

Rural & Scenic Roads Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
November 10, 2021 (Virtual)

**APPROVED**

1. Chair Ms. Ahalt brought the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call

Members Present: Tiffany Ahalt, Jeff Yocum, Howard Looney, Ron Burns, Susan Hanson, Peter Pearre, Dave Ziedelis, Sam Castleman (joined after vote on October minutes), Jim Bonneville, Darius Mark

Members Absent: Tom Barse, Barbara Wyatt

Staff Present: Denis Superczynski, Amanda Whitmore, David Olney

Guest Speakers: Chief Coe, Frederick County Director of Fire and Rescue Services  
Mary Jane Roop, Brookfield Farms  
Darius Mark, Frederick County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Group

2. The Committee members reviewed the minutes of the October 27, 2021 meeting. Mr. Pearre MOVED that the Committee APPROVE the October 27, 2021 minutes as written. Ms. Hanson SECONDED the motion. The minutes were approved as presented. MOTION passed 9-0-1.
3. Chief Coe, Frederick County Director of Fire and Rescue Services presented to the committee on Emergency Services Providers. He noted that the roadway network is pivotal to his department in providing quick, timely, and efficient services to the citizens of Frederick County in their time of need. Roadway, construction and features have a direct impact on their response time, capabilities, and their ability to set up certain functions that exist in the rural areas of the county.
  - Noted they look at a lot of different aspects when it comes to roadways and their functionalities and their effect on their ability to provide service. They look at bridge ratings, canopy over roadway, construction, detours, width of roads, turning radius. These are important so that apparatus can get down roads and they can determine turning ability.
  - Units start stacking up on narrow roads in many cases. A common factor they deal with is not only how to get to a scene, but how to get out of a scene.
  - The most important and biggest effect on the program is the maintenance of the roads. The emergency service providers are very interested in participating in collaboration with the scenic roadway programs.

Chief Coe answered questions from the committee.

- Mr. Yokum asked if Chief Coe would be someone who would look over whatever document came out of the Advisory Committee. Chief Coe commented that he would have an absolute interest in reviewing it and providing any comments that could affect the provision of public safety.
- Ms. Hanson thanked Chief Coe for working with the residents in her area putting in wet faucets in order to come up with a solution for the historic bridge in her neighborhood.

Chief Coe noted that the department has an outstanding relationship with DPW. He welcomed anyone to reach out by phone or email with any other questions.

4. Ms. Roop, Brookfield Farms presented about their operation and their use of the rural roads. They have a farm and run a grain operation and have also opened the farm to agritourism and in the fall they open up a pick your own pumpkin patch.
  - She stated that the biggest issue for them is the size of farm equipment. She stated that all farm equipment has a triangle on the back for slow moving. Most consumers do not understand the slow moving emblem. There are a lot of accidents that have occurred that are not the farmers fault due to people being impatient. Whenever they move their equipment they always have a flagger in front.
  - Stated that their road is well known for being a great bicycle road. But accidents occur with it being gravel, and there is also a deep cutoff on the side of the road that can damage the farm equipment and cars because of the lack of room to get around, lives can be lost and people can have bodily harm.
  - Also noted the necessity of keeping the canopy trimmed back so that equipment and vehicles can get through on the roads.

Ms. Roop answered questions from the committee.

- Ms. Ahalt's question was about tree canopies and asked if there were limits since some of the emergency service providers vehicles are 13 feet tall? Ms. Roop noted that some of their farm equipment is 15-16 feet high and it can be an issue for moving equipment from farm to farm. Farm operations are growing in size and doing more direct farm sales, which brings people to the farms. They don't expect roads to be widened, just made safer with signage and having the canopy trimmed. There needs to be an educational component regarding the signs.
- Ms. Roop was asked if as a farmer she had a desire to see roads remain rural in nature. She responded that yes, she believes that most people farming feel that way, because it reduces the amount of traffic.
- David Olney asked Ms. Roop about their keeping the equipment off of Route 15. She noted her husband doesn't have to go on Route 15, they have scaled back their farming since they don't have a younger generation that will be taking over. Other farmers do have to use these roads depending on where they are farming.

5. Mr. Mark, Frederick County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) presented on Cyclists and Other Recreational Users. He noted that his committee meets on the second Wednesday of the month. He had a presentation that he put up on the screen for the advisory committee.

- Mr. Mark noted that the Bike and Trails Plan was written in 1989 and it has been 22 years and they have made some progress. The goal was to implement the bike and trail plan to promote cycling and walking throughout Frederick County. Many cycling events use multiple routes on multiple days throughout the County and there are some roads they are considering to add to the program. In addition to large organized events, there are people daily coming to the County because of the roads, lower traffic, and typically less congestion at rush hour. We have special roads, rural scenic routes for bike tours, brewery tours, wine tours, and ice cream tours. A lot of the tours feature the County farms.
- Frederick County is trying to create a transportation network that allows you the ability to enjoy life without needing a car. The BPAC is currently working on several multi-use paths like the Ballenger Creek Path in the Southern part of Frederick and the Trolley trail. They are also working on to improve the on-street infrastructure. Also included are bike lanes and signage.
- A big problem for a lot of cyclists is that you have to use Old Frederick Road to get to many locations. The BPAC is working on parks where people can park their vehicles and have access to ride their bikes or walk without having to get on Old Frederick Road, which can be intimidating to new riders. Lots of riders don't want to get on a dangerous road to get to a more desirable road. There are a lot of riders that like the gravel roads for cycling, and there are many events that take place on only gravel roads. There are however very few gravel surface roads left in the county. In Loudoun County, Virginia there are many areas where the road is paved in neighborhoods and then turns into gravel. They see many residents that used the combined surface roads to get to school, work, etc. If we are going to have an impact and save these roads for future, we need to institutionalize it. We need criteria as guidelines for justifying improvements.

Mr. Mark answered questions.

- Canopy was brought up as it provides for shading bicyclists and motorists in the summer. Used to be that canopies were provided to give motorists shading when air conditioning wasn't available in cars. Shouldn't be cut too far back, just enough for the larger vehicles to get through.
- One question was about tar and chip roads and how they change from being newly rough due to tarring and chipping and then change to smooth within a week or so afterwards. These type of roads don't usually change bicyclist events or paths.
- Question about widening roads. They are looking at spot improvements along roads like adding a shoulder or bike lane, which is hard to do in some areas because of lack of right-of-way. In those cases, the widening will most likely be on the upside of the roads since it isn't possible on both sides. The target is to improve where possible.

6. Ms. Ahalt noted that there will not be a second meeting this month, November. The next meeting will be December 8<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Ahalt and staff are working on more speakers for the future, such as a talk about the National Scenic Byways, the Heritage Area, and possibly someone from Loudoun County.
7. Ms. Ahalt asked if Mr. Mark could share his PowerPoint with the group. He will send it to Ms. Whitmore or Ms. Brandt.
8. The meeting adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

Minutes transcribed by: Mary Dolan