

# Crozet Community Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes from August 9, 2023

### Members Present:

Joe Fore - Chair  
 Michael Monaco - Secretary  
 Bruce Butala  
 Ken Thacker  
 Kostas Alibertis  
 Valerie Long  
 Grace Remer  
 Lonnie Murray, Planning Commission  
 Ann Mallek, Board of Supervisors

Allison Wrabel, Community Connector  
 Sandy Shackelford, Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization

Chair Joe Fore called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

### Call to Order, Agenda Review, Introductions

No minutes from the all-CAC July meeting, because we did not have a quorum.

### Scheduled Presentations: Moving Toward 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Sandy Shackelford introduces her presentation.

Matt H (community member): How does this match up with the county's rural set-aside map? Curious about the definition of urbanized.

Sandy: Relies on census definitions (was population; is now more based on housing units) plus projections over the next ten years. Developed by the MPO, approved by the governor.

Sandy: This conversation doesn't focus on rail. This is because we have to prioritize bike/ped/transit/road in order to secure funding. On slide 6, emphasizes the need to prioritize prudently in order to take advantage of limited funding.

Ken Thacker: Asks about slide 7 - "Projects submitted by localities are not shown" - was anything submitted by Crozet?

Sandy: The 240/250 roundabout was a few LRTP's ago

Ann: The 240/250 roundabout is now in Bundle 2, a set of state funds. There are upcoming hearings - September 19 and September 21 at the Ntl Guard Armory and Center at Belvedere respectively. Would be great to see community support.

Valerie Long: Could you provide a quick explanation of the Route 29 Shared Use Path route?

Sandy & Ann: Goes south on the east side of the road to Woodbrook

Joe: Shared-use paths, particularly along 240 from the eastern neighborhoods

Valerie: Shared-use paths along 250 in particular as well, at least as far as Foxchase. The Eastern Ave connector as well.

Michael: Eastern Ave connector north and south, to take pressure off the other 240/250 bottlenecks and provide internal escape valve.

Joe: Agreed

Ken: Sidewalks in the core of Crozet - in the old neighborhoods near downtown.

Lonnie: Park road in particular - there's been a lot of concern expressed for pedestrian safety, especially for kids, around Crozet Park.

Lonnie: Also, the scenic bike route that runs through Crozet is insanely dangerous. Our national bike route is an embarrassment. Not sure if it's feasible to fix the whole thing, but can we identify problem spots - sharp turns and high-crash spots. 810 to White Hall is particularly bad. Short of a bike lane, even just a buffer on the shoulders would alleviate. When cars pass the bikes on the route, it creates a risk.

Joe: Mentions the Crozet trails - they have a last mile problem, connecting tricky spots with bridges and signage that are relatively low-cost (\$50k-\$100k) with potentially high impact. Trailheads as well - access points. So many are in neighborhoods/HOAs. Public trailheads by Crozet Ave, just north of the Meadows/Meadowlands.

Sandy: Some of these are wouldn't fall under our funding categories - but there are other funding sources available.

Valerie: Something between 250 and 240 on Crozet Ave up to Jarmans Gap road for pedestrians - highly risky now. Additionally, something on Jarmans Gap road on the way to Chiles Orchard to accommodate the higher volume of traffic.

Lonnie: That's a gateway to Shenandoah.

Michael: That 240 Crozet Ave stretch is dangerous - folks living at the Meadows/Meadowlands walk downtown from there, which is a dangerous endeavor.

Matt H (community member): Need to see investments in the old neighborhoods - sidewalk fully from the Dairy Queen to the elementary school. There is a state board being established for shared-use paths; we need that kind of professional investment in defining our trail system. Never going to get RTP funds without that kind of demonstration of study in the trails. There is a consultant down at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg.

Lonnie: That would be great - I would like for the county/MPO to set that up. Connect it with the mobility alliance perhaps.

Matt H: Would be great to have the county send people to the state trails advisory committee.

Bill O (community member): Would love to get sidewalks, be able to walk around Crozet park without getting killed. What does Crozet as a small area need to do to get the funds that are apparently being used closer to the urban ring?

Sandy: There are a lot of things that go into the decision-making - safety concerns, etc - when the state is looking at prioritizing transportation, they're not necessarily looking at residential development, they're looking at land use and economic development. Part of this is lining up projects here with those state priorities to make them more attractive to state funders.

Bill O: Three problem intersections - Miller School Road/250, the Harris Teeter intersection, Park Road up to Park Ridge.

Lonnie: How does the MPO boundary get shifted?

Sandy: Includes any urbanized areas as defined by the census, then includes areas we project to be urbanized within 10 years.

