

5th @ Avon Community Advisory Committee

May 19, 2022, Meeting Notes

Present:

CAC members: Nathan Holland, Craig Roller, Karen Davenport, Shawn Brydge, Andrew Baxter, Robert Finley, Roger Schickedantz. (There were insufficient CAC member attendees to establish a quorum). Supervisor Jim Andrews. County Staff: David Benish, Carolyn Shaffer.

Presenter: Gabe Dayley, Albemarle County Climate Protection Program Manager.

Disclosure read: Meeting being held pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 20-A(16), an ordinance to ensure the continuity of government during the COVID-19 pandemic.

No changes were made to the April meeting minutes. The minutes were not approved due to lack of a quorum.

Topic: Albemarle County Climate Protection Program

Gabe Dayley presented the 2020 plan which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

Themes: health, economy, environment, equity.

Targeted emissions reductions: reduce emissions 45% from 2008 levels by 2030, achieve zero emissions by 2050 (per IPCC goals) in categories of transport and land use, building energy use, renewable energy sourcing, sustainable materials (primarily recycling and composting), landscape/natural resources/agriculture.

The program has two parts: **1) Climate Action Plan, 2) Climate Adaptation & Resilience.** County staff is finishing up a climate risk and vulnerability report. Environmental issues are also being addressed in the Comprehensive Plan update process AC44.

Key Goals:

- Reduce barriers to public transportation, walking, and bicycling (75% of current transport is in single occupancy vehicles).
- Focus on planning solutions such as increased density – mixed use, infill development, reduced parking.
- Promote electrification, use of solar energy, and adaptive reuse of buildings.

The Environmental Stewardship Hub is a section of the County website, launched on Earth Day 4/22/22 dedicated to County environmental programs. The site has educational resources and cost share programs.

Andrew Baxter asked about how economic impact is being addressed. Gabe said that cost and future benefit are being evaluated; programs such as LEAP and AHIP (Albemarle Housing Improvement Program) help to provide building energy improvements at subsidized cost to homeowners; the County is also helping to strengthen local food availability.

Craig Roller asked about how emissions calculations are done. Gabe said that vehicle miles in the community are tracked from various sources. Building energy information comes from the local utilities.

Robert Finley raised the issue of the major solar farm proposed for southern Albemarle County. He proposed that the developer be asked to present the project to the CAC; suggesting that the County do a thorough assessment (life cycle analysis) of impacts such as appropriate use of land, potential for erosion, future disposal of heavy metals, and that the project be bonded to cover the cost of future clean-up. The County should establish guidelines for large scale solar development. Gabe responded that this is a topic the County could focus on, looking at low impact development and incentivizing developers. Traditionally stream health is the primary focus, but they could also apply criteria to tree canopy restoration. There is potential to plant agricultural crops below and between solar panels, rebuilding soil health.

David Benish said that a community meeting is required for the solar development, but that it may not be held during a CAC meeting.

Andrew asked about distribution of emissions. Gabe responded that 280,000 metric tons of CO2 is from residential use and 160,000 is from commercial use. Nathan Holland suggested that the County look into ways to optimize school transportation. Gabe said that the School Board just created an advisory committee, that they have bought a couple of electric school buses, and are looking at additional procurement.

Board of Supervisor Update – Jim Andrews

The budget for fiscal year 2023 was adopted on May 4. The real property tax rate stayed the same while the personal property tax rate dropped 6 cents. The meals tax and lodging tax were increased to match the prior tax level in the City of Charlottesville. A 5 cent tax on plastic bags will be implemented.

Capital projects in the budget are largely school related. A new high school center is in the works and in the future two elementary schools are needed. Mountain View school is over capacity. The County is reviewing possible land acquisition at Southwood, but the site may not be suitable for a school.

Funds have been allocated for implementation of phases 1A and 1B at Biscuit Run Park, which will include entrances, parking, and fields. The Supervisors are reviewing soccer field proposals for Darden Towe Park and Biscuit Run, and are evaluating plans for natural vs. synthetic fields.

The Southern Convenience Center is underway. There are plans for a Northern Convenience Center. Other funding: Court Expansion project, Broadband.

The County is looking for new staff. There is a high vacancy rate, especially in the Police Department.

Closing

Next meeting: June 16th

Meeting adjourned.