

April 2024 - General Meeting

This month's Membership meeting was held at Faith Chapel.

Dinner: 7:00 p.m. CTO: 7:30 PM

Attending: Adams, Cleland, Dunn, Falk, Fauber, Frankenfield, Gustafson, Hart, Johnson, Kibler, Kohler, Logue, Maruca B and F, McKenzie, Menendez A and M, Penaranda, Quitter, Roques D, Scott, Small, Stanley

Welcome: Guests: Chris Van Vlack (County Urban Conservationist), (Bill Craig (teacher at Tuscarora H.S.), Youssef Gergis (from Village Green), Robert Camarda (runs Boy Scout summer camp)

Program

Our program speaker was Chris Van Vlack, a County Urban Conservationist and member of the Hillsboro Ruritan Club, who spoke about the need for protection of USDA prime agricultural land and soils and ways to advocate for such protection. Although our area has the best agricultural land on the East Coast, it is subject to pressure and pushback from developers on the grounds of "development rights." Developers are using the so-called "surgical tool" of identifying prime agricultural land for development of cluster subdivisions, which allows four times the traditional housing density of one house per five acres. Although developers are required to preserve 70% of open space, the issue is that although some soils are not amenable to farm use, these areas are not designated as cluster locations with a larger goal to preserve the prime agricultural areas. Concessions sought by developers include smaller clusters of houses (five from 25), reduced setbacks, and longer ingress/egress roads, none of which protect the larger prime agricultural areas. Current zoning could allow 11,000 additional houses in the Rural Policy Area in the coming years.

The County Board of Supervisors will soon vote on Loudoun's new zoning ordinance, passed in 2019, to help preserve prime soils when residential housing clusters are built in western Loudoun. The Agriculture Working Group of the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition

(LCPCC) strongly recommends BOS adoption of the Prime Soils Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOAM) which will protect and preserve a minimum 70% of the area's prime soils on the original parcel of 1,000 already identified new development sites. This ordinance would be an improvement over the status quo and provide a way to preserve and conserve smaller 15 to 20 acre parcels which can better support small scale farming of products such as flowers, vegetables, eggs, and Christmas trees produced by younger, new farmers. This proposed zoning amendment would acknowledge that the nature of farming in Loudoun is changing from large commercial acreages to smaller operations that bring products directly to customers through farmers' markets, community supported agriculture (CSA), and agritourism.

Talking points to the BOS:

1. The Prime Soils ordinance is designed to make sure that if farms are sold and broken up for development, some of the best farmland is still kept on a lot large enough for some kind of farming.
2. Prime soils are USDA Class 1 agricultural soils (out of 5 rankings for ag soils). Western Loudoun has some of the best farming soils on the east coast.
3. The issue is that even though rural subdivisions must preserve a percentage of open space, the lots created as "Rural Economy Lots" by developers often have topography, soils, and other features that make them poorly suited to farming of any type.
4. We are asking developers to protect 70% of these best soils to enable new owners to farm them when they purchase a home on a large lot, or to allow a farmer to lease that land as part of a larger operation. These soils would be placed on Preservation Farm Lots in easement to protect them from further subdivision.
5. Environmentally, farming would be kept on soils best suited for crops and pasture, not forcing these uses into more sensitive areas where animal waste gets into hydric areas or causes erosion on slopes.
6. This zoning amendment would not impact existing protections for steep slopes, floodplain, or wetlands, but would only add prime soils to the list of our natural resources that need protection.

Business Meeting

Minutes: Secretary summarized minutes from March 2024. Minutes from earlier meetings are posted on our website.

Treasurer's Report: D. Stanley reported our accounts as of March 23rd, 2024. We had \$47,952.57 in our Truist checking account; \$173,746.97 in our Vanguard Scholarship Fund, and \$157,271.78 in our Vanguard General and Opportunity Fund (General Fund \$121,382.36 and Opportunity Fund \$35,855.38), for a total asset amount of \$378,971.32 from these accounts. Assets in the Boy Scout Troop 1910 account are \$35,885.38, for total assets of \$414,826.70. In terms of Profit and Loss, for the first six months of our fiscal year, from October 2023 through March 2024, our income was \$61,357.23 and our expenses were \$55,509.70; our investment gain was \$49,183.04.

Grants Committee Update– T. Small

Most of our attention was on the Faith Chapel projects for paving the parking lot, improving the drainage, and redoing the outside lighting. We also subsidized the social hour after the five scheduled concerts at Faith Chapel. Working with Steve Torpy and Chezia Calloway of Loudoun County Parks and Recreation, and with Paige Neeley of LCC, we completed the MOU with the LCC that now enables our club to underwrite the cost of summer camp for children who are eligible for free lunch at school. We awarded another grant submitted by Bill Craig, technical education teacher at Tuscarora HS, to fund a four-student team to travel to Houston, TX as finalists in the HUNCH program. This team worked with NASA scientists to develop hardware for a Mars lunar base (the Artemis program) dusting system for space hardware.

Scholarship Committee Report – R. Cleland

This year, our budget for scholarships is \$25K. The application period ended March 31st and we received 10 applications, which we have forwarded to the POR club for evaluation. We expect to submit our recommendations for awards to the BOD by late April or early May.

Update on Boy Scouts – M. Quitter

The annual yard sale will be held on May 18th, rain date May 25th. Note: old TVs and large furniture will not be accepted.

Update on Give Choose Campaign – C. Kohler

This event is now the second biggest club fundraiser after trash. Our goal was to raise \$20K, and we raised \$22K, \$19K of which was raised online through the Community Foundation and \$2K from offline donations. We also won three of the possible prizes offered in the campaign! After our costs, our total net was \$19.2K! Well done, everyone!

