



Minutes
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Meeting
112 MacTanly Place, Staunton, VA
August 26, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Attendance: 25

	Augusta County		Rockbridge County		Staff
	Butch Wells		Jay Lewis	✓	Garreth Bartholomew
	Pam Carter	✓	Chris Slaydon	✓	Zach Beard
✓	Julia Hensley		Rockingham County	✓	Steve Bolster
	Bath County		Leila Longcor	✓	Philippe Bone
✓	Lynn Ellen Black		Rachel Salatin	✓	Jeremy Crute
	City of Buena Vista	✓	City of Staunton	✓	Ann Cundy
✓	Tyson Cooper		Amy Darby	✓	Danielle Gannon
	City of Harrisonburg	✓	Sharon Angle	✓	Donnie Kern
✓	Laura Dent		City of Waynesboro	✓	Rachel Kinzer
	Monica Robinson		Terry Short, Treasurer	✓	Paula Melester
✓	Adam Fletcher		Leslie Tate	✓	Kimberly Miller
	Highland County			✓	Rich Sagui
	Henry Budzinski, Vice Chair			✓	Devon Thompson
	City of Lexington				Others
✓	Frank Friedman, Chair			✓	Rhonda Cooper
				✓	Joel Hensley
				✓	Andy Zipser

Call To Order

The August 26, 2024, Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Frank Friedman.

Public Comment

Chairman Friedman opened the floor for public comments. There were no public comments.

Consideration of Minutes

Chairman Friedman presented the minutes of the April 15, 2024, and June 17, 2024, meetings. There being no comments or objections, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Friedman welcomed guest Joel Hensley, Rockingham County Supervisor, who attended at the invitation of Ms. Longcor.

Chairman Friedman recognized Rhonda Cooper, who served on the Commission since 2019 as a representative of Rockingham County. Ms. Cooper served as the Director of Community Development and on the board of the Rural Planning Caucus. She retired at the end of July, and this is her last meeting

with the Commission. Chairman Friedman thanked Ms. Cooper for her exemplary service to the Commission and Region.

Executive Director's Report

Under the Executive Director's Report, Ms. Cundy introduced two new PDC staff members, Rich Sagui, Accountant, and Danielle Gannon, Transit Planner. Mr. Sagui recently moved from Burlington, Vermont, and Ms. Gannon recently moved from Syracuse, New York. Ms. Cundy announced the news that Mr. Steve Bolster has accepted the position of Finance Director with City of Buena Vista and recognized his good work with the CSPDC.

Ms. Cundy reported on the following items:

1. Lewis Street Hub

Construction is substantially complete. A ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for Thursday at 9:00 a.m., with an open invitation to all Commissioners. Transit service at the Hub will resume on August 31st. Virginia Infrastructure, our local contractor, has successfully maintained both schedule and budget despite weather challenges. Special recognition was given to Paula Melester for her project leadership.

2. VATI Grant

Partnership is underway with Rockbridge County and broadband providers, BARC and Brightspeed, to provide high-speed internet access to 2,138 residences. The state awarded \$2.1 million to BARC and Brightspeed as part of the nearly \$9 million total project. We are currently in the pre-contract phase with a two-year completion timeline.

3. SAWMPO Long Range Transportation Plan

The SAWMPO is updating its 25-year transportation plan through 2050. Phase 1 of public engagement is in progress, including a general public visioning survey, stakeholder listening sessions, and briefings to local elected bodies. There have been 125 responses to the survey received to date. The plan completion deadline is December 2025.

4. Staunton/Rockingham VBRSP Awards

Rockingham County and the City of Staunton received Virginia Business Ready Sites Program awards from VEDP. Rockingham County was awarded \$4.5 million for Innovation Village, while Staunton Crossing received \$9 million.

5. Goshen Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF)

The Town of Goshen and Rockbridge County secured a \$1 million IRF grant for the Stillwater Worsted Mills textile plant project. Staff assisted property owners with the application process. The former Stillwater plant will be converted into a museum, preservation workshop, and forest-to-finish wood manufacturing factory specializing in log cabin tiny homes.

6. Audit

Brown and Edwards conducted on-site work with Donnie and Rich to complete the audit, currently proceeding on schedule. Recognition was given to the Finance Team for their efforts.

7. Staff Retreat

As mentioned during the budget approval process, the annual staff retreat was held on Friday, August 16th. Facilitators from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) led the morning session focused on DISC assessment results which explore different

communication styles. Staff participated in exercises and facilitated breakout sessions to enhance team communication effectiveness. The afternoon included lunch from Hank's BBQ followed by team building activities at Grand Caverns, including cavern tours and lawn games.

Treasurer's Report

Chairman Friedman presented for consideration the Treasurer's Report, and noted that the Commission Treasurer, Mr. Short, was not able to attend the meeting. In Mr. Short's absence, Mr. Kern gave a report on the June 2024 Financial Statements, noting that the CSPDC's financial position remains strong. He stated that revenues year-to-date are over \$4.9 million, which is down from this time last year due to the timing of the Bath-Highland VATI grant completion. Mr. Kern also stated that receivables are healthy.

Ms. Hensley moved, seconded by Ms. Sandum, to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion carried unanimously.

Special Election of Executive Committee Member (BAF #24-10)

Chairman Friedman introduced the special election to fill the Executive Committee vacancy created by Ms. Cooper's retirement. Ms. Cundy explained that one Commission member needed to be elected to the Executive Committee. Paper ballots were distributed to Commissioners present. Mr. Bartholomew, Ms. Kinzer, and Mr. Sagui were designated to collect and count the ballots, with results to be announced before the end of the meeting.

