

# **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE**

**October 2, 2018**

**1:30 P.M.**

**Government Center Conference Room 11**

## **Board of Supervisors Members Present:**

Board Chair Sharon Bulova

Committee Chair Penelope A. Gross, Mason District

Supervisor John Cook, Braddock District

Supervisor John Foust, Dranesville District

Supervisor Pat Herrity, Springfield District

Supervisor Cathy Hudgins, Hunter Mill District

Supervisor Jeff McKay, Lee District

Supervisor Kathy Smith, Sully District

Supervisor Linda Smyth, Providence District

Supervisor Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District

## **Others Present:**

Hugh Whitehead, DPWES

Aimee Vosper, FCPA

James Mcglone, VDOF/Tree Commission

Kevin Williams, FCPA

Paul Shirey, FCPA

Janet Burns, FCPA

Noel Kaplan, DPZ

Keith Snyder, FCPA

Jerry Stonefield, LDS

Goldie Harrison, Hunter Mill District

Marguerite Guarino, DVS

Hans Christensen, DPWES

Lynn Green, DPWES

Jessica Bowser, Tree Commission

Laura Grape, NVSWCD

Jose Comayagua, FMD

Bill Hicks, LDS

Kirk Kincannon, FCPA

October 2, 2018 Meeting Agenda:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/sites/boardofsupervisors/files/Assets/meeting-materials/2018/oct02-environmental-agenda.pdf>

October 2, 2018 Meeting Materials:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/board-environmental-committee-meeting-oct-2-2018>

The following is a summary of the highlights of the discussion from the October 2, 2018 meeting.

Today's meeting was called to order at 1:34 pm.

### **Opening Remarks & Item I**

After a brief introduction from Supervisor Gross, Committee Chair, there was an edit to the minutes from the June 12, 2018 Environmental Committee Meeting in regards to the correct spelling of the names of Board Members. With no further changes the meeting minutes were accepted into the record.

### **Item II Solid Waste RFEI Update**

The first topic on the agenda was a presentation from John Kellas, Deputy Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services who provided an update on the status of a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) made by Solid Waste.

The meeting began with Kellas informing the Board that the RFEI process, which opened in January of 2018 and closed in March 2018, was initiated with the intent of keeping abreast of industry trends and emergent technologies so as to improve system resiliency and diversity. Emphasizing the commitment to entertaining new ideas, Kellas said the RFEI document was intentionally written very broadly to encourage submissions.

Kellas noted that, in total, 11 proposals were received under five general category types: 1) Waste Conversion, 2) Sustainable Roads, 3) Organics/Composting, 4) Ash Processing, and 5) Diversion Reuse. The category to receive most submissions, with four or five, was in the field of waste conversion; which included mechanical and biological treatment and anaerobic decomposition which together creates a natural gas. He further stated that those particular technologies are seen as an emerging industry, growing significantly, and have activity within the region. Consequently, county staff engaged an engineering firm to provide further detail on the industry as a whole and provide a better understanding of the differences between the processes.

He added that many of the additional proposals received were much smaller in scale, requiring less capital and easier to implement as part of their process at the county's drop-off facilities.

Kellas also highlighted a specific proposer's idea for sustainable road construction that utilizes glass material the county is recycling and ash that would otherwise be landfilled. A small-scale project was developed; a road section of roughly 100 yards was built and is currently being tested by both the Virginia Department of Transportation and Department of Environmental Quality.

Kellas concluded his presentation with a discussion on recycling and China's National Sword Policy. China has become increasingly stringent in terms of the contamination levels it will tolerate on recyclable material, decreasing from five percent in 2013 to half a percent today. This has driven down the price of recyclable materials significantly, affecting programs throughout the country, so much so that a few communities in Virginia have ended their curbside recycling programs. Kellas informed the board that while the Solid Waste Program has been impacted financially on the processing of materials, at this time they are not proposing any changes to the program and hope to be able to withstand the current market adjustments.

### **Board Discussion:**

**Gross:** Every 25 to 30 years Solid Waste seems to go through a change, what was it called in upstate New York?

**Kellas:** Herkimer

**Gross:** Yes, Herkimer, there was a huge shift, from the way things were before, and we seem to be going into another cycle where things have changed. The market has changed, the approaches, the costs have changed and we are in that realm right now. We appreciate the staff bringing this to our attention now, so we are prepared for any changes that need to be made later.

