

Draft Minutes
Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
April 4 , 2024

Present: Meghan Sobbot, Christine Putnam, Leah Jung, Mona El Khafif, Ph.D., Dan Mahon, Leah Jung, Kaleb Notari

Absent: Mike Callahan, Lonnie Murray, Abigail Wilson, Rob McGinnis

Staff: Scott Clark

1. The meeting was called to order at ~5:55 pm
2. Establishment of a Quorum. Seven Committee members
3. Welcome/Acknowledge guests - None.
4. Meeting Agenda amended to updates for biophilic region work and invasive management funding for FY25 budget. Approved
5. Review and approved March 2024 Meeting Minutes with added confirmation of Rob McGinnis and Kaleb Notari's appointment date to the NHC in February 2024.
6. Matters from the public not listed on the agenda- None
7. Staff update
 - AC44 Action Steps over the summer
 - Scott will ask planning staff if the NHC can look at one of the following AC44 chapters per month: Stewardship, Parks and Rec, and Rural Area Land Use
 - Scott has been working on easements ...James Fulcher no longer with County, so down a staff member
8. Review Work Plan
 - Discussion about the NHC reports to the BOS
 - Part of the NHC original charge was to provide a state of biodiversity report- this is a giant task!
 - Could the NHC begin compiling indicators/criteria now...all agreed this is something we can do
 - Short discussion of using land cover data
 - Light Pollution
 - Mona will share a project she did to collect data about outdoor lighting in Charlottesville neighborhoods
 - Christine reported on the Dark Sky Week Proclamations
9. Ragged Mountain Natural Area updated policy
 - Rob reported on the April 3rd BoS meeting and the public comments prior to the start of the meeting
 - Rob provided background information about the RMNA
 - Discussion of NHC feedback concerning RMNA- will wait to hear the next step from the County staff
 - Dan reported on his experience working with the City on trail development
 - All are encouraged to read background documents
10. Follow Ups:

- Solar Ordinance Feedback
 - Discussion about the feedback. Summary of important points to be made:
 - vegetative management plan
 - limit mass grading and stump removal at all cost
 - decompaction of soils after construction and after decommission
 - increase in stream buffers to 300 ft
 - independent 3rd party reviews and inspectors
 - more focus on community solar
- Wildlife Corridors
 - Leah went out with researcher and will put information on Wildlife Corridor Hub
 - Plan to apply for funding for a wildlife corridor in the Afton/64 area getting lots of data to support this
 - Two of the bobcats being tracked were killed by cars
- Budget update for invasive plant management- Christine promised to share her letter to the BoS and encouraged NHC members to individually share their concerns about the absence of funding in the FY25 budget.
- Biophilic Region Update
 - Work group meeting with key people and gathering information
 - Looking at the biophilic application
 - Mona would like to work with her students on this
 - Kaleb wants to work on this

10. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 7:23pm.

Note: The next NHC meeting will be held at the Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Rd. Charlottesville, VA 22902-4596, on May 2, 2024 starting at 5:45pm.