

**COUNTY OF FAIRFAX
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (EQAC)**

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: January 10, 2024

TIME: 7:15 p.m. – 9:34 p.m.

**LOCATION: 12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035
Conference Room 4/5**

EQAC Member Attendance

Name	Present/ Absent*	Name	Present/ Absent*
Larry Zaragoza (Chair, Mount Vernon)	P	Renee Grebe (Vice-Chair Emeritus At-Large)	P
Johna Gagnon (Franconia)	P	Stella Koch (At-Large)	V
Richard Healy (Mason)	P	Oaklen Kalinichenko (Student Member)	A
Ken Gubin (Dranesville)	P	George Lamb (At-Large)	P
Ken Lanfear (Vice-Chair, Hunter Mill)	P	Bryan Campbell (Braddock)	P
<i>Vacant</i> (Providence)		Eric Goplerud (At-Large)	P
Rich Weisman (Sully)	P	Clyde Wilber (Springfield)	P

* P indicates present; A indicates absent; V indicates attended virtually

Staff Attendance

Matthew Meyers, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC)
Neely Law (OEEC)
Sara Girello (OEEC)
Kelly Zitzer (OEEC)
Chris Herrington, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES)
Ellie Codding (DPWES)
Joni Calmbacher (DPWES)
Paul Reynolds (DPWES)
Jack Meritt (DPWES)
Katie Hermann, Department of Planning and Development

Visitor Attendance

Maddy White, Office of Congressman Gerald E. Connolly
Vanessa Simpson, Office of Jeffrey C. McKay
Gail Nittle, Springfield Civic Association
Eileen Vaughan, SPPA Civic Association
Lea Giovannello
Whitney Redding, Friends of Holmes Run
Jerry Peters
Susan Frieswyk
Sandy Frieswyk
Avril Garland, Quite Clean NOVA
Elizabeth Ende

Allan Robertson, Save Lake Accotink
Wade Corder
Brian Slawski, Friends of Accotink Creek
Alan Ruof (Virtual)
Diane Boughton (Virtual)
Dorothy Keough (Virtual)
Leo Milanowski (Virtual)
Marshal Kesler (Virtual)
Phil Shiman (Virtual)
Vicki Arnold (Virtual)
Martin Shepherd (Virtual)
Steve Larsen (Virtual)
Vanessa Goold, Clean Fairfax (Virtual)
Joseph McCormack (Virtual)
Sharada Gilkey (Virtual)
Darrell Meyer (Virtual)

Call to Order/Remote Participation

Chair Zaragoza called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

At 7:30 p.m., after the second speaker during Public Comment, Chair Zaragoza announced that Ms. Koch had requested to participate in the meeting remotely and had arrived. Chair Zaragoza read the remote participation language requirements and asked Ms. Koch to state her name, location, and reason for remote attendance. Ms. Koch shared that she was participating remotely from her home in Great Falls due to illness. Ms. Gagnon moved to allow Ms. Koch to participate remotely. Mr. Lanfear seconded the motion, and it was carried by a vote of 11-0-0 with Ms. Koch not yet able to vote and Ms. Kalinichenko being absent from the meeting.

Agenda Items, Discussion, Decisions and Votes

1. Election of EQAC Chair and Vice-Chair
 - a. Mr. Lamb (Nomination Committee Chair) presented EQAC the nominations for EQAC Chair and Vice-Chair.
 - Mr. Lamb moved to nominate Dr. Zaragoza as Chair and Mr. Lanfear as Vice-Chair. Dr. Weisman seconded the motion, and it was carried by a vote of 11-0-0, with Ms. Koch not present at the time of the vote and Ms. Kalinichenko being absent from the meeting.
2. 2024 Annual Public Comments on the Environment
 - a. Chair Zaragoza provided instructions to the public on the format of providing comment and called up each speaker.
 - i. Lea Giovanniello, stream restoration, Difficult Run and Piney Branch stream. Concern about erosion of stream banks. Coordination between jurisdictions on stream restoration efforts.

