



**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
October 6th, 2022
Albemarle County Office Building (Room 235)
401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA**

Committee Members Present: Christine Putnam, *Chair*, Emma Andrews, *Vice-Chair*, Peggy Cornett, Abigail Wilson, Michael Callahan, Dan Mahon, Lonnie Murray (arr. 5:59pm)

Absent: Kate Mallek, Bruce Gatling-Austin, and Leah Jung

Other Attendees: Meghan Sobott (considering applying for open committee member)

Interim Staff: Scott Clark

1. Christine called the meeting to order at 5:38pm.
2. There was a quorum of 6 members present.
3. Christine welcomed and introduced Meghan Sobott.
4. Peggy Cornett moved approval of the Meeting Agenda; Abigail Wilson seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous. The Meeting Agenda was approved.
5. Peggy moved approval of the August Meeting Minutes as presented; Dan Mahon seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous. The meeting Minutes for September 1, 2022 were approved.
6. **Follow-Ups**
 - A. **Important Site Updates and Outreach**
 - Christine asked if anyone had visited or done outreach for any of over 60 Important Sites since the last meeting. She reminded members to visit sites for the sake of stewardship.
 - B. **Preddy Creek Site Visit.**
 - A Committee tour of the site is scheduled for Sunday, October 9, from 1-2:30pm. Committee members able to attend will meet in the parking area.
 - C. **Recommended Albemarle County Invasive Plants List**
 - **Action Item:** Christine restated her intent to write to Charles Rapp, Albemarle County Planning Director in the Community Development Department, asking him that he seek input from additional stakeholders like the Native Plant Society, Blue Ridge Prism, the NHC and others during the review of the Invasive Plant List as Albemarle County's Invasive Plant List.
7. **Staff Update**
 - Scott Clark (434/296-5832, ext. 3239) will provide staff support until a new Natural Resources Manager is hired. Scott is available Monday – Friday, from 8:00am to 5:00pm.
8. **Comprehensive Plan**
 - Scott Clark commented and answered some questions about how and when the Committee should engage in the review process for the updated Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan ("*Comp Plan*"). Clark said that Phase I of the review process was ending and that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) will meet soon to review progress. Phase II of the review process will begin in early 2023. Scott acknowledged that significant time is available for Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) input. Scott noted



that the Historic Preservation Committee and the Architectural Review Board provide policy inputs during the review process, so it would be appropriate for the NHC to do the same. Committee members remain prepared to engage in policy development and make submissions. It was acknowledged by all Committee members that “Biodiversity” should be included in the “Big Ideas” section of the Albemarle County *Comprehensive Plan* being revised.

9. BAP Review of Goals & Recommendations (Goals 6 & 7)

- Short discussion - *Goal 6: Improve policies for subdivision of properties to help prevent habitat fragmentation and maintain parcels of sufficient size for agriculture and forestry.*
 - Some changes were initially discussed, but it was apparent that members needed additional opportunities to develop and propose changes.
 - It was suggested and agreed that Work Groups meet to develop and discuss issues regarding the BAP and bring recommendations for changes from the Work Groups to the Committee for consideration.

- Short discussion - *Goal 7: Reduce the impact of rural roads and other fragmenting features on habitat.*
 - The key question raised – “How do we [Committee] identify locations where fragmentation can be reduced?”
 - It depends on the species and uses; removal of turf.
 - It was suggested that the Committee could develop standards for how to reduce fragmentation when bridges, roads, crossovers are constructed, and the use of conservation easements to minimize fragmentation.
 - Again, to better manage the Committee’s time, it was suggested and agreed that Work Groups meet to develop and discuss issues regarding the BAP and bring recommendations for changes from the Work Groups to the Committee for consideration.

Christine asked that Committee members meet in their respective Work Groups and be prepared to offer recommendations for BAP Goal 8 at the November Committee meeting.

- *BAP Goal 8: Manage invasive species to limit their spread.*

10. Working Group & Member Reports

- *Education & Outreach Work Group* – Christine, Emma, Abigail, and Mike met prior to the full Committee meeting. Planned updates included: ACES program; Instagram posts; attending next Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting; checking agenda for topics relevant to BAP; Blue Ridge Prism Invasive Management; curriculum; and T-shirts
 - Christine led the group on foot around the exterior County campus to inspect the demonstration pollinator flower gardens and original landscape features. The group agreed that signage would help those working and visiting the campus to know the purpose of the gardens and plants featured.
 - Meghan Sobott also joined the group for a portion of the meeting and the campus tour.

- *Wildlife Corridors Work Group* – The Working Group did not meet.

- *Policy Work Group* – There was no meeting, however Lonnie Murray was asked to help consolidate comments during future Policy Work Group meetings regarding BAP Recommendations, to bring well discussed key points to the full Committee for consideration.



11. Other Matters Not Listed on the Agenda

***Note:** Christine desires that full Committee **meeting times start at 5:30pm and revised to end by 7:00pm.** Future meeting agendas will include the number of minutes allotted for and Abigail has agreed to be a timekeeper, to help keep the Committee on track and discussions moving so that full Committee meetings end on time.

12. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:17pm. The next meeting is planned for November 3, 2022, from 5:30 – 7:00pm, to be held in-person at the Albemarle County Office Building.

Minutes prepared by Michael Callahan, Committee Secretary.

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