

Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority

Meeting Minutes

Friday, August 9, 2024 – 10:00 AM

Berryville/Clarke County Government Center – A/B Meeting Room

ATTENDANCE			
Randy Buckley (Chair)	✓	John Hedlund	✓
George L. Ohrstrom, II (Vice-Chair)	X	Michelle Jones	✓
Walker Thomas (Secretary/Treasurer)	X	Bev McKay	X
Rives Bacon	✓		

STAFF PRESENT: Lorien Lemmon, Brandon Stidham (Planning Dept.)

OTHERS PRESENT: Robin Couch-Cardillo

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Buckley, Chair called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Approval of the Agenda – August 9, 2024:

The Authority voted 4-0-0 to approve the Agenda with addition of Item 7b. Williams single-family dwelling size request.

Motion to approve the Agenda as amended:			
Buckley (Chair)	AYE	Hedlund	AYE (seconded)
Bacon	AYE	Jones	AYE (moved)

Approval of Meeting Minutes – July 19, 2024:

The Authority voted 4-0-0 to approve the July 19, 2024 meeting minutes as amended with minor changes requested by the Authority.

Motion to approve Meeting minutes for July 19, 2024 as corrected:			
Buckley (Chair)	AYE	Hedlund	AYE
Bacon	AYE (moved)	Jones	AYE (seconded)

Bank Account:

Ms. Lemmon reviewed the financial spreadsheets. Current fund balances show a total fund balance of \$577,970.77 consisting of \$165,703.15 in the donations account, \$242,826.91 in stewardship/restricted, and \$169,440.71 in local funds. Ms. Lemmon explained that the expenditures for July included the \$500 sponsorship of the Livestock sale dinner at the County Fair.

Ms. Lemmon reviewed the remaining VDACS funds and relayed her conversation with Amanda Scheps, the program manager of the Working Lands Preservation office at the Department of Forestry (DOF). Ms. Lemmon explained that due to the transition from VDACS to DOF to expect a delay in DUR purchase easement closings until DOF streamlines a process for deed review with their attorneys. She noted that this delay will likely affect the Williams and Fansler easements but is hopeful that closing will still occur before the end of the year. If closing is pushed into the next year due to deed review delays with DOF, Ms. Lemmon stated that she will request another extension for the FY22 funds.

Campaign for the Authority:

Ms. Couch-Cardillo stated that donations were \$10,670 from 78 donors and that she had interviewed the Bryant’s for the summer newsletter. She reviewed her plans to set up a booth at the Clarke County Fair with new banners and decorations and reminded the Authority of the donor reception in October. Ms. Lemmon volunteered to reach out to Vice-chair Ohrstrom about rentals and catering for the donor reception.

Ms. Lemmon mentioned that she did reach out to Sharon Keeler, the County Treasurer, regarding mailing the fall newsletter. Ms. Keeler stated that the Treasurer’s office is now outsourcing their mailers for the tax bill but was open to the Authority including their fall newsletter in with the tax bills so long as the donation remittance envelopes are omitted.

Ms. Couch-Cardillo reported that the CEA had one new donor, Joseph Ponte, for the month of July.

Discussion:

a. Teetor minor subdivision request

Alison Teetor placed property identified by Clarke County Tax Map# 11-A-5A located at 939 Salem Church Rd into easement with the County in 2010. In accordance with estate planning, Ms. Teetor would like to exercise her right to subdivide her property. The deed of easement allows for division as follows:

“The Property shall not be divided into, or separately conveyed as, more than two parcels; provided, however, (i) the permitted additional lot shall not exceed 4.95 acres, (ii) the subdivision creating such lot shall be approved by the Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority, as well as the County, and (iii) in no event shall the subdivision creating the lot result in a residual parcel of less than fifty (50) acres.”

Ms. Teetor has also added a building envelope to the 4.95-acre lot that will be recorded on the plat.

The Authority voted 4-0-0 to approve the Teetor minor subdivision.

