

## **Natural and Cultural Asset Plan Meeting #1**

### ***Natural and Cultural Assets Mapping Committee***

Date: 11/12/2021

Time: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: James City County Government Center, Building F (relocated from Building D due to building closure)

#### **Attendees:**

Committee: Adrienne Frank, Mary Bressler, Jay Everson, Ryann Greifenberger, Mathew Woolsey, Deborah Bussert, Bruce Abbott, Alain Outlaw

Public: Ray Crawford

Staff: Tammy Rosario, Assistant Director of Community Development, and Tori Haynes, Senior Planner

Consultants: Karen Firehock and Matt Lee, Green Infrastructure Center Inc.

**Meeting Purpose:** Orientation and kickoff meeting for natural and cultural assets map and plan for James City County. The committee will review the base map of the natural assets network for accuracy and also make recommendations for additional types of natural and cultural assets to include.

**Committee Organization:** The consultants and staff welcomed the committee and reviewed the committee's roles, responsibilities and procedures.

**Process:** Consultants for the Natural and Cultural Assets mapping project presented an overview of how natural and cultural assets are mapped and why they are important along with the schedule and key schedule milestones and committee roles (see presentation for more details). Participants then broke into two groups to review the maps to ensure they are correct and to suggest additional resources to include or investigate.

#### **General Comments and Notes from Committee:**

- Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program is inactive due to lack of funds. Board has interest in putting funds into it, so it may be reactivated. Consultants noted that the natural assets map they completed for another county was also used to rank PDR properties for importance to purchase easements (along other factors).
- There is concern this program will target landowners who may not understand why their lands were included or what that means. The consultants noted that efforts would be made to reach out to owners of significant parcels to discuss their importance and that there is no intention to restrict their property rights.
- Across Forge Rd. - There could only be one house on a PDR easement property but on an adjacent lot without an easement they could build nine. There were adjustments made to expand the easement to both properties and spread the homes out among them, so there are some tricks and trades in the PDR program that can work and need to be better understood.

- **Habitat for Pollinators – Pollinators need wildflowers, grasses, and shrubs. As a result of mowing practices in recent years, there is less habitat along roadsides, in parks, and neighborhoods. Butterflies and bees need open ground including meadow and dirt roads. More surfaces are being paved, increasing impervious surfaces. Insect populations are declining, and there is a great need to maintain and improve habitat diversity.**
- Powerlines offer habitat opportunities for wildlife and can act as corridors. More could be done to improve habitat along these corridors.
- There were recent changes in the comprehensive plan for some zones and lots are recommended to be 20 acres. Regulations around property rights and takings that devalue or depreciate property are a concern. Can we compensate property owners or don't let property values depreciate?
- There is concern for rezoning to large lots. Some people in the county are land rich but cash poor. Newcomers want to preserve rural character but at the expense of large landowners who can't make money off their land value.
- Williamsburg Bird Club has done a lot of bird surveys in the area, especially near Jamestown. Use this inventory data if possible. Bill Williams with the Historic VA Lands Conservancy is the "bird man," get data from him.
- Friends of Powhatan Creek - the group is no longer active, but there are a lot of people who are interested in this corridor and who should be consulted for their knowledge.
- Kim Hazelwood (GIS) knows the historical sites. Be sure to include the True Governors Landing - ask Kim and Alain about it.
- How does the natural and cultural assets mapping and plan process integrate with the county parks department? - The technical advisory committee is made up of county staff which includes parks. Staff participate in advisory boards and there will be some "shuttle diplomacy" happening to bring the maps to some of those groups that have their own committees. GIC will also have some direct conversations with the parks staff about the project.
- Agricultural and Forestal District (AFD) – the county is currently reaching out to landowners about this voluntary program.

### **General Comments and Notes from Public:**

Ray Crawford – recommended contact for more historical and cultural information.

### **Map comments (see pdf map with comment bubbles on where these are found):**

The following sites are recommended for further investigation/importance.

- ✓ Potential developments - Hazelwood industrial and housing on Forge Rd.
- ✓ Marston – development risk at the end of Bush Springs Road, it is proposed to cross over the powerline.
- ✓ An X marks an apartment complex on a forest patch.
- ✓ Bump up the Jamestown habitat core score because of its historical and cultural significance.
- ✓ Old stone house – no history on the structure, needs a dig to understand it more.
- ✓ Freedom Park Village is an important cultural and historical site.
- ✓ Powhatan Creek is an important corridor and part of an architectural district.
- ✓ Battle of Green Springs in July 6<sup>th</sup> 1781.
- ✓ Church on the Main - historic 1750s church.

### **Additional Public Comments:**

One member of the public offered the following comments: This is a great opportunity to have some input into the process. Everyone is going to be impacted about what is done with the natural assets. The public needs to be able to access a park or greenspaces in the county. People want to have their voices heard. The landscape is for everyone and should be shared with all, including with wildlife. The process is important, especially going into the future and planning.

Staff noted that the committee should feel free to share the maps with colleague and neighbors. Once corrections have been made the map will be posted to the county's website. As this is an iterative process, all maps will be labeled as "draft" since they may continue to be changed up until the maps and plan are complete and adopted by the county.

### **Next Steps:**

Committee members to review the maps and send comments to [mlee@gicinc.org](mailto:mlee@gicinc.org) by Nov 19, 2021. Those edits will be reviewed and incorporated as possible. The next meeting will be held in January at which time we will review themed overlay maps for water, agriculture, recreation and heritage.

*This summary will be reviewed and adopted at the January meeting of the committee. Any edits, comments or questions may be sent to [mlee@gicinc.org](mailto:mlee@gicinc.org)*