**Smyth:** Is glass one of the major contaminants in this process?

**Kellas:** It is one of the major ones. It is residue and unclean containers.

**Smyth:** The topic of glass has come up before. Would it help in any way if glass were collected separately?

**Kellas:** We have looked at that, but it compounds when you look at the costs of putting out new trucks, containers, and people, and collect it separately and then to process it. We are looking at dual stream, but currently riding it out for the time being and staying as consistent as we can. But we will look at dual streaming in the future if things don't change.

**Herrity:** Do we know how much of these materials are being recycled versus being landfilled?

**Kellas:** We have an idea based on information from the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and right now it is about a 30 percent reject rate.

**Herrity:** So that 30 percent is waste, but the product that goes on is 100 percent recycled?

**Kellas:** Yes, and now that the materials are staying home, and they are getting to be a better quality, we may see some rebound here in the processing in the US. While there was a flow through to China it did not make sense to make the investments. We may see some additional recovery in the future.

**Herrity:** What is clearly needed then, in my opinion, is an education campaign to reduce that 30 percent number.

**Kellas:** We put out a posting requesting that people not put their recyclables in plastic bags, and it was our most viewed item. People have the same opinion, I have been doing it forever, and didn't know it caused a problem, we are so glad you are telling us. We are really concentrating on that outreach to get that message out there.

**Gross:** The County does a really nice job of sending that information out to the customers. The private hauler, I have a private hauler, I don't remember the last time the private hauler was in touch with me about recycling and what you should put out? I think we need to get with our private haulers also to get that message out. Having it on the county website is not enough, it needs to come with the bills, so you can post it or put it on the bulletin board, or next to the phone, and so forth.

**McKay:** You're 100 percent right, and having had both, there is a huge difference between the two and actually the private hauler won't recycle a lot of the things the county will. That is where one of the communication problems is because people are recycling things with a private hauler that they believe are going to be recycled, and the county is picking up recycle that the private haulers aren't, and encouraging people to recycle them. Part of the education process is, there is a mixed message, what can you put in the recycle versus the general flow? Not only is the communication different, but what they will recycle is different too.

**Gross:** We need to move on, are there any other questions or comments on this?

**James Patteson, Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services:** As John's graph shows, it goes from a positive to a net 80,000 a month negative on our recycling cost, so that is a million dollars a year. We are looking at our rates when the budget comes forward, there is going to be a rate increase for sanitary districts and the private haulers tip fees. So we are doing that analysis right now. But there will be an impact to the customers.

**Gross:** Oh good, I get to pay more. We are going to move on. Thank you John.

### **Item III Natural Landscape Plan**

The second topic on the agenda was a presentation from Kambiz Agazi, Environmental and Energy Coordinator, who provided an update on the county's Natural Landscaping efforts. This was a response to a Board Matter from April 18, 2018.

Agazi began by referencing the original Board Matter, from 2004, which asked county staff to review county properties and to develop a plan to implement natural landscaping practices. He added that the item also requested the county work with the schools if they were interested. Continuing, Agazi provided the Board with a brief overview of how work proceeded, namely a county staff committee was formed and tasked with a number of deliverables - creating guidelines for applications of natural landscaping throughout the county and also for developing some policy plan text that would assist the effort. This staff group finalized its work in October of 2007 and a presentation was given to the Board's Environmental Committee at that time. The presentation included the original Natural Landscape Manual, policy language, and implementation plan. On October 15, 2007 the Board of Supervisor took action and formally endorsed the Natural Landscape Manual and the Implementation Plan. The Policy Plan text language was not included in the Board endorsement.

Agazi then informed the Board that the Natural Landscape Manual serves as a guide for both county and schools during the site plan process, as well as during the capital renewal process. Stormwater Planning also uses the guide when they are implementing best management practices. He stated that part of the plan was to incorporate natural landscaping on county property and highlighted a few examples.

To conclude, Agazi described three recommendations county staff had in regards to updating its natural landscaping efforts – one required the Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee's endorsement, while the other two could be handled administratively.

- 1) Staff recommended the Board endorsement of the authorization of an amendment to the policy plan volume of the comprehensive plan, in support of natural landscapes at county facilities.

