

Rural & Scenic Roads Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2021 (Virtual)

APPROVED

1. Chair Ms. Ahalt brought the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call

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

Members Absent: Tom Barse

Staff Present: Denis Superczynski, Amanda Whitmore, David Olney

Guest Speaker: Leslie Saville, Montgomery County Rustic Roads Program

2. The Committee members reviewed the minutes of the October 13, 2021 meeting. Mr. Ziedelis MOVED that the Committee APPROVE the October 13, 2021 minutes as written. Mr. Pearre SECONDED the motion. The minutes were approved as presented. MOTION passed 10-0-0
3. Ms. Leslie Saville presented on the Montgomery County Rustic Roads Program.

Ms. Saville presented the outline of the program – Definition, Overview, Legal Framework, Master Plans, Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC), Program Weaknesses, Related Programs, and Resources. The outline was distributed to RSRAC members before the meeting, along with a Drop Box link to photos and additional materials. When finished presenting, Ms. Saville took questions from the committee members.

- Peter Pearre questioned the 80 foot right-of-ways and how that is implemented. Ms. Saville stated that it is usually triggered by subdivision. At the time of subdivision dedication of right-of-way is required. The only time right-of-way dedication isn't required is when there are large farm remainders.
- Susan Hanson thanked Leslie – 1st question: How do DPW and other bodies like MDOT work together, and who is the boss so roads are attended to in a timely fashion? Ms. Saville noted that MDOT is engaged during subdivision review and for Capital Projects, Bridge Replacement, etc. The County Executive and MDOT are very supportive of the program. Maintenance goes to different branches.
- Mr. Mark asked about spot improvements that are allowed and the process they follow. Ms. Saville explained that they gather reports for locations where spot improvements are requested and then review them and act. They try to implement the lowest impact solutions first.

- Mr. Castleman thanked Ms. Saville for the history. Asked about the roll out of the program and the reaction of the community in general. The Community asked for the program and largely supports the program. There has been very minor pushback from the public. Pushback is normally from citizens who believe the government has no role in preserving and maintaining these roads. Mr. Castleman asked what it was that started the program. Ms. Saville said it was paving roads that spurred the program, as well as construction of two large bridges.
 - Ms. Wyatt thanked Ms. Saville for the presentation. She questioned how much was done upfront regarding historic easements and sites. Ms. Saville noted that the scenic easements mostly were already existing and were precursors to the forest conservation law. The Forest Conservation Law and the Rustic Roads Law were put in place in the early 1990's. AG easements have also been very important. The evolution of adding roads is an ongoing process. Roads have been in Master Plans that have come about. Ms. Wyatt asked about the relationship between the program and the historic commission and if any of the rustic roads are also designated historic sites. Ms. Saville noted that Martinsburg Road in Dickinson is the only road designated historic.
 - Ms. Hanson asked how Heritage Montgomery has enhanced the program. Ms. Saville noted the heritage area of Montgomery County was created in 2003-2004 and rustic roads were listed as resources in the back. They are currently working on a Rustic Roads video and are working on 10-12 brochures around the county highlighting the roads.
4. Ms. Ahalt asked members to make sure they reach out to Kimberly Brandt with their complete contact information, phone number and email address. She noted the November 24th meeting and the December 22nd meeting are cancelled due to the two major holidays. She also requested feedback about speakers and topics for future meetings.
 5. Ms. Saville said the committee is welcome to email her any questions. Ms. Wyatt asked for the group to think about classifications of roads being looked at differently.
 6. Ms. Ahalt noted that the next meeting is November 10th at 4:30 pm. The agenda will include a discussion of rural roads issues associated with specific user groups. Darius Mark will discuss issues associated with pedestrians, cyclists, and other recreational users. Tom Barse and Mary Jane Roop of Brookfield Farm will address use by the agriculture community. Chief Coe, Director of Fire and Rescue Services, will address use by emergency services providers.
 7. Ms. Whitmore asked the committee members to come up with questions, issues, or topics related to the upcoming speakers and email her or Kimberly Brandt by November 5th so the speakers have time to prepare.
 8. The meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Minutes transcribed by: Mary Dolan