

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE SHENANDOAH COUNTY CONSERVATION
EASEMENT AUTHORITY

February 1st, 2023

A regular meeting of the Shenandoah County Conservation Easement Authority was held in the Emergency Operations Center, 600 North Main Street, Woodstock, Virginia on February 1st, 2023.

CEA Members present: Chair Dee Hockman, Vice Chair Doug French, Planning Commissioner Debbie Keller, and Kelly Watkinson.

CEA Members absent: Supervisor Josh Stephens.

Others Present: Tyler Hinkle County Planner, Lemuel Hancock Director of Community Development, Kim Woodwell Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley, and Marla Mooney.

Chair Dee Hockman called the CEA meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

1. **February Agenda**

Chair Hockman asked if anyone would like to make a motion, Debbie Keller made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Kelly Watkinson seconded the motion. All in favor. This motion carried.

2. **October and November Minutes**

Chair Hockman asked if anyone would like to make a motion, Debbie Keller made a motion to approve the October 5th, 2022 and November 10th, 2022 minutes as presented. Kelly Watkinson seconded the motion. All in favor. This motion carried.

3. **Appointment Of A Chair And Vice Chair For 2023**

Chair Hockman asked if anyone would like to make a motion, Debbie Keller made a motion to appoint Dee Hockman as the Chair. Kelly Watkinson seconded the motion. All in favor. This motion carried.

Chair Hockman made a motion to appoint Doug French as the Vice Chair. Kelly Watkinson seconded the motion. All in favor. This motion carried.

4. **Public Comment**

No comments.

5. **Shenandoah Valley Conservation Collaborative**

Tyler Hinkle provided an update on the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant for the purposes of funding land conservation in the Shenandoah Valley. He stated that the funding was awarded and that because the CEA was a partner then we will be able to pull from the funding.

6. **CEA Funding**

Mr. Hinkle noted that the CEA has \$334,000 to use for conservation purposes across the County and will receive up to an additional \$25,000 for the next fiscal year.

7. **Farm Tour**

Members of the Authority thanked Vice Chair French for hosting everyone at his farm for the farm tour last fall and noted that it was a great success.

8. **CEA DDR 21-12-01**

Mr. Hinkle provided updates to the committee on the progress on the previously presented easement. He noted that the easement is on its way to the courthouse to be filed and that it was approved unanimously by the Board of Supervisors.

Members asked that a donor letter of intent is provided to outline the reasoning for why he did his easement the way he did it to ensure the protection of his land and prevent contest.

9. **CEA DDR 22-02-01**

Mr. Hinkle provided updates to the committee on the progress on working with Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation on the previously presented easement. He also noted the request for Shenandoah County to provide advance funding for due diligence costs up front for CEA-PDR 22-02-01 for a total cost of \$35,000, to be repaid upon receipt of donations by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation. The purpose of the request is to assist in the downpayment of the purchase of the property as well as the due diligence costs in order to support the easement moving forward.

Members asked for research to be done on whether the funds can come from the VDACS grant. Members also requested that further information be provided from the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation on the repayment timeline and that a formal agreement should be signed with the Foundation.

10. **CEA DDR 23-02-01**

Mr. Hinkle provided an overview of the request for the CEA to be the sole holder for a Conservation Easement on Tax Map Parcel 034-A-014, covering a total of 3 acres. The parcel is to be used by the SVBF to develop a park for Toms Brook.

Members questioned the purpose of a small easement such as this and the public benefit of the easement. Members requested additional information for the next meeting on the reasoning for why they were approved for the VOF grant and why it would be beneficial for the County to be the holder of the easement.

11. **Other Easements**

Mr. Hinkle provided an overview of various landowners interested in a conservation easement in the County.

CEA-PDR 23-02-01: Purchase Of Development Rights for a Conservation Easement on Tax Map Parcels 015 A 110 and 015 A 109 covering a total of 143.256 acres at 3837 John Marshall Hwy, Strasburg, VA 22657 for Freedom Ridge Farm LLC.

CEA-PDR 23-02-02: Purchase Of Development Rights for a Conservation Easement on Tax Map Parcels 034 A 048, 034 A 048A, 034 A 045, 034 A 030A, 034 A 121, 034 A 122, and 034 A 046

covering a total of 94.245 acres at 91 Brook Creek Rd., Toms Brook, VA 22660 for Rosenberger Farm LLC.

CEA-PDR 23-02-03: Purchase Of Development Rights for a Conservation Easement on Tax Map Parcels 034 A 049, 034 A 050, and 034 A 042 covering a total of 166.767 acres at 1896 Harrisville Rd., Toms Brook, VA 22660 for Danny L and Brenda K Rosenberger.

CEA-PDR 23-02-04: Purchase Of Development Rights for a Conservation Easement on Tax Map Parcel 033 A 239 covering a total of 51.311 acres at 49 Ritenour Ln., Maurertown, VA 22644 for Three Amigos LLC.

Members expressed great interest in working on all of these easements and working with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation on those in the Maurertown Toms Brook area and then with Valley Conservation Council or another holder on the Back Road location.

Mr. Hinkle also provided an overview of additional easements that would be in partnership with Valley Conservation Council.

CEA-PDR 23-02-05: Purchase Of Development Rights for a Conservation Easement on Tax Map Parcels 009 A 081, 009 A 079, and 009 A 082 covering a total of 140 acres at 861 Julius Keller Rd., Strasburg, VA 22657 for William Booker Humphries III.

CEA-PDR 23-02-06: Purchase Of Development Rights for a Conservation Easement on Tax Map Parcels 070 A 156G covering a total of 34.344 acres at 1024 Water St., Edinburg, VA 22824 for Scott and Anny Lowery Meza.

CEA-PDR 23-02-07: Purchase Of Development Rights for a Conservation Easement on Tax Map Parcels 084 A 080A, 084 A 080B, 084 A 081B, 084 A 081C, and 084 A 081 covering a total of 157.522 acres at 1767 St Davids Church Rd., Fort Valley, VA 22652 for Justin Tracy and Jessi Lyn Ritenour.

Members expressed interest in working on all these easements.

12. **PDR Review Process**

Mr. Hinkle noted that he would keep the committee apprised if any applications were received between then and their next meeting.

13. **Shenandoah 2045**

Mr. Hinkle noted that the CAC would be completing its first draft of the new comprehensive plan by May.

Next Meeting: April 13th, 2023. Meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM

Minutes recorded by Tyler Hinkle

Mission statement 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".