



# Shenandoah County Conservation Easement Authority

Office of Community Development  
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Woodstock, VA 22664

[www.shenandoahcountyva.us/committees/cea](http://www.shenandoahcountyva.us/committees/cea)

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## MEETING MINUTES

September 4, 2013; 4:00-6:00 PM

Board Conference Room

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

Others Present: Mr. Felling Felling

### Call to Order

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

### Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the CEA meeting on August 7, 2013 approved as amended.

### Update Regarding Island Farm Easement Proposal

Several CEA members made a site visit to the farm. There is general agreement that the property should be protected with a conservation easement. However, there are a number of complications to this project, including the timing pressure from the bank, a planned public water well, a waterline easement deal with Strasburg, ongoing negotiations with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) and other issues. Given these complications, it is not prudent to encourage the landowner to apply to the program with the expectation that the CEA will step in at the last moment to be a co-holder. The existing parties to this project, DHR and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (DHR), will hopefully conclude the project. If for some reason DHR does not participate, the Town of Strasburg has the option of being a co-holder. The motion to table discussion on the project was unanimously approved by the CEA.

### Discuss CEA Funding Options for Coming Year

Mr. Felling updated the CEA on potential state funding for 2014. VDACS will have an application due on October 25, 2013. They expect to have just over one million dollars available, which could break down to \$100,000.00 per locality that applies. They require one to one match with local monies that have already been set aside. If CEA wants to apply for those funds, money must be in the bank; at this point in time CEA has no funds to offer as match. Previous CEA funds were set aside from roll back taxes, and future requests may also come from that source. Supervisor Morris recommended the CEA wait until there was

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a specific easement project in mind before making a funding request. If there are no new funds set aside by the County, we would not apply to the state for funds in October. If funds are allocated to CEA later, then Mr. Felling will inquire with VDACS to see if all available funds have been assigned to other localities.

Commissioner Smith suggested asking the BOS to set aside roll back taxes into an easement fund. Supervisor Morris asked if other counties do that, Mr. Felling replied yes. Supervisor Morris agreed that that proposal could be considered during the next budget proposal. Mrs. Hockman recommended inquiring about the possibility of asked to check to see if the County still has a land use application fee, if so could these funds possibly be set aside for CEA. Supervisor Morris asked if Mr. Felling could check with surrounding jurisdictions to see how, when and what they implemented for funding; this will guide us with a future plan.

In the near term we have an open application period until December 5<sup>th</sup>, and we should encourage applicants to donate easements if possible. Commissioner Smith asked to get future roll back taxes into a fund that CEA uses as opposed to going into a general fund. Supervisor Morris asked if other counties do that, Mr. Felling replied that he is aware of localities that do. Supervisor Morris agreed that we could consider this during the next budget proposal. Mrs. Hockman asked to check to see if the County still has a land use application fee, if so could these funds possibly be set aside for CEA. Supervisor Morris asked if Mr. Felling could check with surrounding jurisdictions to see how, when and what they implemented for funding; this will help us determine a future plan.

### **Consider Requiring Easement Applicants Be Current on County Taxes**

Mr. Felling stated Shenandoah County has an ordinance which requires real estate taxes to be paid current before obtaining a building permit. Mrs. Watkinson stated an easement cannot close if there are delinquent taxes on a property. CEA felt requiring all taxes (county, personal property, real estate, and all town taxes owed) to be current as of due date should be a stipulation added to the initial application, with CEA having authority to waive the requirement depending on individual circumstances. Mr. Felling will check into adding this to the ordinance. There have been a number of other ordinance revisions discussed previously, and a tax payment requirement should be discussed along with a broader ordinance revision proposal.

### **Other Business**

None.

*Meeting Adjourned*