

Crozet Community Advisory Committee – Minutes
Wednesday, October 21, 2015 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Crozet Public Library, Crozet, Virginia

CCAC members present: Jennie More (Chair), Phil Best, John Savage, George Barlow, Mary Gallo, Kim Connolly, Brenda Plantz, Leslie Burns, Jon McKeon, Lisa Marshall, Susan Munson, Alice Lucan, Ann Mallek (Board of Supervisors), Tom Loach (Planning Commission)

CCAC members absent: Beth Bassett, Dave Stoner, Kim Guenther

Public attendees: Paul Grady, Bill Schrader, Emily Kilroy, Frank Stoner, Adam Mulcahy, Mike Marshall, Tim Tolson, Bevin Boisvert, Barbara Westbrook, Joe Fore, Andy Wright, Meg Holden

Chair Jennie More called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. Agenda Review (Jennie More – CCAC chair): It was asked that we talk about bicycle safety.

2. Approval of Minutes from the September 16, 2015 meeting: Subject to any corrections communicated to the secretary within the one week from today, John Savage moved to approve the September 16, 2015 minutes, seconded by Susan Munson, and the September 16, 2015 minutes were approved by vote of the CCAC.

3. Project Updates/Information:

- New tenant in the Library: Andy Wright introduced himself to the CCAC. He has lived here twelve years, has had kids in the schools, and is a member of Crozet United Methodist Church. He is pleased that his engineering firm has rented the space in the Library across from Crozet Running. They have seven full time employees and do environmental engineering, including work on HVAC systems, LEED qualification, resource usage and minimum energy use. He is very pleased with the space, and most of the employees live out here. He is happy to be adding their expertise to the growth in Crozet.

- Reminder about change in location for the November meeting: The November meeting will be at The Meadows, but if the agenda is light, we might not have the meeting.

- Introduction of Adam Mulchay - Environmental Studies Academy: Mr. Mulcahy is the director of the new Environmental Academy at Western Albemarle High School, which is the third of the STEM academies at in the Albemarle County Public Schools. The Environmental Academy has a capacity of 160 to 200 students and would be 8-10% of the WAHS student body. Like the other STEM academies, the focus is on authentic and hands-on experiences. Mr. Mulcahy is looking for connections to the community including mentoring opportunities for younger kids, internships, follow-alongs, geocaching, and helping with water quality assessments. He also hopes to host a natural history day. It will be important to involve kids with businesses in the community. For instance, today students traveled to the Coursey Springs trout hatchery. They need to see careers in the environmental community and model

after what they see. Freshmen have worked at the International Rescue Committee in Charlottesville to plant cover crops and do other work in their gardens. So he is looking for other opportunities to participate. Suggestions came up, including planting native plants in the green space when the Barnes project starts building out. The Academy could be a resource for new development in Crozet. They were also selected for the Green Apple Day awards. The Academy has worked on an organic waste compost project and planted a pollinator garden. Students are learning about native plants, and have also grown some hydroponics or aquaponics. It has been good for them to see the whole planning process. Leslie recommended working with local designers and landscape architects as much as possible. Leslie also suggested LEAP as a possibility too because of training opportunities there. Jessica Mauzy and Kim Guenther would be good contacts on the Crozet Trail Crew to work on restoration projects and trail relocation. Mr. Mulcahy said that 90% of students come from Henley, with approximately three from other public schools and eight or nine from private schools. The biggest challenge is transportation from other parts of county. Please contact Mr. Mulcahy with internship, volunteer and stewardship opportunities. Watch for their projects in the Library display cases too. There will be an open house Tuesday November 10 from 5-7 p.m. and another on Tuesday December 8. You can check out the Academy's site on the WAHS website. Mr. Mulcahy can be contacted at WAHS at 823-8700 or at amulcahy@k12albemarle.org

- Update on Former Barnes Lumber Property- Frank Stoner: Mr. Stoner gave an update on what's happening and showed where the Master Plan process is going. He explained the guiding principles developed by the Downtown Crozet Initiative from the public engagement meetings over the summer. These have been reviewed by the Crozet Community Association and the DCI planning group. Mr. Stoner said that they have a predevelopment checklist and process for community involvement. How will they make decisions? How will this relate to CCA and CCAC? One of the prerequisites for success is maintaining a dialog about what success for the project will look like. What are the design criteria? What are the obstacles and solutions? What resources are needed to achieve success?

What are the prerequisites for success? One is to have an engaged community. The brand has to be "Crozet" but what does that mean? Mr. Stoner has been working with the County's Economic Development staff to try to identify businesses that would be attracted here, but he also needs to understand what the community wants. It was noted that we do have growing tourism, brewing and wine industries and some agriculture.

Mr. Stoner then listed the design criteria. He said that appropriate scale is the big issue. The development must keep with the existing look and feel of Crozet and it must draw people in. There must be adequate building footprints and parking, which are different for each use. They must also find places for each use. It is important to protect Blue Ridge viewsheds, as this is highest point in downtown. The development must also have great architecture (opinions differ on that, but people know it when they see it). For success in 2016, they want to work on the brand, reach consensus on the vision for downtown, and complete the rezoning on Phase 1.

