

# TASK FORCE ON THE FUTURE OF LAKE ACCOTINK

Monday, November 6, 2023  
7:00 p.m.

Government Center  
Conference Room 11

## Meeting Minutes

### **Members Present:**

Sharon Bulova, Individual (Chair)  
Vicki Arnold, Individual  
Ken Balbuena, North Springfield Civic Association  
Anne Ball, Sierra Club – Great Falls  
Matt Bright, Earth Sangha  
Bryan Campbell, Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley  
Karen Campblin, Fairfax NAACP  
Sandy Collins, Friends of Accotink Creek  
John Cook, Individual  
Mary Cortina, Planning Commission  
Michael Deloose, West Springfield Civic Association  
Charlotte Hannagan, Kings Park Civic Association  
Chris Jones, GMU – Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center  
Mary Keeser, Friends of Lake Accotink Park (FLAP)  
David Kepley, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions  
Marta Morrissey, Franconia District Land Use Committee  
Gail Nittle, Springfield Civic Association  
Allan Robertson, Save Lake Accotink  
Martin Shepherd, Ravensworth Farm Civic Association  
Evelyn Spain, Planning Commission  
Delegate Vivian Watts, Virginia House of Delegates  
Steve Yannucci, Individual  
Larry Zaragoza, Environmental Quality Advisory Council

### **County Representatives Present:**

Aaron George, Project Coordinator, Public Works and Environmental Services  
Christopher Herrington, Director, Public Works and Environmental Services  
Andrea Lewis, Staff Aide, Braddock District Office  
James Melvin, Staff Aide, Franconia District Office  
Marcia Pape, Senior Legislative Assistant, Braddock District Office  
Charles Smith, Project Coordinator & Branch Chief, Public Works and Environmental Services

### **LimnoTech Representatives Present:**

Lynne Mowery, PE, CFM, Project Manager, WSP  
Tim Schmitt, Senior Environmental Scientist/Principal  
Craig Taylor, PE, Hydraulics and River Rehabilitation Specialist

### **Members Absent:**

Cathy Field, North Springfield Civic Association

James Heo, Mount Vernon/Springfield Chamber of Commerce  
Diane Hoffman, Braddock District Land Use and Environment Committee  
Stella Koch, Environmental Quality Advisory Council  
Jakelin Lake, Individual  
Chris Landgraff, Northern Virginia Regional Commission  
Ernest Rodriguez, Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE)  
Hasan Shah, Individual  
Kiel Stone, Park Authority Board  
Meghan Walker, Danbury Forest Civic Association

**Public Members in Attendance:**

Kerry Hubbard

## **Call to Order and Introductory Remarks**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Sharon Bulova at 7:00 p.m. Attendance was taken, and a quorum was present.

Chairman Bulova recognized Marcia Pape to provide an update on the status of Diane Hoffman. She reported that Diane is recovering well from her surgery and extended a thank you to everyone from Diane for their messages of support.

Chairman Bulova reviewed the meeting agenda and noted that Craig Taylor of LimnoTech was participating virtually. She stated that in the second half of the meeting, subcommittee chairs will provide updates so all Task Force members understand in what direction the subcommittees are going, hear more details, and for members to provide their thoughts. Subcommittees will present their final reports at the November 27 Task Force meeting. The written reports should include an executive summary and conclusions. The Findings Report will knit everything together. County staff has been asked to fact check the reports for technical errors, not whether they agree with the findings. Staff will contact subcommittee chairs directly if there are any questions.

## **Approval of Minutes from October 2, 2023 Meeting**

Ken Balbuena made a motion to approve the minutes. David Kepley seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

## **Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

## **WSP/LimnoTech Presentation on Forecasting Outcomes for Lake Accotink**

Chairman Bulova re-introduced the team from WSP/LimnoTech: Lynne Mowery, Project Manager with WSP; Tim Schmitt, Senior Environmental Scientist with LimnoTech; and Craig Taylor, Hydraulics and River Rehabilitation Specialist with LimnoTech, who participated virtually.

