



Shenandoah County Conservation Easement Authority

Office of Community Development
600 North Main Street, Suite 107
Woodstock, VA 22664

www.shenandoahcountyva.us/committees/cea

MEETING MINUTES

October 2, 2013; 4:00-6:00 PM

Board Conference Room

CEA Members present: Planning Commissioner Leon Smith, Chairperson Kelly Watkinson, Cindy Dellinger and Doug French

Others Present: Patrick Felling and Crystal Copenhaver

Call to Order

The meeting was brought to order by Commissioner Smith at 4:00 p.m. with an overview of the agenda.

Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the CEA meeting on September 4, 2013 was approved as presented.

Review of Cost of Community Services Studies

Mr. Felling stated the American Farmland Trust has completed numerous studies in select localities in Virginia to calculate the costs to localities for various land uses (e.g. residential vs. farmland). The studies show open land costs less to taxpayers. While there was no known study completed for Shenandoah County, it is likely that the outcome of such a study would yield similar results.

Cost of Community Service Studies

For every \$1 generated in revenue by different land use categories, those land uses require services that incur the following costs:

County	Residential	Commercial & Industrial	Working & Rural Lands
Albemarle ¹	\$1.96	\$0.44	\$0.20
Augusta ²	\$1.22	\$0.20	\$0.80
Bedford ²	\$1.07	\$0.40	\$0.25
Clarke ²	\$1.26	\$0.21	\$0.15
Culpeper ²	\$1.22	\$0.41	\$0.32
Frederick ²	\$1.19	\$0.23	\$0.33
Northampton ²	\$1.13	\$0.97	\$0.23

¹ *Counting the Costs and Benefits of Growth: A Fiscal Impact Analysis of Growth in the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, Virginia*. Advocates for a Sustainable Albemarle Population, 2012.

² American Farmland Trust, Farmland Information Center – Virginia Statistics Center, 2011.

Presentation of PDR Funding Methods Used by Various Counties

Patrick explained several funding options for PDR programs.

Funding Source #1: Other People's Money

- ▶ Leverage state & federal funds
- ▶ Seek landowner donations
- ▶ Example: 100 acre farm

$\$65K + \$65K + \$260K + \$130K = \$520K$
County + State + Federal + Owner = Total

- ▶ However, how to raise the county portion?



Funding Source #2: Taxes and Fees

- ▶ Nexus: Let development activities fund conservation
- ▶ Rollback tax from Land Use
Designate all, portion, or excess
- ▶ Percent of land transfer fee
- ▶ Percent of real property tax
- ▶ All of the above (e.g. Fauquier County)



Funding Source #3: Not Exactly Taxes

- ▶ Encourage proffers to support PDR's
Example: Huntsberry Farm near Winchester
- ▶ Establish conservation "service districts"
- ▶ Issue a long-term bond
County can pay it back with money saved from avoiding sprawl costs



Photo: Steve Stanley

Funding Source #4 : Private Donations

- ▶ Host fundraising events/campaigns
- ▶ Initiate a campaign with local businesses to accept customer donations
- ▶ Any money raised privately may provide support for tax/fee requests



CEA has had two prior donations totaling \$5,000.00. Feedback from the BOS has been positive and supportive of CEA. Mrs. Dellinger suggested that the authority look at large companies to make donations. Commissioner Smith suggested for next year's budget add a line item for CEA to get a percentage of all Ag based business taxes. Mrs. Dellinger agreed and stated we need to use current monies instead of creating new taxes. Mr. French stated without a budget for CEA, money in the bank, there is no leverage for easements unless they are donated. It was also suggested to add PDR support to the list of items developers could voluntarily support via proffers.

Discuss Easement Program Ordinance Revision Proposals

Chairperson Watkinson stated CEA previously considered making changes to the ordinance, but was never finalized. She also suggested previous changes be looked at by the new authority and incorporated with current suggestions to finalize a new ordinance

for the conservation easement program. Mr. Felling went over a few highlights of suggested changes. The authority would like to see how the changes would affect the easement score sheet before making any suggestions or commitments to changes. Mr. Felling will send out a copy of the “old” and “new” score sheets to all members to review before the next meeting.

Other Business

Next meeting is scheduled for November 12th 9 a.m., with November 14th 9 a.m. being reserved as a backup date. It was suggested moving forward, all future meetings will be scheduled for mornings.

Chairperson Watkinson wants to know the amount of agriculture tax generated in Shenandoah County, requested information be brought to the next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned