

Crozet Community Advisory Committee
WED 10 MAY 2023 regular monthly meeting
Crozet Public Library

Attendees:

Joe Fore (chair), Kostis, Valerie, Grace, Mallory, Ken, Lonnie Murray (P.C. Rep), Ann Mallek (BOS), Allison Wrabel (County staff liaison),

Called to order at 7:02pm by Joe Fore, who noted that a quorum was present.

Introductions of Committee members and guests (approximately 50, the vast majority representing the Westlake neighborhood)

Joe asked for a motion to approve last month's meeting minutes, prepared by Secretary Michael Monaco. Valerie so moved; Mallory seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were approved.

Joe reviewed the agenda for the evening's meeting, including announcements, ten minutes of community concerns and a scheduled presentation by Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) representative Jennifer Whitaker entitled "RWSA – Crozet Area Projects".

County Supervisor Ann Mallek offered two announcements:

1. A Second Community Meeting regarding the proposed Oak Bluff development and hosted by applicant would be held on WED 24 MAY at Brownsville ES.

2. An update on the delays associated with the planned "Mechums trestle roundabout" at the intersection of US 250 / VA 240 / VA 680 (Brown's Gap Tpke) Many delays have been caused by the Pandemic, including an inability to conduct public meetings, labor shortages and material procurement challenges. Originally expected to start early 2022, the project was rescheduled. A 2 MAY 2023 meeting at VDOT's Culpeper District office confirmed project is back underway; it is now in a bundle of projects recommended for funding in round 5 of the "Smart Scale" program with expected Commonwealth Transportation Board approval in June and a contract procurement phase later in 2023.

Allison reports on new components of the AC website under "How do I" and "report" for relaying official concerns.

Community Concerns:

Mr. Pablo Miller

"What will necessitate a future density increase for Crozet's Master Plan? Increased revenue needed for increased population ... Raised assessments concern ... Taxes on rezoned homes get substantially increased. Large corporations building large developments forcing those with modest or fixed incomes out of the community."

Ms. Becky Reid of Foothill Crossings has concerns re: new development exceeding height restrictions, limiting sight lines, new retaining walls and resultant increased erosion.

Mr. Sameer Handa (sp?) of Westlake has concerns that “the character of the neighborhood and the people who live in it is being questioned (by members of the CCAC)”.

Mr. Minsu Kim of Westlake expresses concern re: what he deems to be offensive Tweets made by Fore and Monaco. Who does the CCAC represent? Suggests that the CCAC get to know the people of Westlake better rather than criticizing them.

Joe Fore responded that he was representing himself not the committee in his comments on Twitter. Apologizes if mischaracterized. Notes that the Committee has no affiliation with any developer or outside interest. Also notes that the land on which Oak Bluff would be developed is identified as “Neighborhood Density” in the Crozet Master Plan.

Additional concerns from audience members re: Oak Bluff including that it is “out of scale” with Westlake ... that the CCAC are parroting developers rather than listening to residents ... that the proposed development would build on existing steep slopes ... that the public comment portion of the meeting is being kept brief intentionally.

“Crozet Area Projects”

Jennifer Whitaker, RWSA Director of Engineering and Maintenance offered a fascinating and detailed presentation.

Explains the difference among City, County, Service Authority (ACSA) and Rivanna (RWSA) which serves both localities.

“We build the big stuff” — the four (4) major reservoirs that serve the area: Rivanna (serving urban water customers in both the City and County) Beaver Creek (serving Crozet) Totier Creek (serving Scottsville)

RWSA also manages six (6) water treatment plants and four (4) wastewater treatment plants including the major Moore’s Creek facility in the “Hogwaller” section of Charlottesville.

Crozet wastewater needs are uniquely served: ACSA operates the sewer laterals within the village of Crozet and surrounding areas while the 17 mile long “Crozet Interceptor” main trunk line (generally following US 250) with four pump stations carrying our sewage to Charlottesville and the Moore’s Creek Plant is managed by RWSA. This system replaced a number of smaller, local systems that once served Crozet, including one at Brownsville Elementary School south of town and another at the Morton’s plant east of town.

For drinking water and fire protection needs, the pump station east of Crozet on rt. 240 treats raw water delivered by a main leading up the hill from the Beaver Creek Reservoir. This facility was significantly upgraded with a \$2.6M project in 2018, with new Granular Activated Carbon Vessels installed for improved water quality. With this project, the plant’s capacity was increased from 1M gal / day to 2M gal / day, allowing for peak per day usage for drinking water and fire-fighting needs.

Treated drinking water is pumped to a 2M gal storage tank at Bucks Elbow Mountain Road that pressurizes the domestic water system.

[Audience Question: What is capacity for growth?] In 2022 RWSA provided 0.63 million gallons per day to the Crozet community ... in 2075 RWSA expects to furnish 1.52 MGD. This forecast is based on the County's full anticipated growth for the development area.

[Lonnie Murray question: What happens to spent activated carbon used in the drinking water treatment process?] Answer: Reactivated; only 10% is lost and refilled with new. The agency continues to balance water quality needs with a reduction of their overall carbon footprint.

The lagoons that are visible just downhill from the rt. 240 plant were recently rebuilt, too. They collect process water that ultimately gets decanted and sent to Moore's Creek for treatment.