- 2) During the budget development process staff should identify cost effective natural landscape retrofit projects.
- 3) A core team of professional staff, coordinated by Urban Forest Management, should be established to discuss natural landscaping opportunities.

**Board Discussion:**

**Gross:** Thank you. I think that when we adopted this in 2004 we were doing the Environmental Excellence Vision Plan and a lot of things were embraced by this, but probably didn't have formal documents about it. I know the Park Authority did a lot of work, or maybe I should say they didn't do a lot of work because they stopped mowing, and they stopped doing certain things at our parks. Those of us on the Board at the time did get calls from people asking, why did they stop doing this, and we explained why. The Park Authority has continued to do the natural landscaping, and it has changed the look of some of our parks and public buildings.

The recommendations would be that there is a search for this Committee's endorsement for the comprehensive plan amendment to the policy plan. Supervisor Storck also has a recommendation for some changes to the Natural Landscaping defined, and that is in exhibit 1.

**Storck:** There are a number of individuals who have been very involved with natural landscaping in the Mount Vernon District because there are so many opportunities in the Mount Vernon District to do just that, have natural landscaping. So this definition really is more wordsmithing to try and make sure it captures the whole thing. Again, I sent an email to your district offices, but you probably don't have it personally, so if you don't mind, I would like to read this?

**Gross:** Let's have everyone look at what they have in their packet, Natural Landscaping Defined.

**Storck:** Yes, I can just identify the changes.

**Gross:** Dan will read the whole thing, but read where the recommended changes to languages are. I have looked at this, and I think it is perfectly fine, it uses some

terminology that we use now, like stormwater, instead of rainwater, and focuses on some native species.

**Storck:** The first sentence reads, “Natural Landscaping improves the aesthetic and” instead of environmental, the word ecological, “functions of landscapes installed in the built environment, and restored natural areas by preserving and re-creating land,” then inserting, and water features in native plant communities. “Sustainable landscapes are formed, which” deleted the word seek to, “protect and restore natural ecosystem components, maximize the use of native plants, remove invasive plant species, reduce turf grass, and chemical inputs. Improve soils, and retain,” insert the word, stormwater, instead of rainwater, “on site.” That is the first paragraph.

The second paragraph is, “In natural areas only locally native plants species are used to provide the greatest possible ecological benefits.” A period there, then we are deleting, and improve environmental conditions while, then it will start with, “In built landscapes, most of the plant cover should be composed of native plant species that support wild life and improve environmental conditions, although,” and get back to the texts here, “noninvasive,” then adding again, “nonnative plants may be used where appropriate.” And then deleting the rest of it.

So I will read the whole thing as it is intended: “Natural landscaping improves the aesthetic and ecological functions of landscapes installed in the built environment and restored natural areas by preserving and recreating land and water features in native plant communities. Sustainable landscapes are formed which protect and restore natural ecosystem components, maximize the use of native plants, remove invasive plant species, reduce turf grass, and chemical inputs, improve soils, and retain stormwater on site. In natural areas only, locally native plants species are used to provide the greatest possible ecological benefits. Inbuilt landscapes, most of the plant cover should be composed of native plant species that support wild life, and improve environmental conditions, although noninvasive nonnative plants may be used where appropriate.

**Gross:** Thank you Dan, is there any objection to that change in wording? I think that it makes sense, it’s a little more active than what we had before.



**Herrity:** One small wordsmith, I would say natural landscaping can improve.

**Gross:** The first sentence? Natural Landscape can improve the aesthetic.

**Smyth:** I am fine with everything Dan had said. I think the one thing I would like to see stressed, maybe a little bit more, is about monitoring the sites, after the planting has been done. Because I was thinking about my fire station where we did the whole bio retention native planting, and the pervious pavers. Ultimately, if you go there now, since I left, it's mowed grass, there are no plants there what so ever, and the pervious pavers are covered with asphalt. So monitoring is a good thing.

**Herrity:** With the natural landscaping, as with everything else in life, it's a balance. I don't know that there is a lot of balance that is going straight at natural landscaping, without taking into effect things like health. There is no mention of health in here. I am thinking of everything from rodents to insects and mosquitos. Security and safety, sightlines and that sort of thing. Recreation, I would not want to go straight forward and get rid of all our meadows and opportunities for kids to go out and play Frisbee, pick up baseball, pick up whatever. And also cost, I think those are four factors that need some to be in the plan language. Again, everything in life is a balance, and I would hate to just go out and turn all our open areas and turn them into natural landscaping. I don't think that is what it says?

