

**Minutes of Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee (NHC) Meeting
January 7, 2021 – Virtual Meeting on Zoom**

Committee Members: Christine Putnam, Nancy Weiss, Peggy Cornett, Kate Mallek, Emily Luebke, Lonnie Murray, Michael Rodemeyer, Bruce Gatling-Austin, Leah Jung

Absent: Kennon Williams

Other Attendees: Lucinda Shannon, Rick Barnett, Ruth Douglas, Matt Lawless

Staff: Kim Biasioli, Margaret Maliszewski, Carolyn Schaffer

There was a quorum of nine members present, and Christine called the meeting to order at 5:35.

Welcome to Bruce Gatling-Austin, new NHC member.

Member introductions and re-introductions.

Michael moved approval of the agenda, Lonnie seconded. Approved by a roll call vote.

Michael moved approval of the minutes, Bruce seconded. Approved by a roll call vote.

New Business:

- Lighting Ordinance Review and Discussion – Margaret Maliszewski
 - Overview of Lighting Ordinance and review of lighting plans - County Code 4.17
 - Purpose - Protecting dark skies, protecting spillover and glare, regulating direction of light.
 - Applicability – (A) Applied to development proposals that require site plans (mainly commercial/industrial). Applied to fixtures that emit 3000 lumens or more. (B) Addresses high intensity discharge lamps in rural or residential area. Primarily complaint driven.
 - Standards –
 - Includes wattage equivalents of different types of lights to determine if it needs to be full cutoff. LED standards were added more recently.
 - Includes spillover onto roads and adjacent properties (rural and residential areas)
 - Modification or waiver – mainly applies to sports lights. Full-cutoff sports lights have been recently developed.
 - Exempt outdoor lighting – construction, ag, temporary holiday, motion sensor lights, security that shuts off after 15 min, flag illumination
 - Entrance Corridor Design Guidelines provide some additional opportunities for regulating lighting. (Excessive lamination, requires full cutoff, pole light height, decorative lighting; exterior lighting limited to safety and security; maximum illumination of the site).
 - Discussion of visibility, height is not regulated by the ordinance, agricultural exemption (wineries), impacts to biodiversity.
 - New lighting on existing commercial buildings covered by the ordinance
 - Residential developments with site plans are reviewed, but single family residential lighting issues without a site plan would be addressed by complaint. Rural residential subdivisions do not require a site plan.
 - High intensity discharge (Applicability 4.17.2 (B)) not typically used anymore– more LED now. Could be a place to update the ordinance.
 - Topography and vegetation provide opportunities and challenges.

- Currently no incentive for existing sports lighting to change. Condition for shut-off time can be included in a waiver.
 - Future ordinance updates could include glare, maximum light levels, light colors, LEDs, shut-off time. Landowner education is needed.
 - Lighting is not currently in the Community Development workplan – issue would need to be given priority in order for staff to work on it.
 - **Action Item:** Policy Subcommittee to work on compiling lighting ordinance update recommendations.
- Election of new officers – The committee will do this in February.

Follow-ups:

- Important Sites updates
 - Biscuit Run – Christine visited. Discussion with PEC, former PC member, head of CAMBIC about the greenway, future planning. A lot of cyclists were noted using the park trails.
 - Bucks Elbow Mountain – Members expressed concern about upcoming logging operation. Kim provided some background information on the open space easement, habitat protection area, and discussion of forestry BMPs.
Action Item: Christine will draft a letter to VDOF for Committee to review. Approved by a roll call vote.
- Subcommittee Reports
 - Education Subcommittee: Exploring a landowner education webinar in the spring. Focusing on Conservation Focus Areas, possibly work through HOAs. Christine met with PEC and they are excited to partner. Idea for a ‘new to Albemarle welcome package’.
Action Item: Christine and Bruce are working on a webinar idea.
 - Policy Subcommittee: Reviewed policy idea spreadsheet and some draft recommendations on TDR and parcelization.
Action Item: Members are assigned to do additional research on different topics.
 - New Subcommittee – Wildlife Corridors: Leah to chair new subcommittee. Lonnie moved to create the new subcommittee. Emily seconded. Approved by a roll call vote.
- Wildlife Corridors planning
 - Kim gave a presentation about the Southern Albemarle Mountains connectivity project to Virginia Safe Wildlife Corridors Collaborative (VSWCC). Ongoing collaboration with PEC, VDOT, and VSWCC.
- Invasives Policy and Volunteer in Parks guidance document – this is completed.
Action Item: Kim will send to committee members.
- Stream Health Initiative Public Engagement – The project is launching in January. Lots of opportunities to get involved.
- Annual Report Draft - Action Item: Subcommittees will try to prioritize goals. Christine to circulate draft.

Other Matters Not on the Agenda

- **Action Item:** Peggy to check on Tufton bald eagle nes.
- Webinar to Monticello Bird Club - **Action Item:** Peggy to follow up.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23. Next meeting date is February 4th, 2021.