Ms. Cundy noted that eligible candidates were limited to representatives from jurisdictions not currently represented on the Executive Committee. She also informed the Commission that since the distribution of the meeting packet, Augusta County confirmed that Ms. Moran was not reappointed to the Commission when her term expired and therefore was not included on the ballot.

Consideration of Draft CSPDC FY25 Budget (BAF #24-07)

Chairman Friedman introduced the draft fiscal year 2025 budget. He stated that the Executive Committee approved the budget at its May meeting, and it was discussed at the June meeting. Chairman Friedman presented it for consideration and opened the floor for questions. There were no questions or comments.

Mr. Slaydon moved, seconded by Ms. Hensley, to approve the FY25 Budget. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of BRITE Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Bylaws Amendment (BAF #24-08)

Chairman Friedman presented for consideration the BRITE TAC Bylaws Amendment that was discussed at the June meeting. There were no questions or comments.

Ms. Hensley moved, seconded by Ms. Dent, to approve the BTAC Amendment. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of CSPDC Virtual Meeting and Virtual Participation Policy (BAF #24-11)

Chairman Friedman introduced the CSPDC Virtual Meeting and Virtual Participation Policy. Ms. Cundy presented updates to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Virtual Meeting and Virtual Participation Policy. She presented a draft Virtual Meeting and Virtual Participation Policy developed in consultation with other Planning District Commissions and the Commission's attorney. She stated that the policy is reviewed and updated annually.

Ms. Cundy highlighted two key amendments from the 2024 General Assembly session:

- The number of permitted all-virtual public meetings has been amended to a maximum of two meetings per calendar year or 50 percent of meetings held per calendar year (rounded up), whichever is greater. The Commission traditionally holds its February meeting virtually due to potentially hazardous winter weather conditions affecting member travel, particularly from further parts of the region.
- Members with disabilities or who are caregivers may participate remotely and may count toward the required in-person quorum as if physically present. These members retain full voting rights on all matters that come before the Commission.

During discussion, Chairman Friedman emphasized that while virtual options provide necessary flexibility, in-person participation remains the primary expectation for conducting Commission business.

Presentation: “CSPDC Housing Study and Annual Report” by Mr. Jeremy Crute, Director of Planning and Mr. Philippe Bone, Regional Planner.

Chairman Friedman presented the next agenda item, a presentation on fostering a regional housing consortium. Ms. Cundy introduced Mr. Crute and Mr. Bone who have been working hard on the housing study and housing-related programs. She stated that there is a take-home deliverable that will be given at the end of the presentation.

Mr. Bone provided an update on the PDC Housing Program, which began in July 2021 when Virginia Housing awarded \$40 million to Planning District Commissions in the Commonwealth. The CSPDC received \$2 million of this funding and has successfully supported the construction of 58 new affordable housing units across the region, with 32 units dedicated to homeownership and 26 to rental housing.

Mr. Bone highlighted four significant housing projects:

- Greenhouse Village in Lexington: 8 affordable housing units for homeownership being built by Rockbridge Area Habitat for Humanity
- Foley Road Apartments in Harrisonburg: 11 affordable rental units featuring energy-efficient design, community gardens, and EV charging stations
- Fairfax Hall in Waynesboro: Historic building conversion adding 2 accessible units to the existing 54 units
- Pump Street Apartments in Staunton: 6 units of permanent supportive housing for individuals with mental health challenges

He also detailed two ongoing homebuyer assistance programs:

- Down Payment Assistance (DPA): Provides eligible first-time homebuyers up to \$11,000 for down payments and closing costs
- SPARC Program: Offers a 1% interest rate reduction on Virginia Housing loan products, with a new allocation of \$3 million for the region

Mr. Crute then presented the findings of the Regional Housing Study, the region's first comprehensive housing analysis. The study, funded through a Community Impact Grant from Virginia Housing, was conducted by the Virginia Center for Housing Research and Housing Forward Virginia.

Mr. Crute outlined the study's key findings, noting that 28,000 households in the region are cost-burdened by housing, with 5,000 at risk of homelessness. The study identified several critical challenges

including the need for more homeownership opportunities, increased rental options, improved housing conditions, and greater housing size diversity.

The study proposed both regional and local solutions, Mr. Crute explained. Regional solutions include establishing a hub for home improvement grants and resources, expanding permanent supportive housing options, participating in community land trust models, expanding housing counseling services, and developing land banks. Local solutions focus on zoning reform, leveraging Economic Development Authorities, revitalizing vacant homes, organizing housing education campaigns, and pursuing state funding opportunities.

Discussion followed the presentation, with questions regarding land trust implementation in Virginia, the definition of affordable housing, and the geographic distribution of current housing projects. Mr. Crute indicated that the complete housing study would be published in the coming weeks.

The presentation concluded with discussion of future housing summits planned for different areas of the region, building on the successful model of the SAW Housing Summit.

Intergovernmental Review (Board Memo #24-05)

Chairman Friedman presented the Intergovernmental Review (IR) for discussion. Ms. Cundy stated that these IRs are provided for informational purposes and no action is required. The five IRs are from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VADEQ) and each description in the memo notes whether any locality within the region is impacted. The floor was opened for questions; there were none.

Other Business

Chairman Friedman presented the results of the special election for Executive Committee member; Ms. Laura Dent was elected.

Chairman Friedman reminded the group that there is a Central Shenandoah Development Corporation meeting immediately following adjournment of this meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the body, the Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly Miller, Commission Clerk