**Storck:** No, absolutely not what it says.

**Herrity:** I think we need to give a nod somewhere in here to balance, and that is all I am asking.

**Gross:** That will be a part of the language that comes back to us. We have to do an authorization at the Board to do this, and then we give it to staff to do their due diligence and bring back the language that we might consider.

**Cook:** I would follow up on Pat's point, the way I would maybe suggest wording that is, open, yet mowed and maintained space is a need as well. Sometimes we think it's either got to be a field or else all natural, and there is a need for unrestricted, or unplanned space, for a pickup game or a picnic. It does have to be a balance because I know the Park Authority does not want to mow as much, and

often that is the right choice, but I think we should have a recognition somewhere in our manual that open, unplanned space is itself something we want to have.

**Gross:** We have a good example of that in a small park in my district where there used to be an area where you could throw Frisbees and do the pickup games, and it has now gone back into woodland pretty much because the mowing stopped. All right, I think staff knows what they need to do.

#### **Item IV Designation of Official Wildflower of Fairfax County**

John Stokely, Natural Resource Branch Manager, Park Authority, provided a presentation on designating the Trumpet, or Coral Honeysuckle as the official wildflower of Fairfax County.

Stokely reminded the Board that a Board Matter from June 20, 2018 requested that the Environmental Committee have this discussion and he then offered some background information about the Coral Honeysuckle. Stokely stated that it is a native flowering vine, indigenous to Fairfax County, and the surrounding area. It blooms from March until September and attracts pollinators, hummingbirds and song birds. It is adaptable to different growing conditions and was championed by the Plant Nova Natives Campaign. The flower itself was the Virginia Native Plant Society Wildflower of the Year in 2014 and staff recommend adopting the Coral Honeysuckle as the Official Fairfax County Wildflower.

#### **Board Discussion:**

**Gross:** Okay, so recommendation is that we go through the process of designating this Coral Honeysuckle as the Official Wildflower of Fairfax County. Any Comments?

**Bulova:** I think this is a beautiful plant, or flower for us to be able to have as our county flower. I think it is also important that we are making the distinction between this honeysuckle and the invasive honeysuckle, I am sure when we do this, we will get letters from people bringing that subject up. This is native, this is our homegrown native honeysuckle, and I think it is beautiful, and I am glad the Board is supportive.

**Storck:** Are there differences of opinion about this, you have identified a couple of organizations that support this - is there unanimity that this is a unique flower to Virginia or our area, and its native and it should be worthy of having that designation? How else do I ask this question? Is there any controversy about this?

**Stokely:** There is no controversy that we are aware of. There is the similarity between the Japanese Honeysuckle, I think that is what a lot of people are used to. But we have this [Coral Honeysuckle] in our parks, and throughout Fairfax County.

**McKay:** Just very quickly, does the designation do anything, other than celebrate it? What does that mean?

**Stokely:** To the best of my knowledge, it is a celebration of the species, yes.

**McKay:** We just had a conversation about natural landscaping, we should think about, if we are designating things, think about its planting and use and protection.

**Bulova:** And madam chairman, and using it on publications, websites, to include our official flower.

**Gross:** Okay, if there is no objection I will direct staff to go to the next steps we have to do to have the Board officially designate that.

## **Item V Tree Action Plan Update**

Keith Cline, Director Urban Forest Management, provided an update to the Board on the new Tree Action Plan.

Cline began by remarking that it had been nearly 12 years since the original Tree Action Plan was adopted and in the intervening time much has changed. The county has changed, more is understood about the challenges and success of the original Tree Action Plan and about our urban forests and the science of urban forests generally. Cline stated that several years ago the Tree Commission and

Urban Forest Management began the task of updating the Tree Action Plan, he then highlighted the draft before the Board and recommended endorsement by the Environmental Committee. He thanked the many members of county staff and the Tree Commission for their work on this effort and asked that they stand and be recognized.

