



Conservancy Advisory Committee Meeting – 10/29/25
Meeting Minutes

Dial-in Attendees: Tyler M, Lee (non-committee members: Leah M, Frank B, Jill F,)

In-Person Attendees: Julie, Courtney, Drue, Gene, Naisa, Deborah, Tom, Malvi, Tyler (non-committee members: Ashish, Karyn, Gary, Jack, Sophie, Charles, Harry)

The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:35 pm.

Resident Comments

- During the resident comment period, the following comments were noted (in no particular order):
 - When will fundraising ideas be presented?
 - Provide projected operating costs for the farm (profit/loss)
 - Clarify operating budget (to include expenses) of the farm
 - Selection process of Conservancy Board members (nominated vs. elected). Request was made to clarify the process for the community.
 - Suggestion was made to better highlight what the conservancy does for the community how it plays such an important role
 - The group discussed the HOA survey and how that survey may be able to offer feedback on conservancy topics. It was noted that a joint HOA/Conservancy survey might be considered in the future.
 - Concern was raised that the HOA survey allowed for multiple responses and was not locked out once the survey was completed. Participation was low and there aren't any major indications of "issues" that could impact the results. The HOA board is aware and will work to correct this in the future.
 - Question was raised about Conservancy budget "saving" and if that can be used to eliminate an increase. No. Any overage needs to go into the reserves as those funds have been neglected in the past.

Additional Items Added:

- Excitement and potential for solar on land in the future.
- Storytelling for and partnership with Dulles South Food Pantry - show how it is part of community solution
- Funding via Land Trust Alliance
- Karyn: What do residents want Land folks to focus on, especially longer time? New resident **Survey can help answer this if we ask the right questions.**
- Charles: Crowd-sourcing knowledge from within the community. What skills do residents have that can benefit the Conservancy's efforts? **Maybe this needs to be a pointed, targeted question in our Survey.** For example, if a resident has expertise in grant writing, could we bring

them in to help us write grants? **If they can't commit the time to do the work, maybe these experts can train committee members or serve in a reviewer/advisory role temporarily.**

- Willowsford Farm Produce Fund update – on funds raised so far.
 - How do we raise the remaining \$5K for 2025?
 - How to get word out for donor advised funds? Quarterly fundraising event?
- Suggestion to break up fundraising ideas into two buckets: 1) Projects we can start now that doesn't require 501c3 status; and 2) Projects we can do once we get the status.
- Is there interest in doing a Farm tour and Land tour during the off season? Task Forces can continue to meet. Consider for December or January.

Budget Presentation

- Harry presented the budget slide deck to the group with the following comments from the group.
 - The goal is to show the community how we are getting “value” for the money while working to keep assessments low by improving efficiencies.
 - Conversion to 501c3 will allow for donations, grants and real estate relief.
 - Pause Capital Expense spending until there is a clear ROI
 - Keep building reserves steadily over time
 - The Conservancy BOD has (4) new members and a new Chair who will all help bring a new direction to the organization
 - We need to identify the “break even” amount for the farm. Right now, the farm is costing each household \$10/month which is not the bulk of the Conservancy fees
 - The conservancy is doing a lot to raise funds and is looking at more programs and opportunities to expand the offerings.
 - The farm has continued to improve year over year and is producing more food now than ever before. The farm's partnership with Dulles South Food Pantry is increasing revenue and opening up new opportunities to serve the community.
 - Discussion about grants and how the conservancy is planning to approach those opportunities. Charles noted that a study was conducted by a volunteer and there is a large list of programs to consider but it will take time to vet them. This process continues to be on-going.
 - It was noted that we are currently unable to host certain groups due to the limitations of our facilities. Investments will need to be made if we want to capitalize on those revenue streams.
 - The board and staff are looking at ways to utilize what we already have and find cost savings wherever possible.

Update from Board Advisors

- Discussed fundraising ideas
 - Tiger team to prioritize list and effort required
- Discussed organizing list based on grants vs. fund raising
- Discussed partnership with Dulles South Food Pantry and how we can partner with them on fundraising.
- Discussed how to utilize the pool of talented residents to help with grant writing and fundraising efforts

- Discussed how to connect our services with other organizations with similar goals and values (organic produce)
- What can be done ahead of the 501c3 conversion and what can be done with the current staff?
- Suggestion was made to set up specific task forces to focus on further developing the ideas. The results from the task force efforts need to be organized before presenting ideas to the conservancy staff.
- Develop marketing plan and what opportunities exist for revenue outside of the community?
- The goal is to create an opportunity for residents to participate

Committee Business

- Formally named committee officers
 - Committee Chair – Gene
 - Vice Chair – Naisa
 - Secretary – Courtney
- Future agenda topics
 - Conservancy 101
 - Survey

Next Steps:

- **November 17 @ Boathouse (5:30-7:30)**
 - Fundraising opportunity feedback
 - Budget comments
- **December or January – Committee meeting and Farm Tour? Land Tour?**
- **Volunteers needed to review fundraising ideas**
 - **Set meeting for review before next CAC meeting**

Session End

The meeting ended at 8:00 pm.