

Crozet Community Advisory Council – Minutes
Wednesday, September 19, 2012 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

CCAC members present: Meg Holden (Chair), Meg West, Phil Best, Bill Schrader, George Barlow, Nancy Virginia Bain, Ann Mallek (Board of Supervisors), Leslie Burns, John Savage, Mary Gallo, Lucy Goeke, Kim Guenther

CCAC members absent: Kelly Strickland, Brenda Plantz

Public attendees: Mike Marshall, Maynard Davis, Joe Simpson (PDG), Joe Hall, Cliff Fox, David Smullen, Jeremy Romesberg, Trevor Henry, Lee Catlin, Cole Sandridge, Roy Ann Sandridge, Jim Loman, Cathy Loman, J. R. Sanders, Tim Tolson, Jeannie Gentry, Anne Hooff, Jane Rogers, Alan Taylor (Riverbend Management), Susan Payne, Valerie Long

Called to order at 7:05 pm

1. Agenda Review (Meg Holden – CCAC chair): Meg Holden distributed the agenda, reviewed it with the committee and welcomed any additions. No changes were made, but Meg said that we could adapt it as we go if matters arise.

2. Approval of Minutes from August 16, 2012 meeting: Bill Schrader moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by John Savage, and the minutes of the August 16, 2012 meeting were approved by vote of the Council.

3. Public Comment: Meg Holden greeted our visitors and encouraged public comments or questions now or at any time during the meeting. No comments were made.

4. Project Updates/Information:

- Alan Taylor (President of Riverbend Management) to talk about development in Westlake Hills: Mr. Taylor introduced himself to the Council. In addition to the Westlake project, Riverbend is also working on the new Wegmans grocery store to be built on Fifth Street. He said that he met with Albemarle County officials, Crozet residents and CCAC members, and as a result has updated and improved Westlake's design, including the reduction of the number of lots. The first phase will contain 45 lots and there will be 131 lots total. Critical slope impacts have been decreased to 1.5 acres. The new design will preserve 30 acres of trees (twice the amount in the original plan) and half as much dirt will be moved as compared to the original plan. Roads have been moved in order to keep good oak trees. Mr. Taylor appreciated the input he had received. The initial plan appeared to project more traffic into the Westhall neighborhood, but the new plan will have a better road network. He hopes to break ground in early 2013.

Ann Mallek asked about consistency with the Crozet Trail overlay. Mr. Taylor pointed out the trails shown on the map of the development, which would connect to those in Foothills Crossing. A question was raised about the Route 240/250 connector and whether that would be built as part of the first phase. Mr. Taylor said that they would build the portion of the road that lies on the

Westlake property and first phase of Foothills Crossing. This would ultimately connect to Park Ridge (in Western Ridge) and then out to Route 240. This would happen in phase three of the development. Initially, access will be through Western Ridge or Westhall, but there is no timeframe for the whole connector now because it will need to go through the old Acme plant and across Lickinghole Creek, and then to Cory Farms. So Riverbend will build those portions of the road on the land that they own now. Park Ridge Drive will ultimately extend to Park Side Drive. The subdivision will have a ten-year build out. Foothills Crossing has 91 lots in all, 16 in phase 1, and then 75 lots in later phases. Mr. Taylor cannot predict when the third phase of Foothills will be complete. He noted that there will be a lag between first phase of connector through Westlake and the road through Foothills (perhaps a year).

The Council asked whether a developer would be required to build a bridge over the railroad for the connector. Mr. Taylor said that Riverbend would be building their portion of the road out of pocket, but this did not include a railroad bridge. It would also be necessary to bridge Lickinghole Creek, which would also be expensive, but neither was part of this project. It is difficult to talk about the connector because of the Superfund issue at the Acme plant, plus the cost of bridges across the railroad and creek. In response to a question about when the first residents would be in Westlake, Mr. Taylor said that he needs to build roads first, so it would likely be a year or more until someone actually lives there. Jim Loman commented that he has reviewed the plan and met with County officials, and that this is a much better plan with fewer impacts on critical slopes, better efforts to keep trees, and improved connections with paths. From his standpoint as an abutter to the development, this was a better plan.

