



# *Shenandoah County*

Office of Community Development  
600 North Main Street, Suite 107  
Woodstock, VA 22664  
[www.shenandoahcountyva.us/planningzoning](http://www.shenandoahcountyva.us/planningzoning)

Phone  
540.459.6190  
Fax  
540.459.6193

## **Shenandoah County**

### **Conservation Easement Authority**

*Board Conference Room*

*Shenandoah County Government Center*

*Woodstock, Virginia*

**Thursday February 23, 2017; 5:00 – 7:00 PM**

### **Agenda**

1. Approve November 2016 CEA Meeting Minutes
2. County Easement Update
3. Strategic Planning
4. Outreach Strategies
5. Next Meeting
6. Other
7. Adjourn





# Shenandoah County

## Conservation Easement Authority

Office of Community Development  
600 North Main Street, Suite 107  
Woodstock, VA 22664

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

---

### MEETING MINUTES

November 2, 2016, 5:00 PM

Board Conference Room

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

Others Present: Jill Jefferson, Staff, Brenna Menefee, Staff  
John Hutchinson- Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation  
and John and Fran Crisman - Citizens

#### Call to Order

The meeting was brought to order by Jill Jefferson at 5:10 PM.

#### Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

The minutes for the CEA meeting on May 4, 2016 were unanimously approved by all members.

#### Introduction of New County Planner

Jill Jefferson, County Planner, introduced herself to the CEA committee.

#### Discussion Regarding Alternative Funding for CEA

The Committee discussed proceeding in 2017 with no funds. Jill proposed to the committee that she continue looking for grant money to help cover the cost of application fees incurred by an applicant for an easement. All members of the committee agreed that they would like to continue to move forward, and grant money would be helpful. Jill will provide a list to the Committee of different grants available and the deadlines for applying for them. Jill is going to find out if the committee needs the approval of the Board of Supervisors in order to apply for a grant and/or simply look for grant options; understanding grant acceptance requires Board approval. Bradley Polk, Community Development Director, will be made aware of how the committee is moving forward and if any grants are being looked into.

#### Plans for 2017

Kelly suggested creating a strategic plan during 2017, to plan for encouraging more easements, in the event future funding is reinstated. The Committee agreed to a strategic plan.

The members of the committee agreed that the mission statement below is still a good representation of the goals of the CEA:

“To retain the rural character, ensure agricultural sustainability, and protect historic and natural resources in Shenandoah County by promoting, holding/co-holding and purchasing Voluntary Conservation Easements”.

Jill briefly reviewed the tasks regarding outreach that were outlined in a 2015 Goal-setting worksheet. Members agreed that many of those tasks have been done in the past and can continue to be worked on. Moving forward, Conservation Easements and outreach will be more integrated with other aspects of the county, such as Tourism and the Ag & Forestal Districts. By creating a consistent message and seeing Easements as a part of the vision of the county as a whole and beneficial to the industries of Shenandoah County, the easements will become embedded in the County more. Kelly said she wants citizens to know and care about the county's easement program and why it exists.

Doug brought up the importance of having Chris Way, GIS Coordinator, add a layer to GIS where easements are able to be viewed by anyone who has an interest. All members agreed that this will add to the consistency needed and help bring together different county departments, such as the CEA and the Building Department. Jill and Doug will work with Chris to have this added as an additional layer on the GIS website.

Members would also like to have a flow chart/ checklist created or made available for the process of purchasing an easement.

**Summary:** A strategic Plan and Outreach materials will be prepared in 2017. Easements will be noted on the County GIS website with parcel data.

Committee would like to meet next on December 7<sup>th</sup> and then every other month going forward.

### **Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation- John Hutchinson**

John discussed Battlefield Foundation easement plans in the County and updated the Authority on the Marjorie Hudgins 78-acre property. Marjorie Hudgins' property is located just north of Maurertown Mill Rd and adjacent to I-81 outside of the Toms Brook-Maurertown Sanitary District. Having an easement in this location would protect open space with newer housing development not far from her property. John walked through his first attempt of ranking criteria. John described the worksheet preliminary scores. A proposed parcel must rank a score of at least 25 points to be considered. This would be a donated easement, for the BOS to consider. John described the benefits for the County to be the applicant, rather than his Battlefield Foundation including increased property protection from eminent domain. Many state agencies are no longer becoming the

applicant for property owners and encourage the counties to be the applicant. John said the Battlefield Foundation will continue to assist with paperwork and easement preparations; however, there are times, such as the case with Marjorie Hudgins' property where it the benefits are greatest with the County as the applicant.

Faye Cooper from the Valley Conservation Council met with the landowner and believes the landowner is aware of the process involved in putting her land in an easement. This prospect is not ready to move forward yet; the Battlefield Foundation will continue to speak with the landowner. John hopes to formally propose the partnership in this easement to the CEA during the December meeting.

#### Chrisman Property

The Chrisman's proposed easement of 33 acres in Fort Valley was discussed and how their lot size makes an easement challenging. Doug French offered to talk with them to help look for conservation options they may have available. Jill mentioned they could apply for as a Century Farm designation. While not a conservation tool, it may afford a level of protection with that distinguished designation.

#### **Other Business**

The next CEA meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2016 at 5:00 PM. *Meeting Adjourned.*