

Working DRAFT
Minutes from the Albemarle County Natural Heritage (NHC) Committee Meeting
July 6, 2023, 5:30pm
Albemarle County Office Building (Room 250)
401 McIntire Rd., Charlottesville, VA 22902

Committee Members Present: Christine Putnam, *Chair*, Meghan Sobbott, *Vice-Chair*, Mike Callahan, *Secretary*, Lonnie Murray, Peggy Cornett, Dan Mahon, Leah Jung

Members Absent: Abigail Wilson, Mona El Khafif

Welcome/Acknowledge Guests: Peggy Gilges, Moormans Scenic River Advisory Board

Staff: Scott Clark

1. Call to Order. Christine called the meeting to order at 5:32pm.
2. Establish a Quorum. There was a quorum present (5 needed).
3. Welcome/Acknowledge Guests.
4. Review and Approval of Agenda. Peggy Cornett motioned to approve the meeting Agenda and Leah Jung seconded the motion. Committee members present voted unanimously to approve the Agenda.
5. Review and Approval of Minutes. Peggy Cornett motioned to approve the final version of Meeting Minutes w/corrections from the June 1, 2023 meeting, and Leah Jung seconded the motion. Committee members voted unanimously to approve the Minutes.
6. Guest: Peggy Gilges of the Moormans Scenic River Advisory Board (MSRAB) presented a PowerPoint presentation. ***Christine asked if the slide show would be made available for reference.***
 - MSRAB is working with the Rivanna Water Authority to ensure the release of water from the Sugar Hollow reservoir properly mimics natural flow of water to protect native brook trout in the Moormans River.
 - Members suggested the need to create a greenway plan of Sugar Mountain Rd to address traffic, parking, trash and other impacts.
 - Members agreed to coordinate efforts to support Stream Health Initiative and the efforts being made by the MSRAB
7. Follow-Ups:
 - A. Important Sites Updates and Outreach - None

B. Virtual Meeting Policy & August Meeting

- Scott Clark advised the Committee members to review Albemarle County's policy on Virtual Meetings. Scott said that the Committee has been identified as Tier II (***where does the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors Virtual Meeting policy reside?***). The Committee should adopt a *Virtual Meeting Policy* and select two meeting dates per year. Committee members present proposed meetings virtually twice a year. In 2023, the Committee should hold virtual meetings in August and December.
- Meghan motioned to adopt a virtual meeting policy and meet virtually in August and December of 2023. Peggy Cornett seconded the motion. Committee members present voted to adopt the policy and meeting dates by unanimous vote.
- Christine announced that Meghan would lead the virtual Committee meeting to be held on August 3, 2023.

C. Solar Ordinance Update

- The Committee is most interested in ensuring appropriate planning for restoration of land being considered for development as solar collection sites.
- Committee comments have previously been passed to County staff, per Scott Clark.

8. Staff Update: Scott Clark

- Solar Ordinance - an ordinance is being developed.
- Comprehensive Plan Update - Staff members are working on inputs submitted by members of the Natural Heritage Committee (***need a copy of the inputs***).
- Riparian Buffer Ordinance - a draft ordinance will be distributed for review in a couple of weeks; it will apply to disturbances above a certain size.
- Zoning Ordinance - What is the timeline for public review? What are important buffers landowners need to be aware of (streams, floodplains, etc.)? When would a public review and input period begin; for how long?

9. Annual Report to the BOS

- Christine prepared a draft report for the Committee members to review. Need to wait to learn more about the changed format. Not due until September.

10. Future Budget Proposal Proposals - (all with an educational component)

- Focusing on invasive plants; hiring employees in Parks & Recreation to manage invasive plants, public education and engagement with the end goal to recruit, train and support volunteers to help with invasive plant management.
- Identify opportunities for wildlife crossings and associated management plans
- Support Stream Health Initiative

11. NHC Work Plan for 2023 -2024

- Christine asked Committee members to help prioritize actions in the plan.

12. BAP Review of Goals & Recommendations - GOAL 16: Protect and restore Urban Stream

- Lonnie suggested preventing culverting streams as a protection method; providing a 15-foot buffer or an engineered buffer.
- Christine and Meghan contributed additional comments.

13. Working Group & Member Reports

- Education & Outreach
 - Christine proposed education and outreach be part of the three budget priorities
- Wildlife Corridors
 - Leah and Mike offered to work together on Crossing Management considerations
- Policy
 - Biscuit Run was cited as an unfortunate example of a County park area not currently open, but being used by the public; decision-makers need to be made aware of the use and the impact it has on the natural resources in the park..

14. Recruiting New Members

- Mike suggested developing a training program for new members
- Christine suggested defining leadership roles and how to fill them
- Dan volunteered to work on creating a program
- It was suggested that projects by other organizations might help draw citizens to volunteer to become candidates. Examples:
 - Milton airfield grassland activity
 - Solar projects
 - UVA Office of Sustainability

15. Other Matters Not Listed on the Agenda

- Mike will be absent for the August meeting due to out of state personal responsibilities.

16. Adjournment

- Christine adjourned the meeting at 7:10pm. The next meeting of the Natural Heritage Committee will be held on August 3, 2023, at 5:30pm, on Zoom. The Zoom invite will be sent prior to the meeting.

The minutes were prepared by Michael Callahan, Secretary for the Natural Heritage Committee.