



LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – August 15, 2019

Attendees:

Ron Battaglia	Town of Warrenton
Paul Bernard	Town of Warrenton
Michael Collins	Center for Natural Capital
Joe Costello	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Michelle Edwards	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Josh Frederick	Fauquier County
Michael Hanson	Fauquier County
Dina Hermoso	Town of Warrenton
Bryan Hofmann	Friends of the Rappahannock
Richard Jacobs	Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District
Kendall May	Culpeper County
Patrick Mauney	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Emily Melton	Fauquier County
Tracey Newman	Orange County
Joe Rossetti	Virginia Department of Forestry
Ligon Webb	Madison County

Regional Active Transportation Plan

Joe Costello, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC)

Joe Costello provided an update on the Commission's effort to significantly revise the region's Alternative Transportation Plan, which deals with bicycle and pedestrian routes and blueways. The original plan was developed in 2007 and updated in 2012. Mr. Costello stated that a lot has changed in the region since then, necessitating a more thorough revision, which will be now called the Regional Active Transportation Plan. He presented the draft GIS maps (see attached), as well as partial draft of the plan text so attendees could get a sense of the structure and provide initial feedback.

Maps included the following data sets for each RRRC member jurisdiction:

- Current assets- digitally inventoried and compiled existing trails and other features related to active transportation
- Planned improvements- those recommended in existing plans
- Potential active transportation system- existing usage based on stakeholder group and public feedback, as well as Strada and Street Light data.

Kendall May asked if Mr. Costello can email the full draft plan to the Committee when it is ready for feedback, to which he replied yes. Patrick Mauney added that Mr. Costello has met with several local committees to gather input, and if there are others that Committee members feel RRRC should reach out to, staff are happy to present to them.

Further questions and comments concerning this effort should be directed to Joe Costello at jcostello@rrregion.org or (540) 829-7450.

Chesapeake Bay WIP Implementation

Michelle Edwards, RRRC

Michelle Edwards distributed copies of a spreadsheet stakeholders had filled out with grant project information related to implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) (see attached). The spreadsheet includes current and proposed grant projects, as well as potential projects that are in the early-planning stage. Brian Hofmann, Friends of the Rappahannock, and Paul Bernard, Town of Warrenton, provided overview of their organization's projects.

Mr. Mauney asked if the Town of Warrenton's septic tank removal project is currently self-funded. Mr. Bernard replied the Towns' projects listed in the spreadsheet have not been funded or applied for grant funding, except for the bioretention project with the Center for Watershed Protection.

Ms. Edwards asked how the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) funding looks this year. Richard Jacobs replied that there is \$750,000 for VCAP cost-share state-wide, which is similar to last year's funding level. However, this year's funding comes from the state instead of federal funding. He also noted that VCAP is a cost-share program for shovel ready projects. Ms. Edwards stated that help is available from RRRC, Friends of the Rappahannock and Soil and Water Conservation Districts for localities interested in applying.

Ms. Edwards asked attendees if there were any other potential project ideas or opportunities for partnerships. Mr. Bernard stated that Warrenton is planning a streamside trail project that will include a stormwater BMP(s), and asked if what grant programs would be best to consider. Ms. Edwards and Mr. Costello recommended the Virginia Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) or the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Recreational Trails Program (RTP), depending on the location and purpose of the trail. They also noted that TAP grants open for application every two years and the round recently ended.

Ms. Edwards stated that she met with Steve Cook with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to discuss potential solutions for tracking septic pump-outs in the region for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model. She also received input via email from Greg Wichelns, Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District. The recommended solution is to require septic haulers to report pumpouts to VDH, since they are permitted by VDH and must keep a log. Mr. Cook also reported that the majority of septage from the five-county region is dumped in Remington. She asked attendees if there were any other suggestions or other input on the subject. Hearing none,

she stated she would provide the recommendation to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in the final contract report.

RRRC's current contract with DEQ will end on September 30th and a new one is due to begin October 1 and last one year. Ms. Edwards stated the new contract will include many of the same items as the current one, but will also focus on assisting localities with implementation of the Healthy Watershed Forest Initiative's recommendations and beginning to develop a watershed management plan for the Upper Rappahannock River. During the next Committee meeting, she will seek member's input on the scope of the plan and data needs.

For additional questions and comments regarding WIP III, please contact Michelle Edwards at (540) 829-7450 or medwards@rrregion.org.

Regional Food Policy Council Update

Michelle Edwards, RRRC

Flavor of the Piedmont

The Battle of the Chefs has been postponed until April 30th, 2020. Chefs from Arlie, Foti's and Off the Grid will be competing. While chefs had been lined up to compete, few vendors registered to provide tastings. The event committee, led by Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent Rebecca Gartner, felt they needed more time to personally reach out to potential vendors. Event proceeds benefit the George Washington Carver Food Enterprise Center.

