Board of Trustees Meeting – September 15, 2026
Meeting Minutes

Board members in attendance: Charles Graybeal, Karyn Moreland, Harry Pugh, Leah Macchiarolo, Gail Legaspi, Avi Sareen, and Ashish Kapoor (by Zoom)

Staff in attendance: Sophie, Andrew, and Kyle in person. Paul, Sam, and Kasey by Zoom.

There were three people in attendance in person and a few more by Zoom, including several HOA Board Members.

Opening & Board Business

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 pm.

The Board reviewed the agenda. There were no corrections, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

The Board reviewed the May 19, 2026, meeting minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

There were public comments from HOA Board Members during the public comment period and at the end of key sections of the meeting. Of note was a request that Financial Statements include YTD information and a list of staff with team/roles/etc. In addition, there were comments about Farm revenue and the status of the Land Stewardship Manager position.

Old Business

Staff provided an update on grant activity. The grant tracker reflected four approved awards or programs, totaling $70,000 in stated grant amounts, including two recent awarded grants. $5,000 from the Van Huyck Chockley Conservation Fund for acoustic wildlife monitoring (as recommended in our wildlife survey) and $5,000 awarded in May from the Loudoun County Human Services Nonprofit grant program for unrestricted food access. Two applications totaling $56,579 were pending, including Virginia Department of Forestry funding and a Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation request. There was discussion about reformatting the dashboard for board review and Gail offered to design a new dashboard.

Staff reported that the Conservancy's application for Loudoun County real estate and personal property tax exemption, submitted in March following Board authorization in January, was deemed eligible and was considered by the County's Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee on June 9. The committee did not recommend that the application be considered by the Board of Supervisors. The exemption could have saved approximately $55,000 annually.

Staff reviewed progress on the new ten-year Land Management Plan, which will replace the 2017 Conservation Plan. The forests section had completed subject-matter expert review and was ready for Board review. The grasslands and meadows section had also been reviewed and was being updated with

summer intern vegetation survey findings. The water resources and wetlands section was undergoing expert review, and a wildlife habitat outline was planned for late fall. Staff recommended that the new Land Stewardship Manager, once confirmed, review the final drafts and the new sections before coming to the board for review.

Staff presented the Conservancy's updated Graphic Standards Manual, which includes minor revisions to and additional logo colors and fonts, as well as the addition of a Native Plant Nursery logo. The HOA Board reviewed and approval the trademark-related aspects of the manual in June with all approving and Seth Johnson abstaining. The updated manual was presented for Board adoption and was unanimously approved.

New Business

Staff then shared that in addition to informing the draft 2027 budget, that the survey results would help inform the Strategic Plan update that will commence in November. There was strong interest from survey takers in joining focus groups. The goal is to complete the update in-house to leverage expertise on the CAC and board and to share a draft in the first quarter of 2027 with expected approval in March. This was shared as a tentative timeline.

Next, staff provided an update on the Wine Down for a Cause fundraiser scheduled for Thursday, October 1. The event will again be held at the Farm Stand and be co-hosted with Stroll Magazine. The event will include tastings from eight wineries, a silent auction, live music, food trucks, and family-friendly activities. Net proceeds will support the Farm's produce donations to Dulles South Food Pantry. Additional auction contributions and event-day volunteers were being sought. Board members are encouraged to attend and bid on silent auction items. Finally, Sophie shared that staff and board members would be participating in Willowsford 101 on Thursday, September 17 at the Sycamore House.

Gene Loughran, Chair of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), presented the draft findings from the recently closed Community Survey, providing an overall summary followed by aggregated results from each survey question. The findings highlighted residents' strong appreciation for the Conservancy's trails and open spaces, as well as the importance of the Farm Stand and other core services.

The CAC identified several overarching themes, including a desire for the Conservancy to focus on delivering its core responsibilities effectively, strengthen financial sustainability, demonstrate value to residents, and reevaluate activities that provide limited community benefit. Core responsibilities discussed included protecting and stewarding the open spaces, maintaining trails and infrastructure, and prioritizing financial sustainability in Farm operations. The importance of effectively communicating the Conservancy's work and accomplishments was also emphasized.

The presentation did not include the open-ended survey responses, and discussion focused on how best to summarize and communicate those comments. Gene offered to prepare a final report incorporating the survey results and summaries of the open-ended responses. He also offered to present the final results and report at the October Joint Board Meeting. Karyn Moreland followed the presentation with a brief update on the CAC in her role as Board Liaison.

