

# Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition – Board Meeting Minutes

**Date:** August 11, 2025

**Location:** The Perch CoWorking space

**Attendees:**

Staff: Kyle Lawrence and Ben Wyse

**Board Members:**

- Case Watkins
- Thomas Jenkins
- Kristen Grimshaw
- Trent Wagler
- Mark Nesbit
- Carol Lena Miller

**Pending Board Members:**

- Andy Stravers

**Guests:**

- Taylor Evans (potential board member)

[Recording of the meeting](#)

[Link to Board Packet](#)

## Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting was called to order by Kyle Lawrence, who welcomed attendees. Carol Lena led an opening icebreaker in which everyone shared where they last rode their bike and

where they would like to ride tomorrow if given the chance. Answers ranged from familiar local rides such as the Western Slope and Mole Hill to dream trips like Moab, Bend (Oregon), Vermont's Kingdom Trails, and the coastal bike path in Rio de Janeiro. The activity offered a moment of connection before turning to formal agenda items.

## **Board Packet Review and Process Discussion**

Kyle reviewed the current interactive board packet system (Zeck), which replaced the previous Google Docs approach. The new format consolidates updates, links, and comments in one mobile-friendly platform, allowing members to engage asynchronously before the meeting.

He explained that the packet is not meant to be an agenda in the traditional sense, but a comprehensive update tool. When the packet is fully built out, members should expect to spend one to two hours reviewing and commenting ahead of time. The goal is to use meeting time for deeper discussion of two or three priority topics rather than walking through all updates. Board members agreed the new system is effective, particularly the ability to tag and comment on items before the meeting.

## **Approval of June Minutes**

The June minutes were reviewed. Carol Lena suggested clarifying that outreach for the National Forest trail planning process should not emphasize schools and educators. The minutes were approved unanimously with this amendment.

## **Program Spotlight: *Bikes for Neighbors***

Program Coordinator Ben Wyse provided an in-depth update on the *Bikes for Neighbors* program. He began with a detailed story of "Holly," a local commuter who moved from a low-quality department store bike to a refurbished mid-90s Giant hybrid. She was given the opportunity to choose her bike, preserving a sense of ownership and dignity, and Ben personally rode with her to work to identify a safer, truck-free route. He also showed her how to integrate public transit into her commute, creating a more sustainable and flexible transportation routine.

Ben emphasized that the program prioritizes quality over quantity. Challenges include reaching people already commuting on poor-quality bikes, finding ways to measure long-term impact beyond the number of bikes distributed, and telling the program's story

without compromising recipients' privacy. The program is also shifting away from primarily serving refugees through Church World Service due to changes in that organization's capacity, and is building new partnerships, including with Sentara Behavioral Health.

Board discussion touched on potential new referral sources, collaborations with Parks & Rec for youth recipients, and opportunities for local media storytelling. Ben also described the bike donation process via Gift & Thrift and his careful selection of bikes to refurbish to a high standard.

## Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) Training

Case Watkins introduced the planned REDI training to be facilitated by Ebony, funded through a grant from the Virginia Conservation Network. The training will focus on strengthening both internal organizational culture and external community engagement in ways that are inclusive and equitable.

Two sessions of approximately two hours each are anticipated in the fall. Board members were broadly supportive, noting the value of an action-oriented and organizational focus. They agreed that the training should not replace the September board meeting, and identified October as a potential timeframe, possibly tied to the board retreat. However, some noted that the post-Campout period can be demanding. Scheduling will be coordinated with Ebony and Amanda via a poll to confirm availability.

**Motion:** The board supports participating in the REDI training and will work with staff and the facilitator to schedule the first session in September or October, as schedules permit.

Thomas made the motion, which was seconded by Trent Wagler and unanimously approved.

## Discussion: Link Development Project

Kyle introduced the Link apartment development discussion as both a decision on whether to comment on this specific project and a broader conversation about the Coalition's role in land use advocacy. He reviewed the rezoning request from R-3 to B-1, noting that it would allow significantly more units (from approximately 32 to more than 280).

Without rezoning, the likely alternative could be luxury townhomes with more parking and less alignment with walkability and bikeability goals. Kyle addressed misconceptions in public discourse, such as the idea that the site could easily be converted into a park, explaining the costs and maintenance commitments involved. Board members discussed the project's location, proximity to the future Liberty Street cycle track, reduced parking ratio, and alignment with the Coalition's mission, alongside concerns about community perception and precedent.

A portion of the conversation focused on how the Coalition could use this moment to educate the public on the connections between housing density, transportation choices, and sustainable land use. Some members saw the project as an example of transit-oriented development that could help reduce reliance on cars if paired with safe, connected bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Others cautioned that while the development has positive elements, the board should be mindful of how the organization's endorsement might be perceived in a politically charged environment. This led to a broader discussion of whether the Coalition should adopt a more formal framework for evaluating and commenting on development proposals in the future, rather than making decisions on a case-by-case basis.

Several members also examined the trade-offs embedded in the rezoning process. While B-1 zoning allows for mixed-use buildings that activate the street level and integrate housing with retail or services, the board noted that the current proffers do not guarantee substantial ground-floor activation beyond what is minimally required. There was interest in encouraging the city to negotiate stronger proffers that would enhance street-level vibrancy, create more inviting public space, and better integrate the building into the existing urban fabric. Ultimately, the discussion reflected a consensus that the Coalition's comments should recognize both the project's potential to advance active transportation goals and the opportunities for improvement, positioning the organization as a constructive voice in the civic conversation.

**Motion:** The board requests that the Executive Director draft comments to City Council regarding the Link development, highlighting both mission alignment and concerns, and share them with the Coalition's network, along with an explanatory email about civic advocacy as part of the Coalition's work.

**Motion made by Kristen, seconded by Trent Wagler, and unanimously approved.**

## Other Business

Kyle provided brief updates on business sponsorship growth, trail progress at Seven Bends State Park (including a nearly completed gravel trail and upcoming singletrack build), and the soft launch of the Coalition's recurring giving program. The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 8. The October meeting date remains under discussion due to its proximity to the Great Stokesville Campout.

## **Action Items**

- Kyle Lawrence will draft and send the Link development comment letter and accompanying member email.
- Staff will coordinate scheduling for the REDI training sessions.
- Board members will consider personal and professional connections that could expand the Bikes for Neighbors referral network.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting concluded with thanks to all participants.