Ms. Edwards stated that the farm to table tasting portion of the Flavor of the Piedmont is still planned to go on. The event is scheduled for Saturday, September 8th, for commercial buyers only 3:00-4:00pm, and for the public 4:00-6:00pm. The event will be held at The Barn at Lord Fairfax Community College in Warrenton. New flyers were distributed to attendees, who were asked to assist in promoting the event to their contacts (see attached flyer).

RRRC hosted a free workshop entitled Connecting with Commercial Buyers on August 7th at the Market at Grelen as part of its Tween Rivers Trail workshop series (see attached flyer). Virginia Cooperative Extension specialists, Dr. Kim Morgan and French Price, led the event. The workshop informed participants how to prepare for buyer-seller networking events, such as the Flavor of the Piedmont, build relationships with commercial buyers, and shared resources for finding a market for local products.

To register for the Flavor of the Piedmont or learn more, visit www.pecva.org/flavor; and for additional information, please contact Michelle Edwards at medwards@rrregion.org or (540) 829-7450. For questions or to volunteer in planning the Battle of the Chefs, please contact Rebecca Gartner at rebes13@vt.edu or (540) 727-3435.

Farm-to-School

RRRC and the PATH Foundation hosted a farm-to-school meeting at the PATH Foundation office in Warrenton for the public schools in the Rappahannock-Rapidan Region on July 10th. Staff from all school districts except Madison County attended. The main presentation was delivered by Trista Grigsby, who leads the Virginia Department of Education's farm to school

program. Tom McDougall with 4P Foods, Ms. Edwards and Ms. Dueck also presented on their programs. Discussion focused on locally-grown food procurement and distribution.

Schools expressed interest in exploring a regional solution to local food procurement, although no commitments were made or requested. Details need to be discussed and several potential obstacles need to be overcome first.

The next regional farm to school meeting is planned for Friday, October 11th 9:30am-12:00noon in RRRC's conference room. The meeting will begin with a presentation by Melanie Monroe, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, on the Department of Defense's Fresh and FAVORS public school food programs, as requested by school district staff.

Ms. Edwards presented the results of the online survey that school districts were asked to fill out prior to the meeting (see attached). She has reached out to Madison and Fauquier School Districts to fill in the missing information prior to the next meeting, so we have a more complete picture. The Secretary of Agriculture's Office is interested in the data and the potential regional procurement pilot project.

The Food Policy Council's next meeting will be held September 24, 2019, at 5:30 pm in the RRRC conference room. For further information about the regional Rappahannock-Rapidan Food Policy Council, including upcoming meetings, please contact Michelle Edwards at (540) 829-7450 or medwards@rrregion.org, or visit RRRC's Regional Food System webpage at www.rrregion.org/foodsystem.html.

Member Roundtable

- **Bryan Hofmann, Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR)**– FOR is working with the Piedmont Environmental Council to develop the Upper Rappahannock River Report Card, which should be ready next month. Staff will be presenting the results to each locality in the region. Contact Bryan with any potential nutrient management or tree planting sites. A river access meeting is scheduled for next week.
- **Josh Frederick, Fauquier County**– The County's Board of Supervisors adopted revisions to the Rural Land Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan this month.
- **Joe Rossetti, Virginia Department of Forestry**– DOF reorganized staff boundaries, breaking two work areas into three. The change does not impact the point of contact for this region, however. He ran into an issue with FEMA regarding a volunteer tree planting project in a floodplain in Loudoun County. FEMA stated that trees cannot be planted in a floodplain, because they could alter the flow of water.
 - Ms. Edwards stated she will check with other localities and organizations at upcoming state Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Workgroup and Chesapeake Bay Stakeholders Advisory Group meetings, and report back to the Committee.
- **Richard Jacobs, Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District**– The District's annual report will be published in September. They are going into the second year of their NOAA grant for watershed education at area middle schools. Additionally, Mr.

Jacobs is sitting on a state panel to provide recommendations to DEQ regarding consolidation of Erosion and Sediment Control, and Stormwater Management regulations. He invited Committee members to contact him with any concerns that he can take to the panel's next meeting.

Next Land Use & Environment Committee Meeting:

The next Land Use and Environment Committee meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2019, at 10:00 am – 12:00 noon in the RRRC conference room. Bryan Hofmann will present on the Friends of the Rappahannock's Upper Rappahannock River Report Card. Please provide any additional suggestions for future meeting topics to Michelle Edwards at medwards@rrregion.org.