Joe Fore: Another intersection - Old Trail and 250 - three schools there, as well as businesses down the road. That's a lot of traffic.

Lonnie: That Miller School intersection could be easily improved with a turn lane; people are already off-roading it to make their own turn lane. This would be from Crozet turning right, going towards Henley and Western. Extending the right-turn lane would improve this a lot.

Valerie: There is a roundabout planned there in the master plan, which could solve this.

Kostas: If 64 could accommodate more traffic, then 250 would be freed up for more bike/ped; right now, if something happens on 64, it shuts down 250 too. If there were a third lane on 250 by the Old Trail/school area it would accommodate some of this. The biggest challenge is between the stoplight and the schools.

Perhaps a variable-time third lane - one way in the morning, the other in the afternoon - could more efficiently use that third lane space. That long turn lane to Miller School - nobody uses the full length, so we should use it more efficiently.

Bruce: The exit off 64 coming east into Crozet - it's a tricky intersection at high-traffic times. That would be exit 107.

Matt H (community member): It feels like there is no overall plan, just addressing individual points. We need all these intersections in one project; when it's only addressed piecemeal, it won't happen.

Bruce: The 90-degree turn on Park Road is such a dangerous turn; could we get a connection straight from Park Rd to Crozet Ave.

Valerie: There was a brief plan for that in the Master Plan, to connect Park → Dunvegan → Crozet Ave.

Grace Remer: Another problematic intersection, intersection of Jarmans Gap and Lanetown - the intersection is an old country intersection, off-center. Railroad Ave as well is not conducive to walking - widening that is hard with the rail line, but it's not an easy place to move. Also - downtown Crozet. We need to buff up the transportation infrastructure around downtown Crozet.

Sandy: One sentence to sum up what transportation infrastructure should do?

Michael: Get people out of cars.

Kostas: Improve efficient moving for the commuter traffic we have.

Matt H: Support ebikes - advancements in multimodal transportation.

Lonnie: My dream would be passenger rail from Waynesboro to Cville.

Ann: It's possible now - state ownership around the rail has changed.

Matt H: How many folks at this meeting walked or biked? (Michael raises his hand) Crozet is inaccessible to Crozetians.

### **Board of Supervisors/Planning Commission Liaison Updates**

Ann:

- This is the first year that VDOT is doing a pipeline project system. They have open surveys/meetings for two pipelines now - the Old Ivy/Ivy length from Foods of All Nations to Boar's Head, and the Barracks 29 corridor. This generates VDOT's information, which they can use to fund big improvements holistically.
- The Riparian Buffer Overlay District: this is the culmination of 15 years of struggle, but it's also complicated legalese. The BOS needs public input on this complicated text. The headline: moving stream buffers from the water protection ordinance to the zoning ordinance, which puts some more regulation involved in stream buffers.
- Comp plan updates - these require public input, too. A fairly well-done survey with lots of places to contribute feedback. Large in-person meetings will happen later in the process. We aren't even to draft stage yet - this is still soliciting public input. It's not watching grass grow - it's really important stuff.
- (Kostas asks about the 240/250 roundabout, mentioned earlier) Four years ago the roundabout was *due*. During COVID, there was a big musical chairs at VDOT. It disappeared off the list, then ended up in 2025. The new staff at Culpeper has contacted Ann (4 months ago). They're working on getting it back on track. It's been slipped into an already-approved funding bundle. Public meetings are coming, and it is going to procurement. Happening Q1 2024. Design starts 30 days after procurement. All these projects in the bundle (5 projects) will be happening in parallel. That bundling system - parallel work - has worked so far for other projects. This is what VDOT decided to do, we have to play by their rules. The non-emergency dept to call or to report an otherwise unreported accident: 977-9041. The more VDOT sees the dangerous statistics for 240/250 and Park Ridge Rd, the more we can show.

Lonnie:

- Tom L (community member): It's been the Crozet position to discourage the development along the 250 corridor. Why did you take a different position in last night's meeting?
- Lonnie: That was not my position. Uses are going to occur along that corridor - gas stations etc. It's a rural area. If we want it to be rural, we should encourage uses that are consistent with the rural area. The staff report included more heavy industrial/warehousing uses, which I opposed.
- Valerie: I don't know that there is an official position of the Crozet community, although I'm sure many people agree with Tom.
- Lonnie: Failing to plan is planning to fail. Either we plan for the uses we want, or we end up with the uses we get.
- Valerie: The stretch between Western and the lumberyard is dangerous for that reason exactly.
- Tom L (community member): Some of the current conditions came from Freetown community members' desire to not develop that stretch.

