BUNCOMBE COUNTY
LAND CONSERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
8:00 AM, JANUARY 21, 2026. IN PERSON

Members present:	Non-members present:
David Tuch Cameron Farlow David Siripoonsup Stagg Newman Bruce Schlessinger Liesel Erb Lang Hornthal – Virtual (quorum = 6/9)	Bob Gale – Previous LCAB Board Member Nancy Nehls Nelson – Previous LCAB Board Member, Virtual Hannah Coats – RiverLink Jess Laggis – SAHC Ariel Zijp - BCSWCD Martha Ross– BCSWCD Marika Lapham - BCSWCD Samantha Kirk – BC Staff

There was a quorum, as there were at least 6 members present. The following discussion occurred between members present:

The meeting was called to order at 8:17am.

- David Tuch called the meeting to order.

Conflict of Interest Statement: *In the interest of preserving public confidence in the actions of this Board, the chair reminds members of their duty to avoid any conflicts of interests and inquires as to whether any member knows of any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with respect to matters to come before the Board.*

No conflict of interest raised by the Board.

Introductions: All present briefly introduced themselves. Previous board members and new board members took some dedicated time to introduce themselves.

Approval of Agenda

- Stagg Newman made a motion to approve January 21, 2026, agenda, seconded by Cameron Farlow and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

- Stagg Newman made a motion to approve November 19, 2025, minutes, Liesel Erb seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: None.

Election of Officers – Board:
Newly appointed members are already acting as serving board members and with the turnover, new officers must be elected. Nancy Edgerton, who was not present, has experience serving as chair with SAHC and has offered to act as chair. Lang Hornthal, who equally has plentiful experience, has offered to vice-chair. Discussion ensued.

- Motion was made by Stagg Newman for Nancy Edgerton to act as Chair and for Lang Hornthal to act as Vice-Chair. Liesel Erb seconded, all voted in favor and the motion passed on the vote.

Update from Land Conservation Agencies:

- Land Trust Updates
    - Presented by Hannah Cotes with River Link
        - River Link is a Land Trust that focuses on small parcels of land in urban/semi-urban areas specifically by water
        - Creates and promotes programs engaging the youth of Buncombe County
        - Pocket Park Management
        - Focused on the Swannanoa river, specifically the Middle Swannanoa, for river restoration
    - Jess Laggis with Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC)
        - 29 Transactions in the service area
        - Working with the Warren Wilson Conservation easements
        - Deaverview Project – hard deadline to close in March of 2026
        - More projects: North McDaris Ridge and Pinnacle Knob Slopes
- BC Agriculture & Land Resources Update
    - Presented by Ariel Zijp of BCSWCD
        - This board has currently approved the three Conserving Carolina projects – these projects will be brought to the commissioners in March
        - Once these projects are approved, the full 270 will be expended.
        - In the 2030 strategic plan, the county adopted a resolution with the goal to conserve 20% of the land by 2030- or -conserving 700 acres per year.
        - There is also some conversation about another open space bond.
            - Discussion ensued on the passive recreation subcommittee. All three members of this subcommittee are rolling off the board.
            - Conservation ensued on past proceedings/procedure for the benefit of new board members.

Report on 1/13 Meeting on Land Conservation in Upper Hominy Valley:
Meeting to inform the community about the entire conservation process. Acted as a great opportunity to plant the seed of conservation and assistance to landowners who may be cautious of government bodies, but who are also unwilling to sell to developers. Terri Wells moderated the event, Jess Laggis with SAHC and Ariel Zijp presented – all three did a wonderful job! The event was very well received with parking overflowing in the lot. There were approximately 70 guests in attendance. The community thoroughly enjoyed the Q&A session. This event would be great to duplicate in other communities.

Discussion ensued on upcoming opportunities for how to best communicate with the public on conservation processes and successes.

Honoring Board Members Leaving – Staff & Board:
Presented by Ariel Zijp. A running slideshow of members during LCAB over the past 21 years. Some history and highlights presented.
Bob Gale was an original LCAB board member – 21 years! Nancy Nehls Nelson was elected in 2008.

Thank you Bob Gale, Bob Turner, Nancy Nehls Nelson and Matt Fusco for your years of dedicated service.

Announcements and Discussions:
February meeting to take place, as normal, over zoom. Agendas to be sent out a week before the meeting with a request for quorum. Discussion ensued on upcoming procedure for the board.

Adjournment

- Bruce Schelessinger made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Cameron Farlow and the motion passed unanimously.

With no other announcements or discussions, the meeting adjourned at 9:22 am.