

Draft Minutes
Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting

February 1, 2024, 5:45pm
Campbell Hall, Bishop Conference Room (2nd Floor)
UVA School of Architecture

Present: Meghan Sobbott, Committee Chair, Dan Mahon Vice-Chair Christine Putnam, Past Committee Chair, Mike Callahan, Committee Secretary, Leah Jung, , and Mona El Khafif, Ph.D. (The Committee has four open seats.)

Absent: Committee members Lonnie Murray and Abigail Wilson

Staff: Scott Clark

1. Call to Order at 5:48 pm
2. A Quorum of 5 members was present to open the meeting.
3. Welcome/Acknowledge Guests
 - Kaleb Notari, Student, UVA (has submitted an application to Albemarle County Supervisors for consideration of an appointment to the Committee.)
 - Martha Donnelly
 - Tom and Wren Olivier
 - Marieke van Haaren
4. Review and Approve February 2024 Agenda
 - Leah Jung motioned approval; Dan Mahon seconded approval; all members present voted unanimously to approve the meeting agenda.
5. Review and Approve January 2024 Minutes
 - Leah Jung suggested the last sentence of paragraph 9(a) be revised or deleted. The sentence was deleted. Mike Callahan motioned approval with the change; Leah Jung seconded approval; all members present voted unanimously to approve the minutes with the change.
6. Matters from the Public Not Listed on the Agenda - none
7. Staff Update by Scott Clark:
 - In the next two weeks, a draft of Goals and Objectives of the Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan are to be released.
 - Scott requested action steps be submitted to him by the Committee
 - Developing a package for new landowners on environmental stewardship was mentioned.

8. Follow Ups: NHC Work Plan discussion led by Meghan.
 - a. Phase I - Promote policy changes that support biodiversity protection and climate change action. Action items in this phase include providing feedback for AC44 and Albemarle’s solar ordinance in addition to other policies in the County.
 - b. Phase II - Promote education of the public on the importance of biodiversity and ways to protect it.
 - c. Phase III - Strengthen the NHC and support for its work.

Partnerships - Tom Olivier mentioned that “Dark Skies” could be addressed in a Committee work group; Meghan thought issues should be included in the Committee’s Annual Report to the Supervisors. Other issues that could be addressed included tracking native plant installations; Solar Ordinance status; and include in a presentation to the Supervisors.

9. Working Group & Member Reports
 - a. Education and Outreach - none
 - b. Wildlife Corridors - Leah described the progress of the Bobcat monitoring project she has been advocating on behalf of the Committee.
10. The Committee and attendees moved to an adjacent room for a special presentation by Professor Tim Beatley on *Biophilic Cities*.

[Tim Beatley, Principal for Biophilic Cities, and Teresa Heinz Professor of Sustainable Communities in the Department of Urban and Environmental Planning in UVA’s School of Architecture -](#)

Website for [Biophilic Cities](#) project.

The presentation highlighted the project and cities that have committed to incorporate nature with future design and development being considered by City and County elected leaders for decision-making and approval processes. There is a current global network of 31 cities that have made the commitment to be part of the project. To date, Charlottesville and Albemarle County have not made commitments and not been formally approached to consider participating.

11. The meeting adjourned at 7:37pm.

Note: The next NHC meeting will be held at the Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Rd. Charlottesville, VA 22902-4596, on March 7, 2024 starting at 5:45pm.