



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

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, Brenna Menefee, 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

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, so obtaining grant money would make that possible. Before the next meeting Jill would like to have a list put together of the different grants that are 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, accept a grant, and/or simply look for grant options. 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 for 2017 to which the committee agreed.

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, but can continue to be worked on.

Kelly would like to see Conservation Easements integrated more with other aspects of the county, such as Tourism. She believes helping people see Easements as a part of the vision of the county as a whole and beneficial to the industries of Shenandoah County is needed. 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 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. Although it has been brought up before, 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.

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

Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation- John Hutchinson

John provided an example of the ranking criteria worksheet that is filled out when someone is interested in an easement. The example was done using Marjorie Hudgins property which is located just north of Maurertown Mill Rd and adjacent to I-81. It is 78 acres and is outside of the Toms Brook-Maurertown Sanitary District. Having an easement in this location would be very positive as there is a newer housing development not far from her property. John went over the specific scores and how he came up with them. The parcel must obtain at least 25 points under the ranking criteria to be considered. This would be a donated easement, which the BOS has said they would consider.

Faye did meet 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 still needs to speak with the landowner.

John is hoping to be able to formally propose the partnership in this easement to the CEA during the December meeting.

Other Business

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