

SALONA PARK TASK FORCE

MEETING MINUTES

March 19, 2013

The meeting convened at 7:40 p.m.

Members present: Richard Bliss, Dan DuVal, Margaret Malone, Beth Chung, Joel Stillman, Sybil Caldwell, Ed Pickens, and Mark Turner. Also present, Cheryl Patten representing Supervisor John Foust and Dave Bowden and Andrew Galusha representing the Fairfax County Park Authority. Guests: Jay Donahue, Dranesville District Planning Commissioner and Jerry Stonefield and Shannon Curtis, Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES).

Presentation by Shannon Curtis

Shannon Curtis, ecologist with the Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division, gave a presentation regarding the updating of the Resource Protection Area (RPA) delineation for the Salona property. He described the process for approval of the updated RPA as follows: The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services will make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding a change to the RPA map. Subsequently, the Fairfax County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and will forward the Planning Commission's recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, which will in turn conduct a public hearing on the delineation. A decision will then be made by the Board of Supervisors to amend the RPA map to reflect the new boundaries of the RPA on the Salona site.

DPWES conducted field studies at Salona and their findings indicate the presence of a perennial stream through an extended area. The RPA determination is based upon the presence of year round indication of water flow in the specific area. The RPA is a 100 foot buffer set around all designated areas.

The original survey was conducted in 2002 during the updating of the Fairfax County ordinance. At the time the county was mapped to reflect the presence of perennial streams and existing RPAs were revised.

At the request of the task force, Supervisor Foust asked that the Salona property be newly evaluated. DPWES conducted the appropriate studies to assess the property's streams for perennial flow. DPWES conducts observations over a number of months including during drought and non-drought periods in order to get an accurate picture of the stream activity.

The review of the Salona streams was conducted over six months in 2012 during which the region experienced an extended drought during the summer of 2012. DPWES research indicated that there was evidence of continuous water flow within the stream beds of the two branches of the stream; segments A and B. The stream segments were examined for possible infiltration from the nearby sewer line and it was determined that there were no breaks in the line. The streams continue to flow because of the high level of the ground water. Even during the drought period, observations recorded a perennial flow.

The existing wetlands are not contiguous with the perennial stream on the upstream site and are therefore not within the RPA. As such the wetlands do not receive the 100 foot buffer.

This concluded the presentation and the floor was opened for Q&A.

Q How many feet are there from the side/end of the new section of RPA to the road and hedgerows?

A The answer will be sent to the task force.

Q Can you put a parking lot immediately adjacent to the RPA?

A Yes, but all levels of disturbance must be outside of the RPA. A public trail can be built within the RPA with administrative approval.

Q What about a farm access road through the RPA?

A It would be treated as a driveway across the RPA for access to a further parcel. It might be an allowable use but it would have to be reviewed.

Q If a parking lot is built right up to the RPA can stormwater runoff flow into the RPA?

A Treatment for stormwater management must be done before it gets to the RPA; it must be carefully reviewed. Prior use is taken into account- the concept of grandfathering use could be maintained –i.e., a previously mowed area or return to a buffer. Stormwater collection must be outside the RPA and let nature return it naturally.

Q Is there a varying procedure?

A It is not called that but there is a review process. It most often applies to an existing use that the new delineation would impact. Everything must go through review.

This ended the Q&A period.

The schedule for the Salona RPA approval process was described as follows:

April 25 – Planning Commission Public Hearing

May 14 - Board of Supervisors Public Hearing

The discussion regarding the RPA delineation was concluded and the task force moved to its scheduled agenda:

The minutes were approved with the agreement that written comment clarification provided by Charles Smith regarding his presentation will be made to the February 26, 2013 minutes.

It was agreed that at the next meeting individual task force members will begin presenting their recommendations and the group will discuss them.