



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 1, 2014; 9:00-11:00 AM

Board Conference Room

CEA Members present: Chairperson Kelly Watkinson, Leon Smith, Cindy Dellinger, and Supervisor Steve Baker

Others Present: Patrick Felling, Jed Rau, Kim Woodwell 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 meeting on September 3, 2014 were approved as presented.

Overview of Rollback Decision

Mr. Felling presented the Resolution which was passed 4-2 by the BOS. Strong support in favor of dedication of roll back tax collections to the CEA program, 13 people spoke in favor, 3 opposed. The resolution states starting next fiscal year and continuing in future years, rollback receipts up to \$50,000 will be allocated and appropriated to the CEA for the purposes of implementing the CEA program. The Commissioner of Revenue and/or Treasurer can give CEA an estimate of what they are collecting prior to appropriation for planning purposes. There is now approximately \$2,500 in CEA's account.

Review of Federal and State Funding

Mr. Felling stated NRCS' last grant was issued in June of this year; the one before that was November 2013. It is uncertain when the next grant round will be.

Chairperson Watkinson stated with the new Farm Bill, NRCS funding was probably delayed. They like to release funds at the beginning of the year on a target date, but if something comes up, it may get pushed back. They will often distribute funds a second time during the year if they do have extra funds.

Mr. Felling will find out when the next grant round will open up. In recent years, Virginia's NRCS office returned unused grant funds to be redistributed to other states.

For State funding, VLCF grant applications are due November 21st, categories are:

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- Open Space Parks
 - Natural Areas
 - Historic Resources
 - Farms / Forest

This grant program is project-specific (i.e. directed to a certain easement), but it does not require a local match. VLCF did not issue any grants last year.

Chairperson Watkinson stated that NRCS funds can be used to match VLCF funds. VLCF is a lot harder to get as there is more competition. If we have a good candidate then we should talk to them about getting VLCF funding. Mr. Felling will research files of previously interested land owners to see if they are interested in applying. Chairperson Watkinson stated need to get the word out as there is an opportunity to apply for grant funding, interested persons should apply to the program for evaluation.

Mr. Felling stated VDACS does require a local match, dollar for dollar. We can apply to VDACS to match current CEA funds of \$2,500.00, which could help pay for closing costs.

View Easement Outreach Videos

Mr. Felling stated Potomac Conservancy is working with Frederick County to make videos. A sample of several different types of videos was presented for CEA viewing. Brief discussion ensued about the videos. Mrs. Dellinger suggested getting videos out to the schools to educate FFA students.

Other Business

Several people expressed dismay about the insulting comments made by a supervisor at a BOS meeting about those serving on the CEA. Supervisor Baker stated CEA consists of citizens volunteering their time and felt they should continue to pursue the goals of the County program with excellence. There was concern that those comments would discourage other citizens from volunteering to serve on one of the many County citizen committees. The CEA discussed what could be done to prevent that.

Mrs. Dellinger would like CEA to work on setting annual goals, and put together a plan.

Chairperson Watkinson recommended CEA make the connection between easements and economic development, particularly with agriculture and tourism. CEA could invite representatives from other County departments to help us develop a plan.

The next CEA meeting is scheduled for November 5th.

Meeting Adjourned