Mr. Taylor stated that this presentation would address several community questions related to forecasting outcomes for Lake Accotink. The first question in this category was how the regulation of lakes compare to the regulation of wetlands. Wetlands are more strongly regulated than lakes, however, permits for wetland restoration are easier to obtain than permits for the removal of soil from a wetland. In response to another community question, he stated that re-using lake sediment to help restore a wetland can be helpful, but it is a rather complicated option since it is a fairly new approach. Regarding dam regulatory requirements and how it would be regulated if the lake filled with sediment, Mr. Taylor noted that the dam would still be regulated, whether it was full of water or sediment. If a decision was made to fully remove the dam, that would require a permit, which could be a lengthy process.

Mr. Taylor stated that an open water feature would require periodic dredging. The beneficial reuse of sediment could be a good stop-gap measure until a final decision is made on handling of the sediment. It may be possible to dredge a portion of the lower lake and deposit the spoils in the upper part of the lake, but there is a point of diminishing returns. The County would need to reduce the amount of dredging by approximately half with each dredge cycle in order to keep the spoils onsite. Eventually, offsite transportation would be needed to maintain an open water feature. Maintenance costs will be more intensive for the first five years of a combined open water and wetland scenario. The greatest challenge would be the annual management of invasive species.

In response to another question regarding sediment loads for Lake Accotink, Mr. Taylor noted that estimating loads is extremely difficult because of variables like weather, local residential and commercial development, degradation of stream banks, etc. The US Geological Survey has collected data for many years but is only able to make estimates on suspended sediment, not on sediment in the creek beds or lakebed. Collecting bedload numbers would improve the accuracy, but it would take several years and approximately \$500,000 to conduct a study.

## **Reports/Updates from Subcommittees**

Each of the subcommittee chairs reported on the progress of their subcommittees.

**Subcommittee on Options to Consider Other than Full Dredging** – John Cook stated that the subcommittee put together its draft report, which was distributed to the Task Force. They are looking for substantive feedback from Task Force members. The subcommittee established a list of criteria and coalesced around the concept of a smaller lake and keeping the sediment in or adjacent to the park. There are options to mix and match various scenarios based on importance to the community and financial impact. The subcommittee's report does not recommend one option over others, but presents options with associated costs, where possible.

**Subcommittee on Impacts of and Issues with Staff Recommendation to Not Dredge** – Sandy Collins reported that the subcommittee is continuing to review technical data on sediment loads, sediment quantities, along with reasons behind the staff's recommendations. The subcommittee identified four categories of impact related to the recommendation to not dredge:

- Community impact – There would be some loss of open water, aesthetics, and recreation, but there would be no negative impacts from trucking activity.
- Environmental impact – The negative impacts of forest and wetland loss to construct a pipeline and dewatering area would be avoided. It is unclear whether there would be a downstream impact.
- Regulatory impact – There may be negative impacts on TMDLs and the MS4 permit.
- Costs – The cost of initial and subsequent maintenance dredging would be avoided, although the County would still be obligated to do stream restoration. There is no cost estimate for taking no action.

Ms. Collins stated that the subcommittee is reviewing additional information that has been requested, including some that was just delivered. She added that they need better numbers and need to understand the downstream impacts.

**Subcommittee on the Value of Lake Accotink to Lake Accotink Park and to the County** – Allan Robertson spoke about the dearth of reliable data to evaluate the value of the lake. The subcommittee feels further study needs to be undertaken, but ran out of time to collect its own data. Their proposed questions will be attached as an appendix to their subcommittee report. Mr. Robertson noted that they identified various ways of categorizing the value of Lake Accotink, including social and recreational value (fishing, boating, enjoying wildlife), environmental and wildlife value, and socio-economic value (equity for low-income and disenfranchised communities and accessibility). The subcommittee has received a number of testimonials on the beneficial impacts of the lake.

## Closing Comments

Chairman Bulova reported that Channel 16 will put together a short video to introduce the Task Force's Findings Report to the Board of Supervisors in December.

In response to a subcommittee request to work on their report online, Chairman Bulova stated that under VFOIA, more than two Task Force members simultaneously working on a document amounts to having a meeting. The best approach is to email the document to the subcommittee and have members individually submit their comments to one person who is responsible for incorporating the edits.

Immediately following the meeting, the Findings Subcommittee, chaired by Bryan Campbell, will meet to discuss their plans to put together the Findings Report.

Questions/comments for Chairman Bulova and/or the Task Force may be submitted to [BOSLakeAccotinkTaskForce@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:BOSLakeAccotinkTaskForce@fairfaxcounty.gov) or [LATF@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:LATF@fairfaxcounty.gov).

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.