

**BUNCOMBE COUNTY  
LAND CONSERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 15, 2022**

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| Members present:<br><br>Greg Hutchins<br>Joel Mazelis<br>Robert Turner<br>Nancy Nehls Nelson<br>Bob Gale<br>Matt Fusco<br>Jacob Wiesman<br><br>(quorum = 6/11) | Non-members present:<br><br>Ariel Zijp – BCSWCD<br>Michelle Pugliese - SAHC<br>Jess Laggis - SAHC<br>Avni Naik - BCSWCD |
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There was a quorum, as there were 7 members present. The following discussion occurred between members present:

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 am

- Chairperson Hutchins

Approval of Minutes

- Ms. Nehls Nelson made a motion to approve the May 18, 2022, meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Turner, and the motion passed unanimously.

SAHC – Sandy Mush Creek/Covington Easement Discussion and Vote

- Ms. Pugliese provided a summary of the Sandy Mush Creek project presentation from the prior meeting. Mr. Turner and Ms. Zijp spoke in favor of the project stating it is located in a good area and has water resources and scenic viewsheds that align with the LCAB conservation goals.
- Ms. Zijp and Ms. Naik presented the project evaluation scores. The project scored a 75.3 and was within 1-2 points of the last two projects that were approved by the board (Full Sun Farm Ph II and Young Homeplace).
- Mr. Turner asked how other board members decide on scoring for questions that are more involved (ex. forest management/stewardship). Ms. Zijp stated she has been considering ways in which the evaluation sheet could be updated to provide a range of scores for those kinds of questions which could help board members standardize scoring.
- Ms. Pugliese stated that the landowners don't currently have a management plan in place, but it is likely that they will have one in the future if they apply for PUV for forestry. Additionally, the conservation easement requires a management plan if there are harvest plans that will impact more than 1 acre of the property.
- Ms. Nehls Nelson made a motion to approve the Sandy Mush Creek project transaction costs, seconded by Mr. Turner, and the motion passed unanimously.

### Updates from Land Conservation Agencies:

- Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy  
**Jess Laggis**
  - No new closings in Buncombe County, but is waiting to hear back about funding from NRCS about the Full Sun Farm Ph II and Young Homeplace projects.
- Conserving Carolina
  - Land trust representative not present at the meeting.
- RiverLink
  - Land trust representative unable to attend the June meeting.

### Ag Advisory Board (AAB) Update- Ariel Zijp

- The LCAB Resolution passed at the most recent BOC meeting. Mr. Slater and Ms. DeChant are currently serving 1-year terms, once they complete those terms, the board will contain 9 members.
- Buncombe staff has been talking to Boulder County about their open space plan to learn more about how their departments and programs operate and gain insight on successes/challenges that may arise if the bond were to pass.
- Buncombe staff is hoping to bring potential easement purchase criteria to the board during the August meeting to ensure there are clear parameters around easement purchase.
- Ms. Zijp introduced Ms. Rose Wall, one of the new environmental educators that was hired with the county.

### LCAB Mapping Criteria

- Ms. Zijp stated that County Management has been encouraging staff to review and/or update AAB and LCAB board policy documents. She asked board members to consider any updates to the classifications/criteria for easements that were set in the LCAB governing document when the board was first created. She also asked if creating a regional priority map would be helpful for the long-term planning of the board. Projects would still be evaluated at the parcel-level and considered for funding even if they didn't fall in a priority region, but would receive a few extra points if they did.
- Mr. Hutchins stated it may be difficult to modify criteria that the BOC set for LCAB during the board's creation, but it would be useful to consider updating them if/as needed. The 100-acre classification was set to prioritize large projects that would help move the needle towards conservation goals, but did not mean they would exclude smaller tracts. Mr. Hutchins and Mr. Gale noted that the board has approved projects that had good conservation values in the past despite not meeting the 100-acre mark.
- Ms. Zijp and Ms. Naik recently completed a priority mapping project for the AAB and showed board members the final regional maps. Mr. Hutchins stated having a visual reference for the public would be useful as long as there are no references to particular private properties that may raise concerns for landowners or make them feel targeted. Ms. Zijp agreed and stated that scoring at a parcel level with the AAB maps are only used internally for that reason and the regional maps are available for any public use.
- Mr. Fusco stated that the AAB priority mapping project could be useful to the board but adding data related to ridgeline, watershed and water quality protection would be

important as those are additional conservation values specific to LCAB. Mr. Gale stated he worked on a similar project to prioritize old growth forests in the Nantahala and Pisgah Forests. They did not share the exact locations of the forests to keep information from getting into the wrong hands, but they created maps with general areas/regions of the forests to show the public their focus areas, and that method worked fairly well.

- Ms. Zijp suggested bringing a prioritization proposal based on the board's suggestions and comments during the August meeting. Mr. Hutchins stated that would be useful to have as a starting point, and any edits/tweaks could be made based on the BOC's priorities as well.
- Board Discussion/Questions  
Mr. Turner asked where LCAB would fit into implementation of the bond funding if it were to pass. Mr. Hutchins stated he and Ms. Nehls Nelson talked to Commissioner Wells recently and as of now, LCAB will play a big role in conjunction with AAB.
- Ms. Nehls Nelson stated it would be helpful for board members to have a fact sheet and maps with talking points about the bond as the public may look to them for information.

With no further announcements and discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 am.