

Rural & Scenic Roads Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2022 (Virtual)

APPROVED

1. Chair Ms. Ahalt brought the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call

Members Present: Tiffany Ahalt, Susan Hanson, Dave Ziedelis, Ron Burns, Sam Castleman, Howard Looney, Peter Pearre, Jeff Yocum, Barbara Wyatt, Jim Bonneville

Members Absent: Darius Mark

Staff Present: Amanda Whitmore, Kimberly Golden Brandt, David Olney, Martha Berkheimer (Intern for Amanda Whitmore)

Ms. Ahalt asked staff about the status of a replacement for Mr. Barse. There has not yet been an agricultural representative appointed to replace Mr. Barse. The County Executive's office is working on this.

2. The Committee members reviewed the minutes of the December 8, 2021 meeting. Sam Castleman MOVED that the Committee APPROVE the December 8, 2021 minutes as written. Howard Looney SECONDED the motion. The minutes were approved as presented (10-0).
3. Ms. Wyatt presented on the National Register.
 - It is a program of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.
 - In Maryland it is administered by the Maryland Historical Trust. Each state has a preservation office that may submit National Register nominations to the National Park Service.
 - There are districts, projects, and sites. The properties can be parks, urban, rural, and corridors (National Road).
 - How do properties get listed? There are four criteria types: association with historic events or activities; association with historic persons; distinctive design, construction, or physical characteristics; and potential to provide important information about prehistory or history.
 - Nationwide there are more than 1 million properties listed. Approximately 95,000 are listed individually. The remainder contribute to historic districts. In Maryland there are more than 1,500 listings. In Frederick County at last count there were 119 listings.
 - Regarding roads on the National Register, some the committee might recognize are the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the National Road, and the Suitland Parkway. There are 100+ roads listed on the National Register.
 - How do smaller roads qualify for listing? Most are locally significant related to early transportation routes and settlement. Some roads in national parks are listed for their design or engineering significance.

- Why list properties on the National Register? Listing offers protection from federally funded or licensed activities. Listing creates eligibility for historic preservation tax credits, some grant programs, and property tax relief in certain places.

4. Ms. Whitmore presented on the Frederick County Register of Historic Places.

- There are multiple historic lists/inventories that apply in Frederick County: National Register of Historic Places; Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties; Frederick County Register of Historic Places; Frederick Town Historic District; New Market Historic District; and Brunswick Conservation District.
- The Frederick County Register was established by County ordinance in 1998. The ordinance includes the ten nomination criteria. Anyone may nominate a property, but owner consent is required. The County currently has 20 properties listed and one going to the County Council next week for consideration. The County is also working to establish a rural historic preservation district northeast of New Market.
- Benefits of being on the County Register include eligibility for federal and State rehabilitation tax credits and local property tax credits for work done in accordance with the County's Historic Preservation design guidelines.
- An additional benefit is eligibility for the County's Rural Historic Preservation Grant Program. The program allows for awards up to \$50,000 for exterior work to rehabilitate or stabilize a historic resource.

Ms. Whitmore noted the website where more information on the County Register can be found: www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/7981/Historic-Preservation

- Ms. Hanson asked about roads, specifically Burkittsville's square corner. Ms. Whitmore stated that it is on the National Register, but not locally designated.
- Mr. Pearre asked if roads can be nominated. Ms. Whitmore stated that they can.
- Ms. Ahalt asked about scenic roads and review of development projects along them.
- Ms. Whitmore commented that she reviews development projects along certain scenic and historic roads and works with applicants to get their architecture to compliment the landscape.

5. Ms. Ahalt introduced the Loudoun County rural roads initiatives, noting that the committee was provided with a variety of information by staff. She asked if the group had any follow-up questions or wished to discuss any items.

- Ms. Brandt noted that all Loudoun County public roads are State roads, maintained by VDOT. This differs from our situation in Frederick County.
- Ms. Hanson mentioned that Loudoun County has over 300 miles of roads and is in the top 10 counties in the country for development.
- Ms. Wyatt noted that Loudoun County has been a leader in nominating African American rural districts.
- Mr. Yokum commented that to protect roads we need to create a demand for historic context.

6. Ms. Ahalt initiated a discussion of subcommittees. She noted the committee's goals and responsibilities (below) and suggested that the subcommittees initially focus on items 1-3.

1. Establish criteria for eligible roads
2. Revise policy guidelines for the program
3. Recommend/address opportunities for education, promotion, and tourism
4. Make a recommendation for a standing advisory board and program
5. Create a list of candidate roads for the new program

- Ms. Hanson commented that the committee start with the criteria list from the Montgomery County Program, which is 20 years old, and come up with our own specific criteria.
- Regarding item 3, Mr. Castleman noted that the committee should be careful to avoid over-promoting certain roads where increased use is not desirable. Mr. Ziedelis agreed, noting that residents have to be comfortable with increased traffic if the roads are promoted.
- Mr. Looney commented that the subcommittee structure is a good way to break up the material.
- Mr. Yocum expressed interest in marketing and product development, which could be called promotion and partnerships. He noted that if the committee can identify other groups that are interested in these roads, like bicyclists and bridle clubs, our efforts will likely be more successful.
- Mr. Pearre asked about going beyond gravel roads and including other types of roads.
- Mr. Burns commented that subcommittees are a good idea as long as they are led well.

Ms. Ahalt noted that she will work with staff to come up with the subcommittees, putting names on them and identifying their purpose for discussion at the next meeting.

7. Ms. Ahalt shared a letter that staff received from Dr. Jane Sachs and asked if anyone had any comments to share. Mr. Castleman commented that the committee should address her concerns and that the road should remain as is until September. Ms. Wyatt, Chair of the Roads Board, commented that the letter will be discussed at the March Roads Board meeting.
8. The meeting adjourned at 6:09 p.m.
9. The next meeting will be on February 23, 2022 at 4:30 pm.