[Becky Reid question: What kind of security measures are in place to protect this vital infrastructure?] Answer: Not at liberty to say; be assured that multiple techniques are in place and are regularly in use.

The Crozet area's demand for drinking water was updated in 2021; that data was greatly affected by many people temporarily working from home during the Covid-related shutdown. Nevertheless, Crozet has one of the lowest per capita water usage rates in the Country, ranking just behind Santa Cruz, CA!

Explanation of the "FET" – Flow Equalization Tank: sanitary sewer systems are routinely threatened by an infiltration of groundwater – up to 10x flow during rainy weather. In addressing this challenge, a piecemeal replacement couldn't have been implemented, hence the FET on 250 near the Lickinghole Basin; a one million gallon holding tank that withhold high sewage flows until the interceptor can reasonably accommodate it. This tank is regularly "flushed" to eliminate build-up of sediment and odors.

Some discussion of the history of the sanitary sewer system in Crozet, which was replaced in the 1980's to address contamination that fed into the Rivanna Reservoir.

An upcoming \$10M project will rehabilitate all four pump stations on the Crozet Interceptor line.

[Audience Question: where do Funds for repairs come from?] From rate payers — not the County's general Capital Improvements fund.

[Tom Loach question: would water ever be shared with other users?] Answer: Not anticipated.

A comprehensive, \$43 million Beaver Creek (earthen) dam improvement project will be undertaken from 2024-2028, addressing needs of this now 58 year old facility. The work will replace the spillway, intake, raw water pump station, and the piped main delivering raw water to the Crozet Water Treatment Plant. This work will allow the dam to withstand the most severe storm anticipated, like the 1995 storm that so greatly impacted the Sugar Hollow area. The project will also add an oxygenation system to improve water quality. RWSA is hoping for an \$18 million federal grant to help offset costs. A temporary road relocation along the top of the dam will be necessary but two-way traffic will be maintained "most of the time" during construction.

[Audience question: What is general level of water quality at Beaver Creek Reservoir?] It has the highest algal concentration of any of the local reservoirs. The agency suspects an inflowing nutrient issue.

[Audience question: When will the BCR become obsolete?] Answer: The Beaver Creek Reservoir would serve Crozet until 2075. It currently has enough storage capacity to serve Crozet for one full year without any rain!

[Audience question: When and why was the Lickinghole dam built?] Answer: The Lickinghole Basin is a regional stormwater facility that was built in 1990. It was created primarily to manage stormwater and reduce the extent of sediment and pollutants that were getting into the Rivanna Reservoir.

Regarding stream impairment, the RWSA helps fund “Stream Watch”. Lonnie Murray points out that these efforts are not to be confused with those of the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District.

[Ken Thacker question: does the anticipated growth of drinking water needs take into account future conservation measures that may not yet be realized?] Answer: Even though future water conservancy could be realized, Crozet’s current usage rate is so low that future conservancy measures are NOT currently calculated into the equation. The future per capita demands are based on a sustained 65G / day / person for the full duration of the system’s lifespan.

(End of RWSA presentation)

Committee Business:

Joe Fore notes that Bruce (our new member) is not in attendance so his introduction will be postponed.

Joe asks for nominees for new officers.

1. He indicates that Michael Monaco is willing to continue for another year as Secretary
2. Valerie Long is willing to act as Vice-chair for the coming year
3. Joe Fore is willing to remain as Chair for the coming year.

All nominees are unopposed and are individually approved with unanimous votes.

[Outbursts from the audience suggest a heightened frustration with the format and purpose of the CCAC meetings and the limited time for engagement.]

Joe Fore re-introduces the topic of substance of community meetings, which was brought up last month: location, size, committee seating configuration, hybrid vs. in-person — all are worth reconsideration. He notes that the County Board of Supervisors has not authorized a hybrid meeting format yet in spite of CCAC and other CAC entities asking for that. He concludes with others that the central location of the library is ideal. He also notes that the committee could consider a reconfiguration of seating to allow for a larger audience.

[Audience members express concern about the room layout and feeling shut off from the “Board’s” conversation. Some in audience appear to misunderstand the charge of the Committee.]

Mallory explains the limited authority we have, with no power to “approve” projects. She suggests that Allison re-introduce these points each month and help to explain the charge of the Committee to new guests.

Kostis further explains that we’ve been “slapped” by the BOS for taking initiative in prior discussions.

Allison notes that required “Community Meetings” are within the CAC framework and that the CAC’s act as hosts of those meetings.

[Audience comment that Valerie’s association with the Oak Bluff developer is a conflict of interest — in spite of Valerie’s acknowledgement at the last CCAC meeting of that relationship and a willingness to recuse herself from any discussion.]

Valerie notes that the CCAC are simply hosts for required community meetings.

Joe reiterates that like members of the audience, we are only citizens of Crozet and he repeats his plea for new applicants to fill the Committee’s empty seats.

Tom Loach offers a contrary point that CCAC has taken votes in the past.

Joe reminds the Committee of other “Development Project Tracking” — indicating that there are approximately ten (10) projects with 8 or 9 active ... he will assign various development proposals to Committee members to investigate their current status and report back to the group.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32pm.

Reported by: Ken Thacker, CCAC