



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

May 4, 2016, 5:00 PM

Board Conference Room

CEA Members present: Chairperson Kelly Watkinson, Co-Chairperson Dee Hockman, Doug French, Leon Smith, Bill Wine, Cindy Dellinger, and Supervisor Steve Baker

Others Present: Garrett Morgan, Bud Griswald, and Brenna Menefee,

Call to Order

The meeting was brought to order by Garrett Morgan at 5:10 PM.

Introduction of New Community Development Director

Bradley Polk, Community Development Director, introduced himself to the CEA committee.

Update on Board Action to Rescind CEA Funding

Garrett Morgan briefed the committee on the recent decision by the Board of Supervisors to rescind CEA funding. Originally, the board voted 3-3 to maintain the role of the CEA committee. Later in the meeting, the ordinance was re-voted upon. This time the motion passed 4-2 to rescind CEA funding. Garrett presented three possible options for the committee moving forward:

Option 1 focuses on the CEA creating a network of people in the community who have been through the easement process to advocate for the Authority. This does not cost any taxpayer dollars. With that being a main objective of the CEA, the Authority would not meet in person unless an issue comes up. There will still be the option to meet, just no scheduled meetings.

Option 2 would have the committee meeting once or twice a year to discuss the stewardship of the Vance Farm in which the County is a joint holder with the Potomac Conservancy. The members could also use this time to discuss other easement related topics.

Option 3 would have the committee still meeting on a quarterly basis and continuing to strengthen the preservation strategy of the CEA. The internal processes can be improved while keeping the committee in a position to continue its work in the event that the CEA is ever funded again.

Garrett asked the members for their input on how to move forward and their thoughts on his three proposed options.

Cindy Dellinger asked for clarification on the board's decision regarding CEA funding and also other budget decisions made by the BOS.

Steve Baker responded by explaining the happenings of the budget hearing and how the board came to vote on the final decision. Also explained were some of the other cuts made in the budget such as the removal of overtime funding for Public Safety departments and no money was allocated for paid Fire and Rescue Services for Conicville Fire Department as requested by Steve Baker.

Kelly clarified that the ordinance still exist allowing CEA to meet. However, funding is no longer automatically allocated to CEA, leaving the CEA with no resources to purchase an easement.

Cindy asked what the anticipated rollback taxes are for the next fiscal year. Garrett answered that Melissa Sager has estimated it to be about forty-one thousand. The CEA had approximately forty-nine thousand in the bank.

Dee Hockman made the comment that she does not want to give up and stop working on easements and all members were in agreeance. Dee Hockman reminded the committee that there is always the possibility of an easement in which the owner is willing to donate the land. While this would still need board approval, it would not require any taxpayer dollars.

Cindy Dellinger asked when the Comprehensive Plan comes up for review again. Garrett answered that it is an ongoing process and that the land use chapter was reviewed in 2014 and is reviewed about every 10 years, so it will most likely not be reviewed again until about 2024.

Doug French recommended having people, himself included, that are available to speak with someone who is interested in an easement versus those individuals only being able to speak to organizations. It would be helpful to those interested to be able to speak with someone who has been through the process and had a positive experience. Kelly recommended reaching out to Potomac Conservancy, VOF, and VCC to see if they have any easement land owners from Shenandoah County who may be interested in being a contact on that list.

Garrett Morgan clarified with the committee that everyone was in agreeance on continuing to meet on a quarterly basis as mentioned in Option 3. All agreed.

The plan for the next meeting is to look over some new maps with various intersections, battlefields, and areas of interest without seeking out specific easement opportunities, but instead areas of possible interest and why certain areas are important to preserve.

Other Business

The next CEA meeting is scheduled for August 3, 2016 at 5:00 PM. *Meeting Adjourned.*