Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

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Rural Transportation Advisory Committee

DRAFT Minutes, September 22, 2022

The video of the meeting can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7L1rQjeMdE

VOTING MEMBERS		**STAFF**	
Tom Egeland, Louisa County	x	Sandy Shackelford, TJPDC	x
Jim Frydl, Greene County *	x	Lucinda Shannon, TJPDC	x
Douglas Miles, Fluvanna County	x	Gretchen Thomas, TJPDC	x
Dylan Bishop, Nelson County	x	Christine Jacobs, TJPDC	
Michael Barnes, VDOT, Culpeper	x	Ryan Mickles, TJPDC	x
David Cook, VDOT, Lynchburg			
Stephen Johnson, Jaunt	x		
Sara Pennington, Rideshare	x		
Kevin McDermott, Albemarle	X		
	x		
ALTERNATES		**GUESTS/PUBLIC**	
Rick Youngblood, VDOT		Alberic Karina-Plun, Albemarle County	x
JM Whalen, Fluvanna County	x	Lonnie Murray *	x
David Benish, Albemarle County		Rick Youngblood *	x
Stephanie Golon, Greene County		Peter Krebs, Piedmont Environmental Council	x
Cindy King, Louisa County			
Zadie Lacy, Jaunt	x		
Carrie Shepherd, VDOT	x		

**** attended online via Zoom.***

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Rural Technical Advisory Committee Chair, Tom Egeland, presided and called the meeting to order at 1:0 pm. Lucinda Shannon took roll. and asked members to introduce themselves.

2. MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC:

a. **Comments by the Public:** None

b. **Comments provided via email, online, web site, etc.:** None

3. APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES FROM JULY 26, 2022 (MINUTE 2:50):

Motion/Action: Lucinda noted that JM's last name was misspelled and it has been corrected. Mr. Egeland made motion to approve minutes with the correct spelling. Mr. McDermott seconded to motion and the motion passed unanimously.

4. PAVING RURAL ROADS (MINUTE 3:42):

Peter Krebs, Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC), introduced himself to the group and presented to the committee on paving rural roads. He noted that the PEC is known as an anti-sprawl organization and preserving the rural way of life. He also runs Piedmont Mobility Alliance. During their Spring meeting, the Weldon Preservation Conservation Coalition gave a presentation on how Loudon County is handling the balance between rural and urban areas. He came to this meeting to share their ideas from that meeting.

In Loudon, reasons for not paving roads include protecting a rural way of life, controlling speed, limiting growth and development, preserving scenic value, increasing health and recreational value, and embodying significant economic resource, if handled intentionally. Loudon urges VDOT and their Board of Supervisors to seriously consider not paving roads if at all possible. They encourage the public to get involved in expressing their opinions as well.

VDOT's mandate is to not pave rural roads, but to improve them, which does not necessarily mean paving.

Mr. Krebs noted that there are conflicts among rural road users – cyclists, pedestrians, equestrians, etc. They include safety, site line issues, parking, sharing the road, and the idea that the resource is a fragile one that can go away for a number of different reasons.

Mr. McDermott said there is still some indecisiveness about which roads to pave or not in this area. He noted that in Loudon County there are 250 miles of unpaved roads, and Albemarle County has a much smaller percentage of unpaved roads.

Mr. Krebs said one solution is to change the aggregate mix to increase the longevity of the road. One of the metrics Loudon has is to think about a route of significance and whether it's part of its rural cultural experience. Mr. Krebs noted that the 250 miles of unpaved roads are actively being defended by residents of those roads.

Carrie Shepherd said she is trying to find out if money that has been designated to pave gravel roads has a "use it or lose it" tag. The money can be built up over years, but it still has to be used for paving, Mr. McDermott asked if it could be used for maintenance instead of paving.

There was discussion about whether an unpaved road fund's unused money could be moved to a paved road's fund to maintain it.

