



## AGENDA

### Waynesboro Advocacy Committee

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 1 PM

### Waynesboro Office of Economic Development

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Welcome  | Dr. Tom Benzing |
| 2. Approval of Minutes                                  | Dr. Benzing     |
| a. February 2026  |                 |
| 3. Introduction of New Committee Members                | Dr. Benzing     |
| a. Dr. Steven Powers,<br>VMNH Foundation Representative |                 |
| 4. Community Connections                                | Dr. Benzing     |
| a. Advocacy   |                 |
| i. State Budget   |                 |
| b. Waynesboro Library displays                          |                 |
| c. Trailer  |                 |
| d. Events   |                 |
| i. Lecture Series                                       |                 |
| ii. Science Social                                      |                 |
| iii. Riverfest  |                 |
| iv. Museum Rodeo  |                 |
| 5. Open Discussion                                      | Dr. Benzing     |
| 6. Adjournment  | Dr. Benzing     |

**Virginia Museum of Natural History**  
**Waynesboro Advocacy Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 1 PM**  
**All-virtual**



## **MINUTES**

**Present:**

|                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Dr. Tom Benzing, Chair | Dr. Carole Nash      |
| Dr. Maggie Van Huss    | Mr. Rick Kane        |
| Mr. Dick Bratcher      | Mr. Greg Hitchin     |
| Ms. Ann Peltier        | Ms. Faye Cooper      |
| Mr. Urbie Nash         | Ms. Jennifer Whitlow |
| Mr. Len Poulin         | Mr. Zach Ryder       |
| Mr. Ryan Barber        | Mr. Jonathan Martin  |

**Not Present:**

|                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Dr. Steven Powers  | Ms. Stephanie Duffy |
| Mr. Bill Alexander |                     |

## **WELCOME**

Dr. Tom Benzing opened the meeting with a welcome to all attending the all-virtual meeting at 1:00 PM. A quorum was declared present for the committee to conduct business.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from January 5, 2026, were presented and approved with no corrections. Greg Hitchin made a motion to accept the minutes which was second by Maggie Van Huss. Motion carried by voice vote.

## **INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Dr. Benzing welcomed Richard (Dick) Bratcher to the committee. After which Mr. Bratcher gave a brief overview of his connection with Waynesboro and interest in the VMNH Waynesboro campus project.

## **COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

- Advocacy - The advocacy work continues through in-person efforts and community support letters. Dr. Benzing will be traveling to Richmond tomorrow to speak to capital outlay committee members. The committee was reminded that we will know if our budget request made it through committee on Sunday February 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Trailer – Mr. Martin reported that the trailer contract has been signed and exhibits are being developed in-house for use after the trailer is operational.
- Events – Dr. Benzing encouraged attendance at the latest lecture series event planned for Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>. This lecture will feature two accomplished Natural Heritage specialists who will speak about the flora of Virginia. As always, this event is free and open to the public and can be livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube.

- Science Social - To engage a wider audience to the Waynesboro project, Dr. Nash suggested borrowing an idea from the Elizabeth River Conservation group. This would involve a monthly informal meeting ideally at a brewery or pub to speak about science topics relevant to Waynesboro. Faye Cooper volunteered to contact the Elizabeth River group for more information.
- Riverfest – The annual celebration in Waynesboro is planned for May 2, 2026. Representatives from the museum will be in attendance. Ideally using the mobile museum structure for the first time, during this event.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION**

Dr. Benzing concluded the importance of garnering support from the community as both the General Assembly's House and Senate Finance subcommittees work through competing priorities. He reiterated February 22<sup>nd</sup> as the day preliminary decisions are made public.

The priorities of the newly appointed Secretary of Education are unclear, but the hope is that he will be supportive of the initiative.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further comment or discussion, Dr. Benzing adjourned the meeting at 1:30 PM.

The next meeting of the Waynesboro Advocacy Committee  
March 2, 2026, 1:00 PM  
Waynesboro Office of Economic Development