

All-Virtual Meeting Policy
of the
Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee

Effective July 6, 2023

1. **Purposes of Policy.** Pursuant to *Virginia Code* § 2.2-3708.3, the following policy:
 - A.** describes the circumstances under which the Natural Heritage Committee (hereinafter “NHC” will allow an all-virtual public meeting; and
 - B.** fixes the number of times all-virtual public meetings can be used per calendar year, not to exceed the limitations set forth in *Virginia Code* § 2.2-3708.3(C)(9).

2. **All-Virtual Public Meetings:** Except as provided in Paragraph 4 below, the NHC may hold all-virtual public meetings only (i) for reasons of inclement weather, county declared emergency, or a special meeting requested by county officials to advise on a specific issue. In addition, the regular meetings scheduled for August and [TBD] may be virtual all virtual meeting will be held pursuant to and in compliance with the following rules:
 - A. Meeting Notice.** An indication of whether the meeting will be an in-person or all-virtual public meeting must be included in the required meeting notice along with a statement notifying the public that the method by which the NHC chooses to meet shall not be changed unless the NHC provides a new meeting notice in accordance with the provisions of *Virginia Code* § 2.2-3707;
 - B. Public Access.** Public access to the all-virtual public meeting must be provided via electronic communication means;
 - C. Member Audibility/Visibility.** The electronic communication means used must allow the public to hear all members of the NHC participating in the all-virtual public meeting and, when audio-visual technology is available, to see the members of the NHC as well;
 - D. Contact for Transmission Failure.** A phone number or other live contact information must be provided to alert the NHC if the audio or video transmission of the meeting provided by the NHC fails, the NHC must monitor such designated means of communication during the meeting, and the NHC must take a recess until public access is restored if the transmission fails for the public;
 - E. Meeting Materials.** A copy of the proposed agenda and all agenda packets and, unless exempt, all materials furnished to members of the NHC for a meeting must be made available to the public in electronic format at the same time that

such materials are provided to members of the NHC;

F. Public Comment. The public must be afforded the opportunity to comment through electronic means, including by way of written comments, at those public meetings when public comment is customarily received;

G. Multiple Members in a Single Location. No more than two members of the NHC may be together in any one remote location unless that remote location is open to the public to physically access it;

H. Closed Sessions. If a closed session is held during an all-virtual public meeting, transmission of the meeting to the public must resume before the NHC votes to certify the closed meeting as required by *Virginia Code* § 2.2-3712(D);

I. Number and Frequency of All-Virtual Meetings. The NHC may not convene an all-virtual public meeting (i) more than two times per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater, or (ii) consecutively with another all-virtual public meeting; and

J. Minutes. Minutes of all-virtual public meetings held by electronic communication means must be taken as required by *Virginia Code* § 2.2-3707 and must include the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means and the type of electronic communication means by which the meeting was held. If a member's participation from a remote location pursuant to this subsection is disapproved because such participation would violate this policy, such disapproval shall be recorded in the minutes with specificity.

3. During a Declared Emergency or When a Continuity of Government Ordinance is in Effect. The NHC may meet by electronic communication means without a quorum of the NHC physically assembled at one location when a state of emergency is declared pursuant to *Virginia Code* § 44-146.17 or a local emergency is declared pursuant to *Virginia Code* § 44-246.21, subject to the provisions and requirements of *Virginia Code* § 2.2-3708.2. The NHC also may meet by electronic communication means when an ordinance adopted pursuant to *Virginia Code* § 15.2-1413 to ensure the continuity of County government is in effect.

(*Virginia Code* § 2.2-3708.2 and § 2.2-3708.3)

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(Adopted [Date]).