

Crozet Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes from August 10, 2022

***Note: This meeting was held pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 20-A (16); An Ordinance to Ensure the Continuity of Government During the Covid-19 Disaster.**

Members Present:

Joe Fore - Chair
Michael Monaco - Secretary
Kostas Alibertis
Jim Duncan
Marc McKenney
Ken Thacker
Mallory DeCoster
Valerie Long
Mallory DeCoster
Grace Remer
Allie Pesch
Mike Kunkel
Sandra Hausman
Ann Mallek - Board of Supervisors

County Staff:

Carolyn Shaffer – Clerk
Rachel Falkenstein - Planning Manager

Chair Joe Fore called the meeting to order at 7:02

June minutes approved with amendments to roster; motion by Kostas Alibertis, seconded by Jim Duncan.

Presentation from the Downtown Crozet Initiative (60 minutes)

Meg Holden, DCI President & Frank Stoner

Notes

The revised 60% plans (near-complete construction drawings) are going to VDOT next week; after this, VDOT will release the county for the land and utility phases. The plan faced a delay earlier this year when Dominion provided an estimate for moving power lines at \$1.2m; this has since been negotiated down. The County did allocate additional funds at the BOS level to keep the project moving forward earlier this year.

The plan does include a bike/ped path distinct from but parallel to the street connecting to Parkside Village. This could potentially connect to discussed statewide funding for bike connection from Afton to Charlottesville. The road network & the square will be proceeding at the same time. VDOT initially wanted the road connection to be a higher-speed thruway; as of now, DCI has brought that down to a slower speed roadway. The road also includes a potential northern exit underpass by the fire station.

DCI's intent is to raise money for features in the plaza; all proposed features may not continue to reality from the planning phase. DCI has committed \$1.2m in features for the plaza; beyond that, fundraising will continue on a community basis in the same vein as the Crozet library project. The features were generated via community input in 2016/2017 with help from consultants at MRA.

Discussion

Question from Clover Carroll in the public: What kinds of businesses do we anticipate in the mixed-use commercial building, and do we have a commitment from a hotel?

Frank: I will have more details on that in a later part of the presentation. We have interest from two hotel companies - one that's a small, boutique-y developer, the other is more of a condo/budget hotel. With uncertain timing, it's been difficult to make commitment with any company, but we are achieving certainty in the near future.

Marc McKenney: Is the bike shop involved in these discussions, and will it be preserved, since it's an important community feature?

Frank: They currently lease the land from us; we've discussed short-term options during construction and long-term relocation, possibly aiming for the bike path. There's opportunity to keep them onsite, and if not onsite then downtown. They will be displaced by Phase One.

Mallory DeCoster: What's the parking plan?

Frank: Lots of street parking; there'll be plenty of parking during phase 1, and we're looking at surface parking in Phase Two and Three next to the railroad tracks. As Phase Two and Three move forward, we'll need to figure out long term solutions. The County hired a consultant to look at parking here and in downtown in general. Either we'll need surface parking or creative solutions - we've even talked to Perrone Robotics about shuttles for outside parking areas. In the 5-8 year range, plenty of parking. We will have surface parking lots by the railroad track. *The aforementioned parking study is an appendix to the Master Plan.*

Sandra Hausman: What about renewable energy?

Frank: We've had conversations with Dave Stoner about how to incorporate solar design into the downtown area. We've looked into solar rooftops, we've talked about offsite solar to offset energy costs. Solar parking area roofs are not particularly cost-effective. Dominion is not easy to work with on this. The streets were going to be pavers, not pavement, which VDOT hated; they refused permeable pavers. The compromise position is paver crosswalks, pavement streets.

Ann Mallek: What are the layout of the promenades?

Frank: One goes north-south, where Oak Street is now; the other is east-west, between hotel and mixed-use building, and could be site to microbusiness/small retail.

DCI intends for the space at the far corner of the plaza, following discussions with community stakeholders in the arts, to be a Crozet Arts space, serving as a hub for arts and performances. A good part of that depends on the arts community in Crozet to organize. Frank displays proposed floorplans for the mixed-use commercial space.