The committee members continued to discuss the benefits of keeping unpaid roads

5. OFFICE OF INTERMODAL PLANNING AND INVESTMENT (OIPI) GROWTH AND ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT (MINUTE 41:33):

Sandy Shackelford presented information on the OIPI Growth and Accessibility Planning Technical Assistance Grant. She discussed the components, goals, types of assistance for local governments, and application details to see if any one of the committee members might be interested in applying.

6. RTAC WORKPLAN (MINUTE 50:23):

Lucinda Shannon gave an administrative update on the FY23 workplan.

7. ROUNDTABLE (MINUTE 51:33):

VDOT – Ms. Shepherd said she had nothing new to report.

Louisa County – Mr. Egeland said they have planned unit development in Zion Crossroad to increase approximately 200 dwelling units, and at Lake Anna, there is a 96-unit condominium with 130-unit hotel with a rooftop restaurant. Two large projects asking VDOT to review before planning commission. He also reported that the county hired a planning associate.

Jaunt - Stephen Johnson reported that Jaunt is in midst of their TDP. He said they just finished a community engagement initiative and were pleased with response rate. Mr. Johnson also reported that he is leaving Jaunt on September 30. Zadie Lacy is the new transportation planner at Jaunt.

VDOT - Rick Youngblood reported that VDOT Lynchburg District is conducting a new Route 151 corridor study, and update of the 2013 study to be completed by next summer.

Albemarle County - Kevin McDermott reported the County is in the long process of the comp plan update which will go on for the next couple of years. The noted that there will be many implications for rural areas. He also reported that they made an application for the RAISE grant and was successful.

Nelson County - Dylan Bishop reported that they were wrapping up the public engagement portion of comp plan with 900+ responses. They will be presenting results at the end of October. As mentioned earlier by Rick Youngblood, Nelson kicked off the Route 151 corridor study.

VDOT - Michael Barnes noted that VDOT is working on the SmartScale validation process. They will be getting estimates to everyone in next 10 days. He also reported on several grants that are currently ongoing and upcoming.

Rideshare - Sara Pennington reported that Rideshare is hosting “Discover Transit month” in September and “Rideshare month” in October. She also noted that Park and Ride inventories happen in September.

Fluvanna County - Douglas Miles reported that Fluvanna has been active with their first utility solar infrastructure. The company bought property where there is no access off a main road. Accessory solar and rooftop solar will be most desirable because Fluvanna is the second smallest land mass in the TJPDC. RRBC is doing a conference on the 25th at the Lewis and Clark Exploratory Center. He also reported that the Palmyra Street TAP grant has begun.

Fluvanna County - JM Whelan reported that in addition to the solar projects, there are several projects they are working on, including Smart Scale, their comp plan, and a TAP grant.

Louisa County - Tom Egeland reported that he is speaking at conference next week on solar re: lessons learned etc. He invited others who have questions about solar projects to asked both him and Douglas Miles about their experience.

Douglas Miles said Cardinal News out of Lynchburg has been doing good reporting on the ongoing solar projects.

8. FUTURE TOPICS (MINUTE 1:20:17):

Ms. Shannon said other organizations are looking at their environmental mitigation plans. She recommended that perhaps someone from the state could come to the meeting for a presentation.

Ms. Shackelford updated the committee on the Safe Streets for All grant.

Another topic suggested was to give an update on the challenges of updating the comp plan in Nelson.

Mr. McDermott suggested that perhaps there could be a presentation on the grant connecting Albemarle to Nelson County.

Ms. Bishop noted that she belongs to the Rural Planning Caucus and recommends it.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT (MINUTE 1:25:45):

Peter Krebs said PEC is looking at the solar issue very closely and that the magnitude of the issue is gigantic. He said there is lots of interest in adding data centers in Virginia which increases power need by almost double.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion/Action: On a motion by Tom Egeland, the Rural Transportation Advisory Committee unanimously voted to adjourn the September 20, 2022 meeting at 2:31 p.m.