

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
July 19, 2018 – Room 235**

Committee Members: Nancy Weiss (Chair), Christine Putnam (Vice Chair), Michael Rodemeyer, Peggy Cornett, Mary Tillman, Lonnie Murray, Kennon Williams

Absent: Emily Luebke

Other Attendees: Ches Goodall, Leah Jung, Savannah Davis, David Hannah

Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:30. Visitors were welcomed and they briefly introduced themselves.

Ches Goodall, the ACE (Acquisition of Conservation Easements) Program Coordinator for the county, gave an informal presentation about the program. There was good discussion and a number of questions answered. The program was created in 2000, and the county has been purchasing conservation easements since 2002. ACE was the second purchase of development rights (PDR) program established in Virginia, and one of the first in the entire Southeast. Ches offered that the NHC could help by spreading the word about ACE and identifying landowners that may be good candidates. Now that BAP has been endorsed by the Board of Supervisors (BOS), Ches, David, and Scott Clark will begin working on language and methods to better incorporate biodiversity into the ACE criteria.

Action Item:

- David will send the ACE easement criteria document to Committee members. Members should send any ideas about revising the criteria to David.

Nancy reported that Dorothy Tompkins has resigned from the committee. That brings the total number of committee members to eight. Current members need to think about potential new members to reach out to. Minutes of the May meeting were approved.

David summarized the July 5 BOS meeting, when the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was discussed. The board followed the staff recommendations to endorse BAP, approve working on amending the county's Comprehensive Plan to incorporate key aspects of BAP, approve staff working on ACE criteria and considering habitat value in stream buffers, and approve NHC moving forward with biodiversity education and landowner contact of Important Sites.

Michael, Lonnie, and Mary attended the July 5 meeting and gave their impressions of the meeting. Cost and financial considerations of BAP recommendations will need to be addressed in some manner. David has begun working with other staff on how to proceed with the Comp Plan Amendment, but is very early in the process. There was some discussion about ways to potentially bring BAP goals and recommendations into the Comp Plan. Both the Planning Commission and BOS will have public input and public hearings before the Comp Plan can be amended. David plans to bring a proposed amendment to the BOS within a year, hopefully sooner.

Action Item:

- David will send links to the Comp Plan to committee members. Members should review the Natural Resources and Rural Area chapters of the plan.

Given the outcome of the July 5 BOS meeting, the committee can move forward with biodiversity education efforts and landowner contact of Important Sites. A few ideas were briefly discussed, including incorporating Master Naturalists in visiting and documenting Important Sites. More discussion is needed. We should work with partners and other organizations in education outreach and compiling or developing materials. Using the county's website and updating existing NHC pages was discussed. It is not clear if or how updating can be done.

Action Item:

- David will create a simple web page about BAP, with links to the report and all materials.

The status of Biscuit Run Park was discussed. David serves on a newly formed technical advisory team, which has met twice. The Steering Team will meet for the first time on August 2. One public meeting has been held to date, with a second one scheduled for August 22. Several ideas about the park design were discussed.

Action Items:

- Nancy will compose a letter with Committee ideas and send to Ann Mallek and Rick Randolph, who serve on the Steering Team. Members should send their ideas to Nancy.
- Interested committee members should contact Dan Mahon about joining the "Friends of Biscuit Run" volunteer group being formed.

David is resuming work on stream buffer issues, with other staff members. The focus is developing strategies and incentives for improving water quality in the county's Development Areas. The county's Rural Area will be addressed after work in the Development Areas is complete.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for August 16. No guest speaker has been scheduled, but there is interest in having someone from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) talk with us. More discussion about Important Sites and Devin Floyd's data should occur at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40.