Marc McKenney: These plans don't impact the Fardowners-Parkway business, correct?

Frank: That's correct.

Marc McKenney: When it comes to maintaining public restrooms and other public elements, who's in charge of upkeep for that?

Frank: The County and DCI both want those to be public restrooms and spaces, and are working on the details of an agreement between the County and DCI. The Plaza will be a County-owned asset, ultimately. Dave Stoner and Ann Mallek provide similar information - that discussions are ongoing between DCI and the County for the first year of the Plaza's existence and beyond.

Sandra Hausman: Does the population in Crozet support the businesses/spaces in these floor plans?

Frank: The County hired someone to study that. There are gaps in the community, but as Crozet approaches 10k or even 15k in population, especially with the disposable income in Crozet, there is

demand in the Crozet market. But it is true that if it's not programmed successfully, the Plaza will not be successful. It's important to make sure this space is vibrant and effective.

Ann Mallek: When the library was planned, we looked at a 35-square-mile area as the "service area;" that same area is drawn to the Plaza.

Meg Holden: Agritourism and outside visitors will likely be a component of the population visiting Downtown Crozet.

Valerie Long: Is there an estimate for groundbreaking?

Frank: Assuming plans in next week, construction for the square and the VDOT road extensions would likely begin early summer 2023. Right now, it depends on how long it takes VDOT to clear the plans; we've checked a lot of other boxes.

Valerie Long: Does that include siteplan approval?

Frank: Siteplan approval for the Plaza won't go in until this fall; the siteplan approval is next up for the roads. The road construction starts early summer 2023 and the Plaza will be about 6 months behind the roads.

Marc McKenney: How long do you expect Phase One to take?

Frank: Four or five years total. The goal is to complete buildings first to give it a sense of place.

Joe Fore: What do you see for further opportunities for public engagement?

Meg Holden: That is part of the feasibility study. The County isn't keen on some of the features the community really wanted for liability reasons. If people are interested in giving us feedback, we welcome all the feedback we can get. We'll be reaching out to key stakeholders to test the viability of the different aspects of the project. If the key stakeholders - not necessarily investors, but those with interest in the project. The design has been through many public iterations, so we're not currently doing sticky-note or dot voting type meetings.

Committee business - Master Plan implementation (30 minutes)

There have been ways in the past that the CCAC members have been able to support implementation of the Crozet Master Plan. Joe Fore is hoping to identify implementation items in the Master Plan that we can assist with in the near-term, including possibly the NOAH. Rachel Falkenstein provides information that staff is all-hands-on-deck re: the Comprehensive Plan, and the County can't provide staff support on implementation items.

Another identified item is to "Increase capacity of the CCAC...to initiate, implement, and manage placemaking projects." Perhaps in the future we can ID ways in which the CCAC can support this.

Ann Mallek shares that the National Association of Counties Arts & Culture Commission, a body on which she serves, may have resources for facilitating placemaking conversations and dialogues, an avenue in which the CCAC may be able to make inroads.

Committee Business/Announcements

New CCAC member Grace Remer introduces herself.

This is the last virtual CCAC meeting. The next meeting will be in September, in person, at the Crozet Library.

Ann Mallek: The Three Notch'd Bike Trail is becoming a reality after 10 long years of work. County parks have seen explosive attendance growth in the last two years, and we have staffing needs out at the parks, including at Mint Springs. The County is looking into swim-at-your-own-risk options for the parks, which may be more viable in the future.

Closing Material

Next meeting tentatively scheduled for September 14th at 7:00 pm, at the Crozet Library. Details will be posted on the County calendar on the website. <https://www.albemarle.org/community/county-calendar>

Joe Fore read the closing statement, reminding all that the meeting was held pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 20-A (16); An Ordinance to Ensure the Continuity of Government During the Covid-19 Disaster.

Valerie Long moves to adjourn; seconded; Joe Fore adjourned the meeting at 8:35 pm.