

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
January 16, 2020 – Room 235**

Committee Members: Nancy Weiss, Christine Putnam, Michael Rodemeyer, Lonnie Murray, Peggy Cornett, Emily Luebke, Kennon Williams

Absent: None

Other Attendees: Sean Tubbs, Rick Barnett, Nikola McGoff

Staff: Scott Clark

Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:35. Visitors were welcomed and they introduced themselves.

Minutes of the November 2019 meeting were approved.

Chair's Report:

In her last report as chair, Nancy discussed the possibility of moving the NHC's role from its current focus on education to a more active focus on advocacy. Discussion included possible interaction with Master Naturalists to do projects on NHC-designated sites after NHC establishes contact with owners.

Follow-up Items:

Natural Resources Manager Position: Scott Clark reported that the second round of interviews for the Natural Resources Manager were underway, and that the position had been re-listed at a higher pay grade, equivalent to a Principal Planner. Hiring was expected in roughly a month.

Access to Google Docs: Members discussed arrangements to ensure continuing access to the Google Docs site established by Lonnie Murray and until recently managed by David Hannah. Plans were made for Emily Luebke, Scott Clark, and others to complete ownership changes before the next meeting.

Biscuit Run Park: Nancy Weiss reported on a meeting with the County Parks & Recreation Department on the Park. A mountain-bike-only area formerly proposed for the more sensitive southern part of the park is now out of the plan. She introduced the topic of grassland and quail management, and is planning to meet with the park volunteer manager. Meeting discussions also included water resources, invasive species management, connectivity, parking-lot surface, possible NHC attendance at monthly park-planning meetings.

Champion Brewery: The Committee held a brief discussion of the proposed brewery facility adjacent to the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir.

Light Pollution: Sean Tubbs of the Piedmont Environmental Council gave a presentation updating the NHC about ongoing community efforts to limit light pollution impacts on the community, including impacts on wildlife. Discussion included an upcoming (1/26) Sierra Club meeting/discussion, facts sheets with information and solutions, and educational needs related to wildlife impacts.

Virginia Outdoors Plan Letter: The letter distributed previously by Nancy Weiss was discussed, and it was agreed that Nancy would submit the letter. Lonnie Murray suggested that the letter be copied to VDGIF and TJPDC.

New Business:

Officer Elections: Peggy Cornett nominated Christine Putnam as Chair. Lonnie Murray nominated Emily Luebke as Vice-chair. No other nominations were made. Lonnie Murray moved and Peggy Cornett seconded that the vote for Secretary be delayed until the County has hired a new Natural Resources Manager. The motion passed unanimously. Lonnie Murray moved and Peggy Cornett seconded to elect the nominated officers for 2020. The motion passed unanimously.

2019 Annual Report: The new Chair, Christine Putnam, agreed to prepare the Committee's annual report (following the previous year's format) for presentation in April.

NHC Web Pages: Scott Clark gave an update on the County web site changes. The NHC's informational web site will need to be changed to match the new format. The committee stated that it wishes to be consulted on these changes, and that a County staff person involved in the process should come to a future meeting.

Other Business: Lonnie Murray suggested that the Committee should recommend that the Board support a resolution to make the Pawpaw the Virginia state fruit.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30. Next meeting date is February 20. Committee members will discuss the agenda and logistics by email.