

Draft Minutes
Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
March 7, 2024, 5:45pm

Present: Dan Mahon, Vice President and Acting Committee Chair, Christine Putnam, Past Committee Chair, Mike Callahan, Committee Secretary, Leah Jung, Mona El Khafif, Ph.D., Abigail Wilson, Lonnie Murray

(The Committee has three open seats.)

Absent: Meghan Sobott, Committee Chair, and newest Committee member Rob McGinnis (date approved?)

Staff: Margaret Maliszewski, Planning Manager, Community Development Department. (Scott Clark was unavailable for the meeting.)

1. Call to Order. In the absence of the Committee Chair, the meeting was called to order at 5:50pm, by Committee Vice President Dan Mahon. Due to personal reasons, Dan resigned as Committee Vice President, and former Chair, Christine Putnam, was approved to lead the meeting by unanimous vote.
2. Establishment of a Quorum. Five Committee members were present to call the meeting to Order.
3. Welcome/Acknowledge guests - None.
4. Review and Approve Meeting Agenda. Lonnie Murray motioned to approve the Agenda. Dan Mahon seconded the motion. The motion to approve the Agenda was unanimously approved by all members present.
5. Review and approve February 2024 Meeting Minutes. Leah Jung motioned to approve the Minutes. Mona El Khafif seconded the motion. The motion to approve the Minutes was unanimously approved by all members present.
6. Matters from the public not listed on the agenda (3)
 - Mona met with Albemarle County Planning Commission Chair, Fred Missel. “Dark Skies” was part of the discussion about the Comprehensive Plan review (AC44). Mona advocated for a meeting between the Biophilic Cities principal, Professor Tim Beatley, the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County representatives to discuss potential adoption of the Biophilic Cities program. The “Biophilic Cities” program should be introduced as a regional planning idea, outlined in a letter. Mona said she and her students would work on developing how the project, the meeting, and an approval decision might come together.

- Comments and inputs by Natural Heritage Committee members to the AC44 Comprehensive Plan review process should be sent to County staff to be incorporated

7. Feedback for Comprehensive Plan Review (AC44)

a. Rural Area Land Use and Transportation

- Staff member and Planning Manager, Margaret Malizuwski, highlighted the need for a memo to the AC44 Team and the Albemarle Planning Commission from the Natural Heritage Committee (NHC):
 - No ecosystem services mentioned
 - No mention of the “Stream Health Initiative”
 - Need to update the Draft Growth Management Policy
- Abigail volunteered to work on the update over the weekend.
- The format for a memo to the Planning Commission was discussed. The plan was for a memo to be sent to the Planning Commission by Monday morning, March 11, 2024 - Abigail would review the Goals and Objectives, share with Committee members, and a memo would be prepared for approval to submit comments by the NHC.
 - Lonnie motioned to send a draft memo with proposed changes to the Rural Area Chapter, to the Planning Commission by Monday, March 11, 2024. Mona seconded the motion and members present voted unanimously to send the memo when ready.

b. Development Areas Land Use and Transportation. Not discussed, no time remaining.

8. Solar Ordinance.

- Christine toured the [Rivanna Solar Site along Route 53](#); observed no grading and that soils had been left intact.
- Christine offered to resend a previous Committee letter about the solar project to County Supervisors, highlighting the need to limit grading, add stream buffers, incorporate appropriate policy, and provide a Vegetation Management Plan and a Decommissioning Plan.
- Mona motioned to resend the letter; Lonnie seconded the motion; the motion was approved unanimously by members present.

9. Staff update. Not discussed, no time remaining.

10. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm.

Note: The next NHC meeting will be held at the Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Rd. Charlottesville, VA 22902-4596, on April 4, 2024 starting at 5:45pm.