Cline continued by explaining the lengthy and extensive outreach process done as part of developing the new Tree Action Plan. Twenty-two county agencies, regional and state organization and nonprofits were involved with the plan review, including Northern Virginia Building Industry Association, Dominion Energy, Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, Reston Association, Fairfax County Public Schools and many others.

Cline stated that the county's current tree canopy cover sits at roughly 55 percent, which is above the county's goal of 45 percent. He added that thanks to improved satellite imagery the county is better able to monitor the urban forest and two different studies, one done in 2011, the other in 2015, showed that tree canopy cover is remaining consistent. Despite the success that came as a result of the original Tree Action Plan, Cline noted that one challenge was in the area of implementation as there was no process by which the plan could monitor and report on. He added that this iteration of the Tree Action Plan addresses that shortcoming.

Cline furthered explained that there are five goals and 24 recommendations in the plan, all focused on sustainability - not solely the sustainability of the forest, but the community as well. Since much more is known about the science of urban forestry and urban greening (and its relation to water quality, air quality and stormwater management), he added that a link must be made between the management of our forests to social and economic values and people's health and wellbeing. Cline expanded on that point and urged people to visit a website, green cities good health, created by Dr. Kathy Wolf at the University of Washington if they would like to learn more. He concluded by discussing the economic value of urban forests – that people will spend more money in retail districts that are landscaped and have trees, office space rents at higher rates with quality trees in the area and that values of residential lots are increased with trees and quality landscaping.

**Board Discussion:**

**Gross:** Thank you Keith. We have a recommendation here to have the Board endorse the updated Tree Action Plan which would have to be through a Board Matter, at a forthcoming Board Meeting. Any comments or questions on Keith's presentation?

**Smyth:** Thank you. Certainly, I think the Tree Action Plan has come a long way, but one of the things I don't know if you all talked about as part of monitoring are the major road projects underway. Because we are watching trees be cleared along I66, and this is just the beginning. I remember the Park Authority projecting something like 100 acres of trees could be lost as just part of the road construction along I66. So I hope that is something being considered. We need to have a plan for how mitigation can occur with these major road projects.

**Cline:** Yes, it is definitely being considered. In the last three or four years, our office, Urban Forestry Management Division has been working closer with FCDOT, and with Stormwater Planning, and Capital Facilities, and looking at trees and landscaping, and how it is approached in county projects.

**Storck:** Congratulations on this update, I think you have a broad overall strategy that can create the kind of community that we want to live in. I would start with One Fairfax, because that is one of our challenges. The tree canopy varies greatly depending upon the community you are in, some do not have a lot of tree cover because of the density and the planning that went on decades ago is not up to what we would expect today. The other thing I would say is I am really uncomfortable taking out a metric because right now we have a clear expectation that 51 or some percent of our land surface have tree cover, and I would not support eliminating that.

**Gross:** Keith, the recommendation on the Metric, or removing the Metric, was that something the Tree Commission recommended?

**Cline:** Yes, the Tree Commission recommended getting away from that metric, that percent tree canopy, and to really look at urban forest health. I have been a proponent of that metric, but the Tree Action Plan specifically talks about not trying to hit that percent metric, but to concentrate on tree health, and educating the public of the value of their urban forest, and all the services the urban forest provides, especially health and wellbeing.

**Smith:** Just briefly, I appreciate the section on the urban forest stressors, I had a constituent come up to me recently, very upset about the Deer Management Program. The first thing that comes to mind for me is people getting into car accidents, and I think we have to get people to understand its more than that, and this is good information of the stress deer have on trees and tree canopy.

**Foust:** Infill development, I think, is absolutely critical, I hope that is very, very high on your list. All trees are equal, but some trees are more equal, those trees in the neighborhoods are critical to preserve if we can. Are you looking around the county to see, when resources are available, where we can and should be planting trees?

**Cline:** I think that is the next step that is what I was referring to is, now that we have information from an aerial imagery, and we understand a lot more about the urban forest health. The next step is to now identify those areas.

**Gross:** Okay, the recommendation is that the Board adopt the Tree Action Plan as recommended by the Tree Commission, and as discussed here. We can do an action item on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October. That would give you your three weeks of time.

