

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting  
December 2nd, 2021 – Virtual Meeting on Zoom**

Committee Members: Christine Putnam, Lonnie Murray, Leah Jung, Emma Andrews, Kate Mallek, Michael Callahan, Kennon Williams, Bruce Gatlin-Austin

Absent: Peggy Cornett, Nancy Weiss

Other Attendees: Sean Tubbs, Tom Chapman, Josh Press-Williams, Rod and Maggie Walker, Sterling Howell, Unidentified phone in caller

Staff: Kim Biasioli, Gabe Dayley, Carolyn Schaffer, Nicole Jones

There was a quorum of eight members present, and Christine called the meeting to order at 5:31.

Welcome to guests.

Michael moved approval of the agenda, Lonnie seconded. Approved by a roll call vote.

Leah moved approval of the minutes, Lonnie seconded. Approved by a roll call vote.

Climate Action Program Discussion with Gabe Dayley (Climate Protection Program Manager)

- There are a lot of intersections, synergy between CAP and BAP (land protection, management, outreach, invasive species, climate change)
- Many of these are focused on mitigation; County is also working on a climate resiliency plan.
- 14 of 21 BAP goals are directly linked to CAP, and additional opportunities for integrative action.
- Example is pollinator smart solar site design for utility scale solar sites.
- GHG Inventory – estimates carbon sequestration by existing forests and tree cover; this emphasizes the critical importance of maintaining them.
- SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) goals – important for achieving the goals of the CAP and BAP. One of the first steps for implementation.
- Implementation also starts with prioritization. Indicators will help with prioritization (e.g. lays groundwork for other actions to occur; provides co-benefits; emissions reductions; equity)
- Climate Program Team includes other County staff; other County staff are already working on projects/programs that contribute to climate action. Gabe's role is facilitator of work across the organization, both supporting existing programs and creating new programs as needed.
- Climate Program is working on updating procedures and policies around sustainable operations (includes purchasing, buildings, management of County lands, etc.)
- Climate Program is focusing on a whole of government approach, and developing a climate lens for all County staff to consider climate as they make decisions in their daily work.
- Discussion of how to measure reductions from different actions, such as mowing.
- NHC is a key stakeholder group, can provide feedback on how to improve programming. NHC can also continue to think about co-benefits and provide input to the Climate Program.
- Rod Walker commented that vines are taking down tree canopy around the County.

Follow-Ups

- Important Site Updates and Outreach
  - Lonnie is tracking down and reverifying rare species in the County.
  - Emma's property – James River Buffer Program is installing trees.

Spotted Lanternfly Efforts

- Article was published in the Cville Weekly about SLF.
- Rod Walker reported that 820 fliers were never delivered.
- Important to consider timing of future updates and information distribution.
- **Action Item:** Michael is developing a newsletter blurb for HOAs.

- Update on other sightings from Extension – several reports but only one other SLF location has been confirmed (a single individual adult in Belmont).

#### Comprehensive Plan Update

- Christine shared that there will be a citizen working group of 8-15 members representing different demographics, spatial and socioeconomic subsets of the population. Group will serve as a sounding board for policy proposals and links to the community for engagement efforts. Will this group have the expertise, knowledge to support conservation priorities? Selection process will be in December.
- **Action Item:** NHC can consider vision, elements, language that support retaining and any new additions. Christine will create a shared google doc to capture items and will stay involved.

#### Membership

- Kennon is planning to reapply.
- Committee still has two vacancies. **Action Item:** NHC members can consider how to fill these vacancies and share their thoughts with Christine.

#### Staff Update

- Stream Health Initiative – 14 final proposals went to a Board work session on December 1.
- Stream Health proposals included alignment with goals and strategies of Comprehensive, Climate Action, and Biodiversity Action plans.
- Policy group minutes about the Stream Health proposals contain a number of inaccurate and contradictory statements; a follow up conversation to clarify and correct them is warranted.
- Kim will present to Virginia Safe Wildlife Corridors Collaborative Research and Resources group about the Southern Albemarle Mountains project and citizen science efforts, and receive feedback.
- Kim is working with other staff to modify the CAP database framework to create a BAP database to track progress on the BAP goals and recommendations.

#### Work Groups and Member Reports

- Education and Outreach
  - Group will meet in January.
  - Members are working to partner with Albemarle-Charlottesville Historical Society and Piedmont Master Gardeners to develop a plan for the Historical Society garden, which might include involving students, native plant installation, protecting the ash tree, and a kiosk.
- Wildlife Corridors
  - Leah is waiting to hear about funding for bobcat project and working with a teacher to develop related curriculum.
- Policy
  - Group is developing a list of factors important for designation of Important Sites.
  - Group is supportive of a solar ordinance and has outlined desired criteria.
    - Action Items:** Schedule follow up policy meeting. Christine will develop a google doc to track solar recommendations.
  - Evaluation of Stream Health Initiative proposals – group supports adoption of the Bay Act and stronger regulations on agriculture. Support for other proposals, especially those that are regulatory in nature. Group developed a recommendation for prioritization of proposals.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31. Next meeting date is January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022.