Mr. Stoner showed the CCAC images of the plans that have proposed for the site, including Katurah Roell's plan and the bank's plan with a large retail component and lots of residential units. These were followed by iterations of Milestone's plan, including the most

recent “block” plan. Some of the road layouts are dictated by VDOT’s mandated medium radius turn (if there are no intersecting roads, you must have a curve and not a two-way stop). Various versions move the plaza around and change the Square. Note that VDOT does not like to have a road connection through the Square because the Square is a private street and VDOT does not like to connect to private streets. He also showed us the plans provided by Warren Byrd and Paul Grady, both of which emphasize a block and grid. Mr. Grady’s plan uses the natural grade to do slip deck parking under the buildings, would tunnel under the railroad to extend High Street, and terminate the Square’s connection to Crozet Avenue. Mr. Stoner said they would need a market study to determine how much commercial space can be supported over time and what types of businesses are desired. He hopes to design a Phase 1 that we can all live with, then construct the road network in the other phases to achieve objectives and allow for the desired uses. He wants to allow for flexibility for a variety of product types, noting that any retail uses will require bigger footprints.

Mr. Stoner’s fourth iteration for October 2015 is much like Mr. Byrd’s block plan. He has found that he needs to manage the blocks so that they are large enough to accommodate commercial uses. Much of the plan looks the same as earlier iterations, but has differing block sizes. He has had to move the plaza to avoid a large drop due to the slope, and its attendant Americans with Disabilities Act issues. As a result the plaza is not on the highest point of the development. Mr. Stoner noted that not all the proposed road connections might be possible. It was noted that the land is zoned heavy industrial now and must be rezoned to the Downtown Crozet District. There are some inconsistencies with the Master Plan, in particular because it does not have a continuous road from east to west across it (VDOT wants such a road with a continuous sixty foot right of way to serve as a collector road to bring traffic downtown). Mr. Stoner said that VDOT is open to a grid plan but wants it to be connected. Parking is located along the railroad track. He noted that the tunnel proposed in the Grady plan under the railroad track would be problematic because it would have to go down 20 or 25 feet and would require a lot of property on the north side of Crozet Avenue.

As it is, he will need VDOT design exceptions for the Square. Any tunnel under the railroad track on the east end would be for cars only. Underground parking is possible but very expensive (\$30,000 per space), and even slip parking costs \$18,000 to \$20,000 per space. Surface space parking is \$2,500 per space. The project will require a long term parking plan but in the short term, the project will work using surface lots. As development progresses, they will move to the east and will leave less and less parking for downtown and so at some point the project will need structured parking. The cost of a parking structure would have to be shared, ideally with the County making up the difference between what the market will support and actual cost (building infrastructure to support economic development). There is an issue in that Main Street becomes a broken street. Does divided traffic hurt retailers on Main Street? Is there a timeline to figure out eastern accesses? Much depends on that. Right now, part of the street is in the 100 foot stream buffer, which is a wet area but may not be a stream. If the County will drop the buffer requirement and the Parkside HOA allows the connection, then the street as designed will work. On the north side of the east end there is a road easement, but on the southeast corner the developer would need to work with the HOA to get the land for the road. Mr. Stoner said that it is not necessary to solve all this now, but we do need to be thinking about these issues.

The group then discussed residential use along the south and east sides. Mr. Stoner said that it is more important to taper to residential use on the east side because on the south, the adjacent lots are very deep and there could be a planted buffer between those homes and the development. The rezoning is step one and this would show what Phase 1 could look like. Mr. Stoner said that it must have a sense of place and that this is important because we don't know how fast the space will be absorbed. Mr. Stoner also has an option on land to south of Barnes and is in discussions with hotel developer to use the land. The plan is to ask first to rezone the hotel site (if he's successful) to DCD. Phil Best said that he likes the idea of developing the commercial end first. Mr. Stoner then showed renderings of the various phases as they build out, gradually adding all the roads and completing the grid. There will be more east-west connectivity when Foothill Crossing is built out. Mr. Stoner then showed some precedent images including one on Vancouver Island and one in Wisconsin. Both were eclectic with character and had "older" looking elements. The Downtown Crozet Initiative has a website that will go live later this week and all the plans will be there.

- Discussion about parking and DCD zoning: Alice Lucan said that this issue came up when we reviewed the plans for Piedmont Place and it seemed that 28 parking spaces would be too few for the project. Alice asked who locates the parking spaces in Crozet to make the development viable. Jennie said that she had invited the developer, Drew Holzwarth, but he could not attend tonight. She said he was aware of the concern and has met with planning staff, but Jennie noted that the development does meet all DCD parking requirements. He has been able to add four more spots after working with his engineer, which results in 18% more space for this project than required. It was hoped that builders can add a few spots here and there to get to the vision for Crozet. It was noted that the general idea for DCD, including the Barnes property, is to have a walkable town with more people biking and walking to downtown. Mike Marshall explained that the DCD got started in response to the County's parking rules. At that time five spaces were required for each thousand square feet of floor space. With that ratio, it was going to be very difficult to get businesses to come here because in a legacy old town it would be impossible to have the necessary spaces. So DCD is meant to be one big parking lot, allowing more businesses to locate here. However, each business needs to show it can provide all its parking. Alice said that we need to look for more developable parking spaces. There has been some concern that the ratio has been shrunk too much, but we will have to see how this works. A hotel will need to deal with this requirement by having more parking itself. Alice said that there likely is more parking out there than meets the eye. Jim Duncan noted that people do like to drive and park at their destination. We need to recognize a problem and find a way to fix it. Mr. Stoner noted that people are parking on the Barnes property now and that this use is actually illegal and not insurable. It was thought that people are using this as a "Park and Ride."

- Discussion about infrastructure specific to roads and connectivity: Because of the hour, this topic was tabled for a later date.

4. Items not listed on the Agenda, Announcements and Future Agenda Items: None

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

George Barlow, Secretary