**Storck:** I had a question on the percentage of tree canopy. I would like to see that metric remain.

**Penny Gross:** Let's get a statement from the Tree Commission defending their recommendation, we will discuss that and it can be part of the Board action. I certainly want to honor the Tree Commission's work and their recommendation, but the Board is free to make a change to that recommendation, but I think we should do that at the Board table, rather than here at the Committee table.

## **Item VI Running Bamboo**

### **Board Discussion:**

**Gross:** We are running out of time quickly, we have a presentation on Running Bamboo. You have in your packet some information about Running Bamboo.

Essentially, we know it is bad, but the recommendation is to defer adopting a Running Bamboo ordinance at this time, and instead take an educational approach to the issue. I don't think we need to go through all the reasons why Running Bamboo is bad, and you can read the items in your packet. Jack has laid out what the pros and cons are, and there are a lot of cons because it is very difficult to enforce. So going the educational route is the recommendation. Is anyone dying to hear Jack's presentation?

**Cook:** I do actually, not the whole presentation, but Bamboo is a problem, it is in my district. I did leaf through the material, I saw the pros and cons, it does not have to be a burdensome enforcement process if it is a complaint driven system. My question is why can't we do that? The problem with education is, so you reach 90 percent of the people, but they already know. We all know Bamboo comes from a small number of people, and it is a huge problem. I guess I would like to hear your thirty second version of why an enforcement route is bad, and why we can't do it, because I think we need to do it.

**Jack Weyant, Director, Department of Code Compliance:** I think the big thing about the enforcement is, we talked about putting in the grass ordinance which is a seasonal thing, May to October, Running Bamboo would be a year-round issue for us. Getting rid of the bamboo is the big thing, Running Bamboo rhizomes grow underground, under a fence, into your property. The containment method is to dig down several feet into the ground, put a barrier up, and we are looking at thousands of dollars, I guess, for us to do that. As compared to the Grass Ordinance, my guys go out and measure the grass, and issue a violation, if we mow, it is \$165.00. And we put it on their taxes, if they don't pay. It could easily get into a few thousand dollars if we tried to get rid of the bamboo. Do we want to get rid of it totally? Do we want to allow them to keep a clump of bamboo?

**Cook:** Couldn't we start off by prohibiting it going forward and just enforcing it on anyone who plants it? Not worry about telling people to dig up something that their neighbor planted twenty years ago. But not letting people plant it?

**Weyant:** I guess I don't know how we stop that. One of the original things we saw when this legislature came out was to put a tag on bamboo at Home Depot that said this is invasive. If we could stop it from coming into the County, that

would be a big thing, but I don't think we can do that. So I am not really sure how we would stop the planting?

**Cook:** Well, we send out notices with the tax bill every spring, and at different times, we have put different notices in that envelope, and this would be a good thing to put in there.

**Gross:** Our next Environment Committee Meeting isn't set until February twelfth, and I suggest we put this on the agenda for a little deeper discussion.

**Bulova:** I don't think there is disagreement about education, and reaching out, so why don't we do that. And we can have more of a discussion if we want to go further than that, but in the meantime, educational outreach is really important, and we can do that right now.

**Smyth:** Madam Chairman it was my Board matter, and I am in total agreement with Supervisor Cook.

## **Item VII**

### **Proposed Pest Management Tax Service District Amendment**

Kevin Williams, Manager, Parks Operations Division, Park Authority provided the presentation.

Williams began by stating the Ash Borer has caused significant tree loss on Park Authority property. As a result, the primary task of his department has become removing trees; so much so, that he now has insufficient funds to meet the present needs. The current special service district for the Pest Fund has appendix language that only allows for controlled infestations. It does not cover removing trees that were killed by a pest infestation, which is what the Park Authority is facing. Due to this language the Park Authority cannot utilize the taxes collected by this fund, and thus, is looking for an amendment to the appendix language that incorporates removal of trees damaged by pests.

He continued by offering some context on the issue faced by the Park Authority, noting that it is the largest land owner in the County with 23,512 acres, 77



percent of which is forested, and contains an estimated 163,000 ash trees. It costs approximately five hundred dollars per tree removal and in FY18, they received 1,100 tree calls or emails from residents about park trees. Williams then explained the process that occurs after receiving information from a resident. An arborist is dispatched to do an inspection and to assess the risk of those trees. Due to limited funding, Williams added that high risk or extreme risk trees are what the department focuses on currently. An example of a high risk tree would be a tree behind your house that is on park land and if it fell, it would hit your house. Williams then explained that on average, \$225,000 over budgeted contract expenses is being spent on tree removal costs. Ash trees represent roughly 30 percent of the work load.