Mr. Taylor said that they will build a pool and amenities center, which he intends to be open to residents of Westlake and non-residents alike. He said that timing of construction will depend on cash flows after the first phase is complete. Riverbend has not yet decided who the builders will be. Prices are expected to be in the \$350,000 to \$550,000 range like Foothills Crossing (which has the same zoning and lot size). Lots will be one-half to one acre. The pond shown on the Westlake flyer is the existing pond. It was built to handle runoff from Westhall, but Mr. Taylor said that they intend for it to be a neighborhood amenity. Commenters suggested that the stream be daylighted. Walking trails and sidewalks will be installed, and these will connect into existing trail system. A commenter noted that there is only one way in and one way out of the development, which could be an issue in an emergency like the recent windstorm. The County Code permits up to fifty lots before two connectors are needed. Ann Mallek said that she appreciated their efforts to pull back from steeper slopes. A question was raised about lower cost housing in the \$200,000 range. Mr. Taylor said that the raw land cost drives housing costs and in this market land cost drives townhouse construction in that price range. It was noted that newer units in Old Trail are less expensive and selling well. The Council thanked Mr. Taylor for his presentation and responses to questions.

- Crozet/Western Albemarle library, discussion on First Floor use (Lee Catlin, Susan Stimart (ECO Dev) and Bill Schrader): Susan Stimart was unable to attend, so Lee and Trevor talked to the Council. The library construction is moving along and it is time to consider how the first floor space will be used for the community. Lee gave us the background for where we are now. In 2007, meetings were held to discuss the library's appearance and size. It was decided to build a structure that would provide service through 2027 and that the community

would need 20,000 square feet of space. With savings to be realized through community fundraising, the Board of Supervisors endorsed the idea to build the whole library. The library's operations would occupy the second floor, and a community oriented space would use the ground floor. Operating guidelines included creating foot traffic and pedestrian activity, maximizing revenue for businesses, covering the County's expense for space, and avoiding competing with private sector owners. This building will be front and center on Crozet Avenue and should create a lively street scene. The first floor uses should be compatible with the library's mission and operation, but the space should be designed with flexibility in mind if the library determines that it needs the space.

Trevor showed us the schematics for the space. The ground floor is programmed to be 4,800 square feet and west-facing. The layout is partitioned by a 700 square foot lobby area. One space contains 1,700 square feet and the other is just under 1000 square feet. It will be built out to "white box" finish with a dry walled interior. It will have lighting but no ceiling grid, so there will be an opportunity to adjust the design. The lobby, entrance and bathrooms will be fully finished. For now there will be no connection between floors, but a space is maintained for installation of an elevator and stairs.

Current favorite potential uses include a visitor's center to support tourism and visitation (given the proximity of Shenandoah National Park, Skyline Drive, Blue Ridge Parkway, wineries, etc.). The Charlottesville Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau (a City/County combined effort) could be involved in operations as they operate the center downtown. They are combined effort of city and county. It was noted (several times) that Asheville has a successful center that displays local wares, and hosts activities, including arts demonstrations and wine tasting. The center could also include information and artifacts to teach visitors about Crozet's history. A museum could also partner with the visitor center. Bill Schrader noted that this use is mentioned a lot. There are parking spaces on Library Avenue but none along Crozet Avenue. Phil Best noted that perhaps doors bigger than 32' could be used for accessibility. There should be good access from the library parking lot to these rooms.

