



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

March 13 2013; 4:00-6:00 PM

Board Conference Room

CEA Members present: Supervisor Dennis Morris, Planning Commissioner Leon Smith, Cindy Dellinger, Dee Hockman, Kelly Watkinson, and Doug French

Others Present: Bobby Clark, Patrick Felling, and Crystal Copenhaver

Call to Order

The meeting was brought to order by Chairperson Kelly Watkinson, March 13, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. with an overview of the agenda.

Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the CEA meeting on February 5, 2013, were approved as presented.

Proposal from Valley Conservation Council for Collaboration on Outreach to Ag & Forestal District Landowners

Presentation postponed until April.

Briefing on BOS Role in Easement Program

Mr. Felling presented to the BOS three options for amending the ordinance to change the BOS role as holders. (See attached chart for option details.) The CEA members were all in favor of recommending Option 2 to the BOS. Mr. Felling will draft an ordinance amendment accordingly and present it to the BOS at their March 26th meeting.

Consideration of the Hawkins Farm Easements Proposal

The CEA would like to have one or more Hawkins family members attend the next CEA meeting to learn more about their farm and the proposed easements. Doug French questions the presence of perennial stream on the farm; Mr. Felling will check and confirm. Among the scoring highlights:

- Easement is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan;
- over 90% of farm soils are prime or of statewide importance;
- working family farm, in battlefield study area;
- approximately one mile of road frontage, and visible from a state scenic road; and
- twenty-nine development rights on the farm.

The entire Hawkins Farm scored a total of 58 points. The CEA agreed the Easement Eligibility & Ranking Criteria form represents staff scoring and is not considered an official subdivision or zoning determination. Mr. Felling will add this caveat to the bottom of the scoring sheet.

The state matching grant funds will expire at the end of this calendar year, with federal funds expiring in March 2014. Mr. French made a motion to move forward with the Hawkins easements; Mrs. Hockman seconded the motion, with all in favor. Mr. Felling will brief the BOS about the proposed easements, and that CEA has voted to proceed with reviewing this easement.

Update On The Vance Farm Easement

We are still waiting for NRCS to take review the Vance Farm easement deed, they are behind in their review process by approximately three months.

Plan For Future CEA Funding

CEA uses County funds to leverage additional state and federal funding. Mr. Felling will research roll back tax dollars which currently flows into capital reserves and potential state funds that should be available for 2014. CEA members plan to request the BOS dedicate funds to the CEA to enable the committee to continue their work as an active, key player in granting easements which require funding matches. CEA members would like easement funding to become a part of the operating budget, but it was decided that is not a feasible option to request at this time.

Options For Preserving The Knob Near Mt. Jackson

CEA is interested in helping preserve "The Knob," a ridgetop property near Mt. Jackson consisting of 130 acres. The owner is interested in selling the property soon to a conservation buyer. The sale price sought by the owner is not known. The National Forest Service has expressed interest in the property, but projects approximately three years before actually pursuing the property. The Town of Mt. Jackson may have some interest in the property. Mr. Felling was asked to contact the Shenandoah County Travel Council to see if they are aware of other options that may be available.

Other Business

Shenandoah Forum organization plans to hold a Farm-to-Table dinner and workshop Wednesday, April 10, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned