

Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee Meeting Summary

**December 12, 2023 at 1:30 P.M.
Government Center Conference Room 11**

Board of Supervisors Members Present:

Board Chair Jeffrey C. McKay
Committee Chair Daniel G. Storck, Mount Vernon District
Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn, Hunter Mill District
Supervisor John W. Foust, Dranesville District
Supervisor Penelope A. Gross, Mason District
Supervisor Pat Herrity, Springfield District
Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk, Franconia District
Supervisor Dalia A. Palchik, Providence District
Supervisor Kathy L. Smith, Sully District
Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw, Braddock District

Link to agenda and meeting materials: [Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee Meeting: Dec. 12, 2023 | Board Of Supervisors \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

Committee Chairman Storck called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M.

Item I: Opening Remarks

The October 3, 2023, meeting minutes were accepted with no changes.

Item II: Lake Accotink Update

The presenters from the Task Force on the Future of Lake Accotink were asked to introduce themselves: Sharon Bulova, former Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, chaired the Task Force; John Cook, former Braddock District Supervisor, chaired the Options to Consider Other Than Full Traditional Dredging Subcommittee; Sandy Collins, from Friends of Accotink Creek, chaired the Impacts and Issues with Staff Recommendation to Not Dredge Subcommittee; Gail Nittle, President of the Springfield Civic Association, and Alan Robertson, from Save Lake Accotink, co-chaired the Value of Lake Accotink to Lake Accotink Park and to the County Subcommittee; and Martin Shepard, representing Ravensworth Farms Civic Association, developed findings for dredging and sustainable management of Lake Accotink.

A video prepared by the Lake Accotink Task Force was shown, highlighting the purpose and mission of the Task Force. Lake Accotink Task Force Chair Bulova provided additional background on the formation of the Task Force and explained that its mission was to conduct a review and develop findings on previous studies, identify relevant needs and questions, and consider the environmental, community, recreational, and cost impacts. Subcommittee chairs presented their findings, which were reiterated by Lake Accotink Task Force Chair Bulova,

when she summarized the findings of the Task Force. The findings were: 1) the activities and amenities at Lake Accotink are important to the culturally and economically diverse community, 2) a smaller lake is feasible and a full dredge needs to be reevaluated, 3) the Lake Accotink dam is 80 years old and any solutions to the lake must take into account preserving future options to replace, repair, or remove the dam, 4) the community should be at the table for the Master Plan process, and 5) the lake continues to fill with sediment; a decision about a general approach will allow the Master Plan to move forward while continuing the technical study of alternatives.

The Task Force concluded with Mr. Shepard sharing findings on a potential processing site and transportation hub at Robinson Terminal, a property owned by The Washington Post. This location would eliminate the removal of tree canopy and heavy neighborhood truck traffic. Additionally, this dewatering and transportation hub would reduce the dredging project's carbon footprint by 87 percent. The Washington Post is not interested in leasing the site for dredging operations, but the Task Force recommends reevaluating this option.

Chairman McKay inquired about the urgency of the project's decision and the impacts a smaller lake would have on the park's Master Plan. Chairman McKay and Mr. Cook agreed on the urgency of the decision. Chairman McKay noted that the Board would need to dig deeper with staff on the financial and regulatory pieces included in the findings, to inform funding options for the Board to consider as part of its final decision.

Supervisor Walkinshaw commented on the cooperation between the Task Force and consultants (WSP-LimnoTech) and stated that the consultants' deliverables would be shared with the Board. He noted the potential of a hybrid, smaller lake option, but stated that the cost estimates are rough and there may be unknown regulatory and permitting challenges. He said he would be coming to the Board in early 2024 to lay out the next steps, including broad community engagement and additional analysis of the smaller lake option.

Supervisor Lusk asked for information on the expected maintenance schedule and costs for the different options and noted that if it was not available now it would be needed in future analysis. Former Braddock District Supervisor Mr. Cook commented on LimnoTech's suggested five-year maintenance schedule for a "mini dredge" operation. Mr. Cook, Task Force Chair Bulova, and Supervisor Gross discussed Lake Barcroft's annual maintenance schedule, as a comparison. Ms. Collins added that the frequency of dredging needs to be determined for Lake Accotink.

Mr. Shepherd expanded on solutions to truck traffic in the Lake Accotink area. Supervisor Lusk asked for clarification that The Washington Post, owners of the Robinson Terminal, have indicated that the site is not currently an option and that was confirmed. However, Task Force Chair Bulova stated that further discussion and evaluation needed to take place.

Supervisor Alcorn stated that he is looking forward to receiving more information on the project's costs and financing options.

Supervisor Herrity expressed support for a smaller lake option, adding that this would be a long-term investment and that maintenance of existing assets needs to be prioritized in the future. He asked about the sediment forebay option, which Mr. Cook confirmed was likely not viable.

Committee Chairman Storck added that there have been some changes to the state's expectations and regulatory requirements on dams and water retention. He mentioned the potential downstream impacts to the Mount Vernon District and greater Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Item III: Climate Progress Update

John Morill, Acting Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) provided a summary of the county's climate progress. Mr. Morrill commented on progress made since the last climate update, noting that multiple programs have been launched, the county has engaged with residents and the private sector on climate action, and there is significant momentum on future gains.

Mr. Morrill explained staff efforts to address both the cause and effects of climate change through the implementation of the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP), the Operational Energy Strategy, and Resilient Fairfax. He explained how the OEEC coordinates interagency and community efforts on the implementation of these plans and highlighted outcomes to-date of this work. He highlighted progress on the community's goal to be carbon neutral by 2050, noting that community carbon emissions are down 30 percent since 2005 due to a cleaner grid and reduced energy use in buildings. Within county operations, he highlighted the strides made in energy efficiency, green building construction and renewable energy installations, including completion of the county's first four solar projects in 2023. He outlined priorities for 2024 and noted upcoming updates to the county's Climate Action Dashboard and release of a detailed 2023 climate progress report, expected in early 2024.

Chairman McKay expressed the importance of identifying those actions within our control or ability of influence and continued need to engage with the community to achieve our goals.

Supervisor Alcorn asked for a future update on the Charge Up Fairfax program and additional ways to increase electric vehicle registrations.

Committee Chairman Storck asked Mr. Morrill to expand on an emerging challenge for solar installations. Mr. Morrill explained a recent hurdle with Dominion Energy requiring dark fiber from large solar installations and how those costs are being incurred by the customer. This is a matter that increases the cost of solar installations for the county.

Item IV: Review of Staff Reports and NIPs

Committee Chairman Storck reminded his colleagues to review a Litter and Zero Waste NIP included in the committee package. He concluded by thanking outgoing Supervisors Gross and Foust for their years of service and dedication to environmental issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 P.M.