Another possibility is a center for business support, like the Open Space/co-working concept, which would provide a professional space for business people to use. A police substation is another possibility. A use will also need to be found for the old library, but there are real constraints as to parking and ADA accessibility. A council member noted that a visitors center cannot be simple a bunch of racks with folders; we have the internet for that. The Shenandoah National Park would like a presence, and wine trails could be interested. Downtown the visitor center pays the City for use of a portion of the transit center. We want to help grow businesses here now and foster future businesses. The Board of Supervisors wants the spaces to break even, covering operating expenses plus upfit (but not building cost). A satellite UVA or other classroom situation is a possibility, but a concern was raised that this use would not generate the same foot traffic and revenue. We need a lively street presence to bring in people who want to stay, shop and dine. Make it attractive to visitors and residents. The use must be compatible with local landlords, and balance with business uses. Should we focus on creating jobs out in Crozet? The co-working space concept could help that. Do the same guidelines for future use of the current library? Must the use be non-competitive with existing businesses or landlords? It is anticipated that this building will probably have different uses (given its limitations) and so the

rules may be different. The Historical Society had been curious about a space in Crozet. Mr. Sandridge says museum would indeed be a good use, and could house artifacts that people could see and relate to the history of the town, including construction of the railroad and tunnels. This would be a great companion with a visitor center. Also, we need to remember possible uses for teens, including a safe place to hang out other than Charlottesville.

Issues remain. The space needs to be revenue neutral and compatible with the library use and a community resource. Most uses will require a staff presence to monitor things, but not county staff. Meg H. hopes that a recommendation can be made. Visitor center? Co-working space? Must it be ADA accessible? If so, can this be addressed at build-out. There may be an issue with accessibility on the front. The grade from the parking lot may be too steep to be accessible. Meg H. says she thinks this is the right direction, to house a visitor center or co-working space. Could both uses fit? This could be hard to do because of the need for meeting space.

- Update on Downtown streetscape Projects: Trevor noted that a “surprise” fiber cable was found in the street, causing additional work but it is expected that the street work will wrap up next week.
- Any news on development of Barnes Lumber Company property: It was reported that the lender owns the property now. A concern had been raised over the chain across Park Road; it is very difficult to turn around because of placement of the chain. Although some people were picking up items purchased at the auction, but others dumping stuff there, so the bank had to gate it. Trevor’s staff will help with VDOT and consider a dead end sign.
- Developments at the I-64 Interchange: Nothing to report.
- Library: Leslie has developed a very good brochure for fundraising contacts, foundations and other uses. Each proposal is being tailored for the foundation or company to whom it is sent. Leslie is also working on a mailer for early November. Using the ZIP code program, 18,000 mailers will go out to Crozet, White Hall, Ivy, etc. to get the word out on the status of the library project and how to contribute. Council members are reminded to get their tickets for the chef competition at Old Trail; \$20 ticket. Contacts have been made with the Perry and Charlottesville Area Community Foundations, and proposals are out to many potential funders. They have \$248,000 on hand now. If Council members have any leads on donors, please let Bill know. Thank you to Mike for ads in the Gazette.
- Town Hall Meeting: A town hall meeting was held annually for a number of years, and it’s time to start having them again. It will be held at Western Albemarle High School and the format is an open session on a variety of topics, followed by a break out into stations so that people can get more focused information. WAHS is available on October 18, which is the CCAC date. The CCAC could have its meeting as a town hall meeting, or move its meeting to Wednesday. The One Community meeting is scheduled for Old Trail on the 24th. Crozet was not in the original study, and so now the Thomas Jefferson Planning District is opening it and seeks input. Lee will talk to them about conjoining meetings.

- Ann Mallek noted that the most recent quarterly report on building permit activity said that 60% of the permits issued were in the Crozet area.

5. Old Business:

- What is the word from VDOT on road ways in downtown Crozet: Nothing new, but VDOT is coming to meet with Ann. The spraying issue raised over the summer is being resolved.
- Brief discussion of plans for reconnecting with school PTOs: Meg H. will send e-mail to CCAC's PTO leads and suggest that they reach out to schools. It may also be productive to have the Crozet Library leaders come to PTO meetings.

6. Announcements: Get your chef competition tickets!

7. Future Agenda Items:

- Meet with New Old Trail Management.
- Start dialogue with schools: Mary will coordinate. It was suggested to go to them to talk about the new library and the opportunities it presents. Lucy will help.
- Meet with Amanda Burbage from Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission to discuss Many Plans One Community : wait and see about meeting for October.

Adjourned at 8:46 p.m. on a motion by John Savage seconded by Lucy Goeke.

George Barlow
Secretary