Williams explained that to meet those cost overruns, money is being removed from other Park maintenance funds such as courts, trails, parks and buildings. If amended language is approved and access to the Pest Fund is granted, Williams said those maintenance funds will return to where they were intended – park infrastructure.

**Board Discussion:**

**Gross:** Thank you. This does not include any kind of request for the increase for the assessment?

**Williams:** No ma'am.

**Gross:** Just for using monies that already exist within the Pest Management Fund?

**Kevin Williams:** Yes. Once the language is changed we can tap into the existing funds.

**Gross:** And you figure that on an annual basis, for the moment, it will be about \$200,000?

**Williams:** We are overspending about \$225,000 per year.

**Joe Mondoro, Director, Department of Management and Budget:** So what this will do, we will access some of the revenues that are currently flowing, and

at this point not needed for the approved items, and that is approximately a couple hundred thousand dollars a year.

**Gross:** At some point we may need more for more pests, but for right now this appears to be a logical approach.

**Smyth:** All right madam Chairman, I am missing something here, so we have these service districts setup, it's not everywhere in the County, is it?

**Mondoro:** This is county-wide, yes.

**Smyth:** This is the county-wide one?

**Mondoro:** Except for Lake Barcroft.

**Smyth:** Okay. So Lake Barcroft doesn't have to pay for it. There are parts of the county that have this problem, and a lot of the other parks don't. So people all over the County are going to be paying for something that is more localized, and instead of dropping the tax rate if we are not going to be using it, we are going to be maintaining the tax rate county-wide for something that is local and on Park Authority land.

**Kirk Kincannon, Director, Fairfax County Park Authority:** One of the issues with the Emerald Ash Borer is the infestation is 100 percent fatal. Every Ash tree in Fairfax County will probably be dead in fifteen to twenty years. We have had some small infestations in the past, we have another infestation going on right now. The way that we look at this collectively is that, it is a community wide issue, even though there are areas in the community that are not impacted yet, they will be.

**Smyth:** But we have other things that we see from our trees that are coming - the diseases on the Oaks, and other trees as well. It is not as though we don't have other things that effect other trees in the county. Believe me, we call you when you have a tree falling over.

**Bulova:** This is not something that is just restricted to the Emerald Ash Borer?

**Williams:** It is for pests as a whole. Right now our current pest is the Emerald Ash Borer.

**Bulova:** It is not restricted to that; it could be another infestation.

**Williams:** Specific to the pest infestation.

**McKay:** Just a request for some information when this item comes forward for public hearing in the background, if we could get what the balance has traditionally been in this fund over the last couple of years. I think it is easy to explain now that I understand it is county-wide, and it is a pest, this is because of the effects of pests, that's why we are using this fund. But I would like to be assured that, in the past, we have had the right rate, and moving forward, you think that even if we encumber the fund with these additional services, that we will not be looking at an immediate rate increase. We need to get some understanding of what that balance has been historically. Obviously, you all have identified this, and it makes sense to use this fund, but let's just make sure it makes financial sense too.

**Cook:** The Board may recall this came up a few years ago in one of the bug presentations because we weren't spraying, and doing some things, and we thought we don't need this fund anymore. But the fact is we do need it, but need it for a different bug and it is a good example of a fund that was drawn up to be too restricted. I think that fixes this problem. In fact, Linda, we are all paying right now because our parks are not getting maintained, because the money is getting pulled, and has to when these trees have to come down. So we are paying whenever the tennis court is not getting fixed, or a trail is not maintained. I think this makes a lot of sense.

**Joe Mondoro, Chief Financial Officer:** Just at that point, we have precedent in this fund of doing exactly that. It started very, very narrow with Gypsy Moth and as others needs were identified in the county we expanded it.

**Gross:** It runs in cycles. Gypsy Moth was high, and then it is lowered, and then you get something else, then it goes down, and then you get something else. It is just like the weather. If there are no other questions? Thank you very much, we will move forward with that. If there is no other business. With apologies to the Chairman of the Transportation Committee, we are adjourned at 3:11.