Staff Updates

Operations: Kyle discussed ongoing recruitment and leadership transitions. Sabrina, who joined full-time in June as Programs and Engagement Associate, is expanding capacity for volunteer coordination, programs, and events. Staff also provided updates on the Land Stewardship Manager position and the

Farm leadership transition. Farm Director Paul Harnden was leaving due to a family emergency requiring a move back to Maine – he was thanked for his service. Charlotte, Emma, and Kylie were providing continuity while the longer-term Farm leadership structure was assessed, including through a facilitated planning session.

Farm: Paul reported strong volunteer engagement, completion of the annual organic certification inspection, and a pilot allowing customers to redeem Custom Credits at Farm Stands. Farm Stand sales at both locations and meat sales were ahead of the prior year, and Eat in Season and Egg Shares were performing well. Farmer's Choice and Custom Shares were below last year, with higher costs for purchased vegetables. As a result of the transition, the team was evaluating late-summer crops and fall plantings, including radishes, beets, and leafy greens, while planning winter CSA offerings and the 2027 strategy. Tractor training was underway for team members.

Food access: The Farm continued to support Anna Sudha Community Kitchens through Harvest for Good, with okra production reaching approximately 50 pounds per week, although daily harvesting needs created volunteer recruitment challenges. Dulles South Food Pantry continued to receive unclaimed shares and other surplus produce. Staff reviewed the DSFP Produce Fund, noting approximately $2,789 in donations for 2026, and a $5,299 balance in the fund. Net proceeds from Wine Down for a Cause and grants were expected to support 2027 donations, including labor.

Land Stewardship: Staff summarized work on pond management, water-quality testing, an Allen Farm pond dam survey, a solar aerator at Lotus Pond, and future dredging planning. Wildlife work included stream monitoring, camera surveys, monarch and amphibian projects, and completion of bluebird nest box monitoring, with 176 birds fledged. Hunters were selected for the 2026–2027 deer management program, and two residents were selected for a mentorship pilot. Grassland and meadow work included vegetation surveys, invasive plant treatment, and work supported by the County's Invasive Plant Species Management Program grant.

Trail conditions: Andrew acknowledged resident concerns regarding mowing delays, overgrowth, loose aggregate, erosion, unauthorized ATV and e-bike use, and damage to bridges and other trail features. DTE's mowing contract covers grass sections only; Conservancy Rangers and volunteers manage woody vegetation separately. Staff were working with DTE on service improvements, and Elizabeth began as a full-time seasonal Trail Technician/Ranger on September 14. Updates included resident reporting and Adopt a Trail efforts, a feedback session with the Mountain Biking Club, and bridge and boardwalk projects in the Grove, Grant, and Grange.

Programs and communications: Kasey reported 189 volunteers contributing more than 2,053 recorded hours, excluding unreported Board hours. Plans to adopt Better Impact volunteer management software were presented to improve sign-ups, records, training, and reporting. Newsletter open rates improved to an average of 19% since May, compared with 14.6% earlier in the year, and social media views increased, with 73% originating from non-followers. Staff also reviewed upcoming fall programs, including the Harvest Market and Holiday Farm Stands.

Finances

The Finance Committee presented financial results through July 2026. Community Enhancement Fees totaled approximately $213,500 year-to-date, compared with $180,500 budgeted, with July resale fees totaling $56,500. Organization-wide payroll and benefits were approximately $121,000 below budget,

including $85,000 in Land Stewardship. No significant unexpected expenses were reported through July. Farm revenue was $93,170 year-to-date compared with a budget of $138,685. While share sales were down, farm stand sales were up. Farm expenses and payroll also remained below budget.

The 2025 audit had been completed, and the Finance Committee approved the audit report in July. Staff reported that Schedule O was completed in August and that the 990 Form would be circulated for Board review in late September, with a filing target ahead of the November 15 deadline.

Harry presented the 2027 budget development schedule and guiding principles. Draft budgets were being presented to the Board in September, with CAC feedback planned for September 22 and community review in October at the Joint Board Meeting and via a communication to residents. The presented schedule called for a Board vote on November 5 followed by HOA Board consideration at their November board meeting. Guiding principles included supporting core mission activities, financial sustainability, responsible cost management, diversified funding, and careful review of capital and reserve needs.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm and the board then entered in an executive session which concluded at 8:35 pm.