

Draft
Minutes from the Albemarle County
Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting, 5:45pm
July 8, 2024

Present: Rob McGinnis, Chair, Mike Callahan, Secretary, Lonnie Murray, Kaleb Notari, and Leah Jung

Absent: Christine Putnam, Vice-Chair, Mona El Khafif, Ph.D., and Dan Mahon

Notes:

- Abigail Wilson has resigned for personal reasons. We have acknowledged her role and thanked her for her membership.
- The committee now has four open seats needed to fill its 12 authorized positions.
- With the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors' direction, the NHC is considered a Tier III committee and required to meet in-person except may hold two announced virtual meetings per year.

Staff: Scott Clark

1. Call to Order. The meeting was in session at 5:49pm.
2. Establishment of a Quorum. Five committee members were present to open the meeting.
3. Welcome/Acknowledge Guests. None.
4. Review and Approve Meeting Agenda
 - Motion to approve the Meeting Agenda was made by Leah.
 - Motion was seconded for approval by Lonnie; the Motion was approved unanimously by members present.
5. Review and Approve June 6, 2024 Meeting Minutes.
 - Motion to approve the Meeting Minutes was made by Lonnie.
 - Kaleb seconded the Motion; the Motion was approved unanimously by members present.
6. Matters from the Public not listed on the Agenda. None.
7. Staff Update (by Scott Clark)
 - Reported the Work Session on the Comprehensive Plan scheduled for the Planning Commission
 - Discussion ensued regarding Rob's recent email (7/7/2024), citing a revised Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan structure and included the Long-Range Planning Team's memo to the Planning Commission, preparing for the

Commission's 7/9/2024 Work Session. The memo included a link to the *AC44: Plan Structure & Project Update* slide deck prepared for the session.

- Rob shared that the Comprehensive Plan may not be finalized and considered for approval until 2025.
- Rob's email was attached to previous NHC inputs by Leah and Lonnie for the Rural Area Objectives and the Draft Updated Growth Management Policy, respectively.
- Rob asked about a Google.docs folder containing NHC letters to the BoS, referencing recommendations submitted by the Committee as inputs to the Updated Comprehensive Plan. Rob said he would work to create an Index for letters to the BoS from the NHC, as he reviews material in the folder.

8. Solar Ordinance.

- *Comments*
 - Bill Fritz is the lead planner for the County on the [solar ordinance issue](#).
 - The County hosted a [half-day workshop](#) on June 7, 2024; there is a set of workshop notes available [but the video found at the link is highly informative]; discussed small scale solar to support agriculture operations
 - [Virginia House Bill \(HB\) 206](#), mitigation of impacts, was mentioned
 - Recounted what the County recommended; Solar facility ordinance; encouraged native plants, but does not require native plants
 - Rob provided an overview of the major elements of the draft NHC comment letter. That draft NHC comment letter augments previously transmit NHC comments and focuses on a requirement that locally/regionally native plants be required with a provision for proposing non-invasive non-native plants based on County review and approval. Another key recommendation is for a requirement for a vegetation management plan as well as regular inspections of vegetation over the life of the project.
- *Follow-up/Next steps*
 - Committee members please review the draft NHC letter and recommendations (see Scott Clark's July 8, 2024, 1:20p.m. email) in correlated with the [draft ordinance](#); ask questions; send comments/inputs to Scott, Christine and Rob in the next two weeks, but no later than COB July 22, 2024.

9. Draft FY 24/25 Work Plan

- a) Review Work Plan - Actions & prioritization
 - i) Rob asked committee members to look over the draft Work Plan; review the scope of the plan; and assess the level of effort required
- b) Discussion of member roles. TBD.
- c) New members. TBD.

10. Follow Ups:

- The Wildlife Corridors update was replaced by a report by Lonnie on species he recently observed in the area.
 - [Prairie rose](#) *Rosa setigera* Michx. or “climbing rose”
 - *Utricularia gibba* (Humped bladderwort), a Federally Listed Sensitive Species 2 Aquatic; found in standing or slow moving water; ponds and sloughs

11. New Business. None.

12. Old Business. None.

13. Adjournment. Rob adjourned the meeting at 7:20pm.

Note: The next NHC meeting will be held on August 1. The committee meeting will be virtual. Information to follow.