Lonnie:

- Lonnie was the red card on all four of the topic areas in the AC44 phase 2 at the PC meeting on 8/8. One of the things presented was a potential map for expansion of development areas. Lonnie (and other commissioners) were of the opinion that this would be disastrous for those areas - speculation would drive up land prices. Before we even talk about expanding the growth areas, we need to maximize the growth areas we have. There are big empty seas of pavement in the urban ring that could be far better used, and there was general agreement around that.
- Another AC44 area of interest was the activity center topic. Crozet appears ahead of the game in that we have them mapped already.
- Rural Crossroads communities - one item was expanding the potential by-right uses at rural crossroads. Banks, restaurants, childcare - things that in my opinion would be a significant expansion of what are currently rural locations.
- Finally, rural interstate interchanges. Expressed concern from Crozetians that we don't want to pull activity from downtown towards exit 107. Question of - should this be a priority for changing land use around the interchange. If we want to attract businesses to the area, maybe we don't want the kind of businesses that flock to interstate interchanges.
- Asks for feedback from CAC and public on these things - either to Lonnie directly or via the survey links.

Kostas: Expresses agreement, particularly on the accelerating property values in possible future development areas.

Lonnie: Points out that if the assessed value of land increases artificially, the amount of revenue-sharing we pay to Cville increases commensurately.

Joe: Commends the planning commission on the recent meeting regarding the mobile home park - exceptional collaboration between PC members, staff, and the developer. Thought it was a model for engagement.

Lonnie: Thank you - we all wanted to do the right thing. After all we've heard about pedestrian infrastructure on that road - we needed to get something from the developer.

Tom L (community member): If the county expands the growth areas, it breaks the 1975 promise to protect the local growth areas. But if growth areas do expand, will the county continue to ask residents to pay for a non-existing preservation plan?

Ann: I would not be in favor of expansion. We have made progress in land use allocation. Right now is the interval for landowners to hand in their participation packets (by September). For productive land only. There's been a lot of progress in the last seven years to inspect and make sure that people are participating in the preservation efforts fairly. It's only the soil included in that - improvements are assessed at market rate.

Tom: Did the board vote to industrialize the rural area when they approved the solar farm? If it's preservation, call it preservation.

## **Other Business**

### **Discussion of Riparian Buffer Overlay District**

Lonnie:

- The water protection ordinance was eviscerated in 2014. Combined two ordinances; the end result was that the ordinance only applied for disturbance of 10,000 sq ft or more. This effectively permitted the destruction of riparian buffers by 9,999 sq ft at a time.
- This RBOD gets it out of ordinance and into zoning. This is good, but it's still weaker than 2014. Prior to 2014, if someone wanted to get within the 35-ft buffer of a stream, they had to go through the soil conservation plan; after 2014, everyone just stopped submitting to the conservation body.
- This only applies to residential development. Permitted uses still include agriculture. Forest roads are an end-run around this policy.
- It's a dense, dense document. We need as many eyes on it as possible. Concerned that this is another thing that goes through the process with minimal public input. Water quality has decreased since 2014, but our ordinances are looser than 2014. We should be doing more, not less.

Joe: Does this draft do more than we currently do, but not what we used to do?

Lonnie: It's way better than what we have right now. A big step forward. I personally feel we should be going further than what we had in 2014.

Joe: Would it alleviate the concerns with Montclair?

Lonnie: I think it would help. There will be a map now. But if enforcement is based only on the map - there are streams we don't know about. Perennial/intermittent streams that are undocumented - what's the process for getting that on the map? Or the process for removing them from the map?

Joe: Removing in particular.

Matt H: I do have concerns about trails in the floodplain - it's unsustainable. Would like to see more on the trails.

Lonnie: The trails are addressed - you might not like what's in there.

Matt H: The stream on the north side of Railroad Ave needs to be daylighted - does this allow for remediation of existing streams?

Lonnie: There's a series of stream health initiatives - restoration hasn't really come up yet, but it's a worthy topic. There's other items like that to bring forward - low-impact development. We need more mechanisms to encourage stream daylighting. If you lose the headwaters, you lose the stream.

Lonnie: UVA has shown in the South Lawn project that you can incorporate intermittent streams in design.

### **Debrief of July's All-CAC Town Hall**

No update.

## **Community Concerns**

Matt H: Property for sale down the road - the county should be acquiring that to provide additional park space. Right before Chesterfield Landing, Crozet Ave area.

Next meeting tentatively scheduled for September 13 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>

Kostas motioned to adjourn; Michael seconded. Joe Fore adjourned the meeting at 8:33 pm.