

Working Draft Minutes
Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting (In-person)
January 4, 2024

Present: Christine Putnam, Chair; Meghan Sobott, Vice Chair; Mike Callahan, Secretary; Leah Jung; Dan Mahon; Lonnie Murray; Abigail Wilson,

Absent: Mona El Khafif, Ph.D.

Staff: Scott Clark

1. Call to Order was made at 5:45pm
2. Establish a Quorum - At least 5 members were present to open the meeting.
3. Election of New Officers
 - For the Chair position, Meghan Sobott was nominated by Lonnie Murray and elected by unanimous vote. Meghan will not attend the committee meeting in March.
 - For Vice Chair, Dan Mahon was nominated by Leah Jung, and elected by unanimous vote.
 - For Secretary, Michael Callahan was nominated by Leah Jung and seconded by Christine Putnam. Michael was elected by unanimous vote.
4. Welcome/Acknowledge Guests
 - Rob McGinnis, PEC
 - Kaleb Notari, Student, UVA
5. Review and Approve January 2024 Agenda
 - Christine motioned for approval of the Agenda; Lonnie seconded the motion; members present voted unanimously to approve the meeting agenda.
6. Review and Approve December 2023 Minutes
 - Lonnie motioned for approval of the Minutes; Christine seconded the motion; members present voted unanimously to approve the minutes.
7. Other Matters Not Listed on the Agenda from the Public
 - Kaleb spoke about a UVA Professor, in the Environmental Science Department, as a potential candidate to be submitted for committee membership.
 - Leah asked Rob if he would consider becoming a member of the committee. Rob said he would check with his boss at PEC about potential conflicts..
8. Staff Update:

- Scott spoke about aspects of the Comprehensive Plan Review (AC44) to include surveys, questionnaires, and draft goals and objectives. He said work was ongoing. Draft action items were being prepared for the Comprehensive Plan, to be released in early Spring.
- Report sheet on 2023 conservation easements. There were 6 donated conservation easements in 2023, obtained 845 acres.
- Discussion about the Albemarle Conservation Easement Authority (ACE) and its status. Scott and James Filcher manage.
- **Action: Christine - Find letter about funding ACE program. March 2022.**
- **Lonnie moves to write another letter, Christine to write a letter to fund equity; Scott needs a letter two weeks before the BOS meeting. Support ACE program and fund for 2025 budget.**
- **Lonnie, no score in process for biodiversity. Issue of hypothetical development rights.**

9. Follow-Ups:

- a. Important Site Updates and Outreach - Lonnie, looking for *logolium povata* (climbing fern) most sites don't occur any more. Has vulnerable status in VA. Occurrence in Preddy Creek, near a mountain bike trail. Check to see whether County Parks monitors. Bungle Town site scoring. Reconsider Bungle Town scoring. Important Sites originally part of the BAP. Flag layer, solar development. Included in the flag layer. Lonnie, Christine, unanimous.
- b. Biscuit Run Park Letter (Dan) - follow up
 - The concept of the letter is evolving, considering a "recreational opportunity spectrum". There was discussion about developing a "class of parks" and development criteria. "Primitive" was suggested as an initial or primary "class".
 - Comments pertaining to the Parks and Rec section of the Comprehensive Plan Review included "Accessibility" (ADA) criteria
 - Christine asked Dan to author a paragraph to consolidate ideas by Friday, January 5.
- c. Speakers for Future Meetings
 - February 2024 - The Committee plans to meet at the UVA School of Architecture (Campbell Hall). Mona is to coordinate the meeting space. UVA Professor Tim Beatley, will make a presentation on **Biophilic Cities**.
 - TBD - Tim Padalino, AICP, Albemarle County, Chief of Parks Planning, was mentioned as a possible guest to meet with the Committee at a future meeting.
- d. County Native-plant Demonstration Beds and Dark Sky Week Proclamation (Christine) - follow up.
 - Native-plant Demonstration Beds - Christine discussed the Native Plant demonstration beds around the County's campus site and proposed developing an "open letter" and inviting other like-minded organizations to participate. She proposed using *Google* capabilities so that the letter could be coordinated and signed electronically. Lonnie sent his comments after the last committee meeting; Christine sent comments to Scott Clark for inclusion.

- Dark Sky Week Proposed Proclamation - Christine said she had the information she needed for the proposed *Proclamation*. Christine said she would seek to work on the proposed *Proclamation* with “*Dark Skies Piedmont*”.

10. [2024] Work Plan Review

- The Committee’s 2024 Work Plan is based on achieving BAP Goals, however there was discussion and ideas proposed for streamlining the plan.
- Mike suggested the plan be recategorized and reprioritized.
- Lonnie suggested the plan could be matrixed to reflect difficulty versus return on investment (ROI).
- Meghan agreed to work on recrafting the plan prior to the February committee meeting.

11. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:23pm.

Note: The next NHC meeting will meet in-person at the UVA School of Architecture (Campbell Hall) on February 1, 2024, starting at 5:45pm. Meeting space will be identified by the Committee prior to the meeting.