



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

February 12, 2014; 9:00-11:00 AM

Board Conference Room

CEA Members present: Supervisor Steven Baker, Planning Commissioner Leon Smith, Doug French, Chairperson Kelly Watkinson and Vice-Chairperson Dee Hockman

Others Present: Patrick Felling and Crystal Copenhaver

Call to Order

The meeting was brought to order by Chairperson Watkinson at 9:00 a.m.

Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the CEA meetings on November 14, 2013 and December 4, 2013 were approved as presented.

Review Easement Program Outreach Presentation

Mr. Felling presented a draft version of the outreach power point for the easement program. An extensive discussion of the presentation ensued, and a number of modifications were requested to be made to the draft. Supervisor Baker stated that several groups in the County strongly support easements. The CEA should move forward and be vocal. Vice-Chairperson Hockman stated that the CEA has a responsibility to have correct information disbursed.

Consider Revised Ranking Criteria Scoresheet

Mr. Felling presented an updated working draft version of easement eligibility and ranking criteria score sheet. After some discussion, it was decided to make a few additional changes to the score sheet. Mr. Felling explained that all changes must be reflected in the easement program ordinance, which would go to the BOS for review after being approved by the CEA.

Update on Collaboration with Other Easement Programs in Region

Mr. Felling stated Frederick County Easement Authority is reaching out to other counties to assist in preparing several short (three to four minute) videos. They would like landowners with current easements who are willing to speak on different topics. Initially, it was anticipated that local university and high school students would do most of the video

production, but that plan fell through. Other options are now being considered for how to accomplish the project. There is currently no funding available for this project; it is largely being done with volunteer effort. Chairperson Watkinson felt an emotional / pride video would be very powerful. Another option would be someone who their parent or family member put the land in an easement, maybe they can talk about legacy a little bit. Mr. French stated he would be willing to participate in a video. Other possible interviewees were discussed. Vice-Chairperson Hockman suggested contacting the Visual Arts department at JMU, as they may be interested in assisting with the video. Chairperson Watkinson stated these videos could be really useful so it would be a shame if the project did not go forward. Mr. Felling asked if someone would like to attend the next Fredrick County Easement Authority meeting. Chairperson Watkinson volunteered to attend the meeting with Mr. Felling.

Update on Funding Request to BOS

Mr. Felling informed the CEA that their funding request to BOS would be under the umbrella of the Community Development Office. A request of \$120,000 would be submitted as a part of the budget process. Supervisor Baker stated the County budget was given an excellent review by Davenport, the County's auditor, stating that the debt ratio was excellent and the County is doing fantastic financially. Commissioner Smith stated when the request is made to the BOS, it would be a good idea for CEA members to be there to support the request.

Other Business

Chairperson Watkinson stated the new Farm Bill has just passed, and one of the big changes in the FRPP program there may be an allowable exception for local cash match. It may be that easement purchases could be able to go through with landowner donation and federal dollars, meaning we could avail ourselves of that program and not have to use County match. This information needs to be confirmed.

Mr. Felling referred the CEA to the ordinance section calling for Chair and Vice-Chair elections at the first meeting of the year. Commissioner Smith made a motion that the officers remain the same; with Mrs. Watkinson as Chairperson and Ms. Hockman as Vice-Chairperson. Mr. Doug French seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

Mr. Felling agreed to inform the CEA of the date they would make a funding proposal to the BOS. The next CEA meeting was scheduled for March 5th at 9 a.m.

Meeting Adjourned