

Healthy Watersheds, Healthier Communities

Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division

Minutes

Pohick Creek Watershed Advisory Group (WAG)

Meeting #1 - Orientation

Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Fairfax Co. Government Center, Conference Room #4

Meeting Attendees	
Members of the Public	Fairfax Co. Stormwater Planning Division
Patrick Gloyd, Burke Centre Conservancy	Fred Rose
John Harris, Kings Park West	Shannon Curtis
Rob Hartwell, Hartwell Environmental Fund/Mt. Vernon-Lee Chamber	
George Jennings, George Mason University	
Robert Jordan, PRGC	PBS&J
Chris Landgraf, Fort Belvoir	Trish Hennessy-Webb
John Levto, Christopher Consultants	Karlee Copeland
Kelly Meadows, Lake Braddock Community Association	
Ron Marlow, Burke Presbyterian Church	Waterford Inc.
Mike McCaffrey, Hidden Pond Nature Center	Beth Offenbacher
Ed Miller, Kings Park West	Paul Coelus
Jim Pomeroy, Hidden Pond Nature Center	
Susan Susa, Friends of Hidden Pond / Pohick S. V.	

The meeting convened at 7:10 pm. Following welcome comments by county staff and public involvement consultant Beth Offenbacher (Waterford Inc.), all attendees introduced themselves.

County staff and consultants then gave a series of presentations as follows:

- Shannon Curtis, Fairfax County, outlined the purpose and history of the county's watershed planning process and reviewed the proposed timeline for the Pohick Creek Watershed Plan.
- Fred Rose, Fairfax County, discussed the policy issues involved in the planning process.
- Beth Offenbacher (public involvement consultant) described the role of the Watershed Advisory Group and WAG participation guidelines.
- Trish Hennessy-Webb, PBS&J (engineering consultant) reviewed the Pohick Creek Watershed Workbook and described the types of projects that can be found in a watershed plan.



Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division

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- Beth Offenbacher presented the Watershed Management Plan goals and objectives and reviewed the timeline from Watershed Workbook to Draft Plan.

The presentations were followed by a question and answer period moderated by Beth Offenbacher.

The following is a summary of the questions asked by members of the public and the answers provided by county staff and consultants. The identity of the persons asking and answering the questions is not included. This is not a verbatim transcript.

Q: Will the WAG's recommendations go to the Planning Commission or the Board of Supervisors?

A: Both. They'll also go to the Engineering Standards and Review Committee.

Q: Will WAG meetings be 2 hours long? Will materials be given to the members in advance or just at the meeting?

A: Yes, the meetings will be 2 hours. In some cases, but not all, materials will be distributed in advance.

Q: Must the WAG work within a particular framework of cost?

A: Not so much cost; more a projected number of projects for each watershed. The total cost may vary by watershed. In the first round of watershed planning (now completed), we looked at 20-year costs of implementation. In the second round, we'll be changing to a 10-year implementation schedule. We may also look at 20-year projects, but won't price them as precisely as 10-year projects.

Q: How long does the current one-penny dedicated tax last?

A: The Board of Supervisors must approve it every year. The amount of revenue it generates varies from year to year. For example, it generated about \$17.9M in the first year, \$20M in the second year, \$22-23M in the third year, and \$23M in the fourth year.

Q: There are supposed to be ten regional ponds in Pohick Creek. How many have been built?

A: About four have not yet been built. Part of the current watershed planning projects is evaluating whether to create one larger pond or several smaller ones (i.e. alternatives to regional ponds).

Q: You referred to an assessment on developers. What is that?

A: We assess a "pro rata share" on new development to cover that development's share of impact on the watershed as measured by the amount of impervious area added. The rates vary by watershed, and the funds collected must be used on projects within that watershed and within 12 years.



Q: Are there any types of the projects the county won't do?

A: All projects must be consistent with the county's goals and objectives. Also, we can't spend a large amount of money on any project that's principally in a private area, since that would appear to use tax dollars for private benefit. We will also use computer modeling to quantify the benefits from each project. Generally speaking, preference will go to projects that provide the greatest benefit for the money spent.

Q: Are all dams in the watershed structurally sound, or are dam projects to be considered in this program?

A: The state has recently increased the regulatory requirements on dams, so we'll be doing rehabilitation work on some of them to meet these requirements. This is a separate effort from the watershed planning effort. Dams provide some regional benefits; this program is focused more on localized stormwater treatment.

Q: It sounds like you're looking to do about 150 projects in this watershed. Is the WAG supposed to come up with, say, 300 projects and then narrow the list down to 150?

A: No, we'll generate a list of projects based on the modeling currently being done. The projects will focus on flooding, channel erosion, pollutant load, and other issues.

Q: The midsection of Pohick Creek has run dry twice in the last 10 years, but it shouldn't be a seasonal stream. Why is that?

A: There's a lot of sediment upstream. Also, some large storm sewer lines may actually intercept some groundwater and discharge it elsewhere, reducing the flow in parts of Pohick Creek. We can attempt look at that issue in this WAG.

Q: Are we to be reactive or proactive in setting policy?

A: Policy issues were addressed in the first round of planning, and there is currently a separate policy review effort occurring. This WAG will be focused on identifying projects to address known problems.

Q: Some projects may have "synergy" if done together. Will that be taken into account? And how do we quantify non-structural projects?

A: Yes, non-structural projects are more difficult to quantify, but we do have a requirement to include some non-structural projects. Overall benefits of these projects tend to be more visible at the county or watershed level, harder to see at the watershed management area (WMA) and subwatershed level. Also, it's important to look at upstream projects before downstream.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