Recognition of Environmental Committee – B. Scott

Barbara reported that our Environmental Committee won a Ruritan Gold award for Service Excellence! We were recognized for our trash service and our re-usable tote project. Last year, we collected 325 tons of trash and 30 cubic yards of recyclables. The award will be on display at the LCC for a few weeks!

The Student Environmental Action Showcase (SEAS) exhibition at the Academies of Loudoun is in two weeks. We have presentations on the installation of bluebird boxes at LCC and our work on Mrs. Lucketts' garden.

Other environmental initiatives included our collection of 702 corks for recycling and an upcoming sneaker drive in June. P. Gustafson noted that we also plan a scrap metal collection at trash, date TBD.

Strawberry Festival - P. Logue

The festival will be held on June 8 from noon to 3 p.m. This year, the festival has been expanded to include entertainment, a raffle, a bounce house, a truck that will sell doughnuts, and craft sales. Our club will manage the grill for hot dogs and hamburgers.

Update on Faith Chapel Parking Lot – D. Roques, A. Vela

Amanda thanked the club for our grant to upgrade the parking lot at Faith Chapel. To date, the paving, drainage, and lighting improvements (including motion lights) have been completed. Landscaping, a wheelchair ramp, and sealing and striping of the lot still need to be done (see update below in BOD minutes). She noted that these upgrades greatly improve access to the food pantry on the ground floor of the building, where the access door often flooded because of the poor drainage. She also noted that our MOU with Riverside Church enables us to use the building for the next seven years.

Pledge of Allegiance was said, and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Submitted by Elizabeth Penaranda, Secretary

April 2024 Board of Directors Meeting

CTO: 6:40 p.m.

Attending: Dunn, Gustafson, Kibler, Logue, Penaranda, Roques, Stanley

Minutes: Sec. Penaranda summarized the March General Membership meeting.

Treasurer's Report: D. Stanley provided a financial report as of April 28th, 2024. We have \$35,741.14 in our Truist checking account; \$168,489.36 in our Vanguard Scholarship Fund, and \$152,464.49 in our Vanguard General and Opportunity Fund (General Fund \$117,672.09 and Opportunity Fund \$34,792.40), for a total asset amount of \$356,694.99. Troop 1920 assets are \$35,855.38 for total club assets of \$392,550.37. Don reported that we haven't taken the funds for the paving at Faith Chapel from the Opportunity Fund yet because we are waiting on the final bill that includes the welding task. We will move \$15K into our Truist account when P. Baker determines that the time is right. Don will also file our club tax return.

Announcements

Faith Chapel Parking Area – D. Roques

1. Trucks damaged the ditches around the paved lot and some of the surface. VDOT will paint the lines and designate in/out directions. We will add a No Trucks sign to prevent further damage and install large planters to isolate the lot from street traffic and cut throughs. Striping of parking spaces is the last step, not yet completed because sealing was recommended first, which will cost about \$2,400. It is not clear as of this date whether Riverside will cover this cost or will ask us to.
2. A classical guitar concert is scheduled for May 11th at Faith Chapel.
3. The speaker at our next General Membership meeting will be a school representative from the NASA team HUNCH competition. Our winning Tuscarora Team will be our honored guests!

Club Annual Picnic

P. Gustafson is organizing our club picnic, to be held on June 23rd. To relieve A. Menendez from hosting again, Peter presented several alternative local venues for consideration. These included Barnhouse Brewery, Steve Ewell's venue, the Girl Scout campground, Tarara Vineyard/Winery, Marucas' farm, Lost Creek Winery, Holly Heider's farm, and Freedom Center. After discussion, the BOD's first choice was Tarara. Peter will discuss logistics and particulars with the owners and will report back.

Website Maintenance Update – P. Logue

Pat reported that scholarships and grants information is current on our website, but other committee activities have not been updated and need to be. We also need to improve the navigation on the site by each committee for easier access to information. D. Stanley noted that we also need to remove old photographs on the website and replace with new ones to better reflect our current activities and achievements.

Odyssey of the Mind – P. Logue

In recognition of excellence and to acknowledge their achievement, Pat made a motion to support this team to travel to the University of Iowa for an award event. On the team of six students, four are

from Lucketts. The BOD moved to support with \$3K, which will be presented to the membership at the May meeting.

LRC Environmental Award of Excellence – M. Dunn

Lucketts students won an Award of Excellence at the SEAS (Student Environmental Action Showcase) exhibition. Congratulations to the team!

Update on Small Area Plan for Historic Villages – P. Logue

Pat reviewed the initiative to address zoning and future development for historic villages and surrounding areas, which is part of the new county Comprehensive Plan. The initiative is to develop a Small Area Plan for Historic Villages. She stated that our club should participate in developing a plan for Lucketts, which would need to be approved by the BOS and eventually incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. This is a county and community process that requires the alliance of representatives of 11 villages. Our club needs to be a partner in sponsoring the charter to the county. The BOD approved Pat to sign the charter on behalf of the club.

Heidi Siebentritt is managing this initiative for the county. The county will hire a professional firm to manage the plan as part of the national design. The cost to designate a historic village is \$25K, which qualifies for grants.

New Business – M. Dunn

1. Don Stanley will have a role on the Financial Committee.
2. The 45th anniversary of the club occurs in May. We will celebrate at the General Meeting; P. Logue will develop a press release.
3. The Membership Committee is developing a membership directory, which will be in the form of a three-ring binder with black and white photos. They will hold a planning meeting at Fabboli's. She requested \$1K for materials.

Adjourned 8:15 p.m.