Motion to grant approval of Teetor minor subdivision request:			
Buckley (Chair)	AYE	Hedlund	AYE (moved)
Bacon	AYE (seconded)	Jones	AYE

b. Williams single family dwelling size request

George Williams has applied to the easement authority for approval of a DUR purchase. The property is currently vacant and located on the west side of Kennel Rd, approximately 1700 feet from the intersection of Kennel Rd and John Mosby Highway. The property is identified by Tax Map #30-A-47B, is 22.22 acres, and has 2 DURs. The applicant would like to retire 1 of the 2 remaining DURs and the parcel is in enrolled in use value taxation.

A site visit was conducted April 26 and the Authority voted to approve the DUR purchase for \$40,000 on May 10. On July 19 the Authority approved a 6,000 square foot allowance for a single family dwelling if the applicant agreed to move the building envelopes back to where staff had originally placed them or allow 6,000 sq. ft. in Building Envelope 1 and 4,500 sq. ft. in Building Envelope 2 for the building envelope locations selected by the applicant.

The applicant has revised the building envelope locations and is requesting a 5,500 sq. ft. allowance for either building envelope. The Authority reviewed the new building envelopes and voted 4-0-0 to approve a 4,500 sq. ft. single-family dwelling for building envelope 1 and a 5,500 sq. ft. single-family dwelling for building envelope 2.

Motion to grant conditional approval of the Williams single family dwelling expansion request:			
Buckley (Chair)	AYE	Hedlund	AYE (seconded)
Bacon	AYE (moved)	Jones	AYE

Report on Easement Donations/Purchases:

a. Summary of easement applications/inquiries

Ms. Lemmon gave a broad overview of the current status of active applications and inquiries for easements. She stated that Mr. Weir had been out of town and wants to hay before the Authority conducts the site visit. She also mentioned that she will apply for the Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) grant for this easement. Ms. Lemmon stated that there has been some progress on the Fansler easement application since Ms. Teetor found a new contact with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) but a closing date is still unknown.

Ms. Lemmon explained that there were two strong applications for grants due this fall, which pushed the other inquiries towards a DUR purchase, donation, or to be considered next year’s grant cycle.

b. RSP Enterprises – Grant Purchase - TM# 16-A-1 – new application

Betsy Pritchard, co-owner RSP Enterprises (Smithfield Farm) has applied to the easement authority for approval of an easement purchase using grant funds. The property is located 660 Smithfield Lane off of Wickliffe Road adjacent to the West Virginia line. The property is identified by Tax Map# 16-A-1. Once merged with two 3-acre adjacent parcels, it will consist of 164 acres with 4 DUR’s, 2 existing dwellings, and a farm store. The primary use is for grazing and hay production. The applicant proposes to retire 4 of the remaining DURs.

The property meets all of the 4 criteria. The property resource score is 162. The applicant would retire 4 of the remaining DURs. It is next to an existing easement, property that the Pritchard’s own and placed in easement in 2021, and it is more than 40 acres. Points were given for retiring 4 DURs, having a perennial stream, frontage on a scenic byway, and being owned by the same family for more than 200 years.

Ms. Lemmon explained that this is an excellent candidate for grant funds. The adjoining parcel was approved for both federal (ALE) and state (VLCF) grant funding in 2021.

The Authority voted 4-0-0 to approve the preliminary application of the RSP Enterprises grant purchase and request staff to schedule a site visit.

Motion to grant preliminary approval of the RSP Enterprises easement grant purchase:			
Buckley (Chair)	AYE	Hedlund	AYE
Bacon	AYE (seconded)	Jones	AYE (moved)

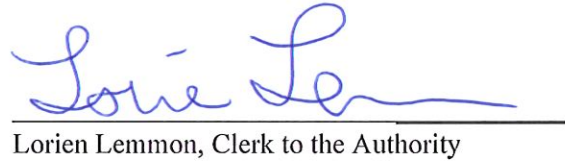
Adjournment

There being no further business, the Authority agreed to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 AM. The next Clarke County Easement Authority meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2024 at 10 AM in the A/B conference room, Government Center, Berryville.

The Authority voted 4-0-0 to adjourn the August 9, 2024 meeting at 10:35 AM.

Motion to adjourn to the August 9, 2024 meeting at 10:35 AM:			
Buckley (Chair)	A YE	Hedlund	A YE (moved)
Bacon	A YE	Jones	A YE (seconded)


 Randy Buckley, Chair


 Lorien Lemmon, Clerk to the Authority