

1. Approaching 100 Friends, our first year! And 175 monthly visits to our website.

A year ago, there was no way to know if anyone was going to be interested in revitalizing Esmont. The interest has been overwhelming and looks like the organization is going to be successful with the selected projects. There are major obstacles ahead, but with a strong board and strong support from the neighborhood those obstacles can be overcome.

This meeting was a turning point. Everyone realized that now is the time to write a Business Plan, describe/plan/organize each project, and prepare to seek funding sources. Hopefully, some members of the audience with this kind of experience will assist in this huge project. Suggestions were made to contact the Mayor of Batesville and the Town Manager of Scottsville for copies of their Business Plans to use as guides.

2. Graduate Student in Non-Profit Management working with us for about 6 months.

We were fortunate to have been contacted by a woman in Florida with lots of good experience, working on a master's degree in Non-Profit Management needing a non-profit to work with. She will help us with a host of planning ideas and written materials.

3. Newly forming group - Southern Albemarle _____, name not complete yet. Interested in controlled growth in Esmont and Scottsville.

We have had one meeting of developers/designers/builders re affordable housing in both Esmont and Scottsville, in the "forgotten corner" of Albemarle. We would have more clout by joining together. After the Friends meeting the folks from Alberene said they would like to participate also.

Scottsville is also interested in connecting with our proposed trail which ends in Alberene, connecting all three communities. A walking tour of Esmont and Scottsville is being planned.

4. AHIP Update

Some time ago Friends of Esmont led a tour of the village for AHIP. They were to then prepare a planning grant proposal to submit to the county to include as a line item in their application. This was to give us a better chance of getting funded. However, when we inquired recently about the status of the grant, we received the following email:

“Albemarle County officials have decided to not pursue any type of CDBG grants this year including planning grants. The County is in the process of redeveloping their housing plan and there was some discussion at this past week’s board of supervisors meeting about what the future may hold, but nothing definitive.”

Cory Demchak, Director of Program

The 22 people who asked for AHIP’s services will go on the waiting list at AHIP and will eventually get serviced.

5. Esmont Depot Update

Spoke with CSX in Jacksonville, FL, about acquiring the land close to the original site of the Depot. He put us off until we have funding and says the piece of property is not large enough for them to recover costs of selling. We expect to have the drawings by late June. Meanwhile the Depot is one the projects we must plan out, estimate costs, look for funding, then go back to CSX when this is all done.

6. Scottsville Museum - needs Esmont artifacts

Several Friends went to a talk two Sundays ago about Esmont’s history. The Museum had employed an Intern from UVA to research the Village and he presented his findings. A surprisingly large audience filled the room. Again, lots of interest in Esmont.

The museum Director, Evelyn Edson, asked for us to bring Esmont artifacts for them to display. If anyone has artifacts to share with the Museum, please do take them by.

7. Fulfillment Farm update

The following email was sent to Jenny West, a representative of Virginia Wildlife Association:

Jenny, my name is Peggy Denby, and I am Chairperson of Friends of Esmont, a 501 c 3 non-profit, organized to bring life back into the Village. We organized about a year ago and now have some 100 members. Shortly after we organized, we went through a process of determining what we thought would be good projects to work on that would benefit most of Esmont residents, while at the same time, make the Village more attractive to visitors.

We decided on a list of five projects, all five of which connect in some way and all meet the criteria above. One of those projects is to work with your organization to make the approximately 200 acres of Fulfillment Farm, north of Route 6, more usable/user friendly for Esmont residents and visitors.

Just so you know, another project is to make the "bottom" along Ballinger Creek, abutting the fulfillment Farm property and across from the former Purvis Store, into a Wetland. A third project is to turn the rail bed into a walking/riding trail. This trail would run alongside the Wetland and possibly into the Fulfillment Farm property. So, you see how our projects come together and benefit each other as well as benefiting the Village.

Please give this information some positive thought and let's get together soon to talk about how Virginia Wildlife can help us accomplish these projects for the good of the historic Village of Esmont, its residents and visitors. I am available by email, phone at 404 680 6122 or in person.

Jenny called me and asked for a more definitive plan on how we want to use the property. I would like to have ideas from anyone interested to put together the plan. See Item 1 above.

8. BAMA WORKS FUND – Dave Matthews

We are registered with this Fund so we can apply for a grant before August 1. Award sizes are up to \$10,000 and several of our projects would qualify.

9. Delegate Matt Fariss - anyone know him?

As we move along with our projects, we are going to need support from our State Legislators as well as our local politicians. I have written to Matt Fariss, state delegate representing Esmont, twice with no response. Does anyone know him personally, who might call his attention to us?

Or, if you know other legislators who might be helpful, let us know.

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A big **THANK YOU** to Stephan and Desiree, Owners and Operators of Woodville Bed and Breakfast, for inviting us into their beautiful place to have our meeting.

www.woodvillebedbreakfast.com