- ii. Whitney Redding, Friends of Holmes Run and Friends of Accotink, importance of protecting streams: preliminary assessment of land use decisions, appoint advisory groups that include environmental groups; environmental review process around bike/pedestrian paths in environmentally sensitive projects, Cinder Bed project did not have sufficient prior environmental review.

(After this speaker, Ms. Koch joined the meeting remotely. See section “Call to Order/Remote Participation” for the motion to allow Ms. Koch to participate in the meeting.)

- iii. Jerry Peters, Green Farm, concern about deer population. Concerning move of staff responsibility for deer culling from police department to animal shelter office.
- iv. Corazon Sandoval Foley, video testimony, requested that EQAC petition the general assembly to ask that existing law be changed so that Homeowners’ Associations be prohibited from banning solar panels.
- v. Susan Frieswyk, Save Lake Accotink, emphasized the importance of Lake Accotink to disabled residents. She said that Lake Accotink is the only park with direct waterfront access for mobility-challenged visitors. Other waterfront parks do not provide similar access for disabled residents.
- vi. Sandra Frieswyk, Save Lake Accotink, expressed her concern about the impact of dredging and transportation of dredged soil through neighborhoods, cutting down mature trees and cost. She advocated for rail transport of dredged material.
- vii. Avril Garland, Quiet Clean NOVA, advocates banning gas powered leaf blowers countywide. Provided examples of other states and jurisdictions that have banned them. DC and Montgomery have banned it, and their governments provide incentives or rebates to offset cost of electric blowers.
- viii. Elizabeth Ende, concerned about insufficient protection of tree canopy, mature trees, concern about loss of tree canopy, need to enforce regulations.
- ix. Allan Robertson, Save Lake Accotink, highlighted the need to acquire better data to make a better informed decision. Recommends dredging to preserve an open water body.
- x. Wade Corder, concern about Lake Accotink, start the permitting and contracting process needed to dredge the lake and maintain it at its current size of 45 acres of surface area.
- xi. Brian Slawski, Friends of Accotink, concern about paving wooded natural habitats for paved recreational trails, assure and support forest and flood plains, against Cinder Bed trail and lighting of trail.
- xii. Joseph McCormack, virtual testimony, Cinder Bed bike/pedestrian path – already a pathway. Lack of assessing alternatives to Cinder Bed path.
- xiii. WhoPooApp (written comments) Concern about lack of litter control, encourages county plastic recycling incentives, recommends county

- adopt meadowing policies to increase natural habitats without pesticides and herbicides.
- xiv. Dr. Mitchell Simmons (written comments) recommends Halifax Park not be developed as an outdoor sports complex for environmental and historical impacts.
 - xv. Diana Gibbs (written comments). Supports ban on chemical lawn applications. Also favors earmarking county funds for invasive vine removal and control.
 - xvi. Tami Davis Entabi (written comments). Favors better regulation of pest control, including advanced notification of pesticide fogging, prohibiting pesticide spraying into private properties, and mitigating negative effects of fogging drifts. Recommends outright ban on fogging for mosquitos.
 - xvii. Cynthia Shang (written comments). Concerned about environmental effects of data centers, recommends careful consideration of impact of electrical substations and transmission lines before approving data centers. Concerned about the climate impact of electrical demand of data centers, conflicting with CECAP and Resilient Fairfax plans.
 - xviii. Richard Hildebrand (written comments) recommend that the Board of Supervisors dredge the lake at its current footprint and that the Park Authority restart the Master Planning process for the park. This process with the assumption that the lake will be dredged and maintain the current size.
 - xix. Martin Shepherd (written comments) Recommends urgently to preserve Lake Accotink.
 - xx. Patricia Tyson (written comments) urges greater control of feral/community cats and lack of substantive regulation of gas-powered leaf blowers.
 - xxi. Anna Marie Hicks (written comments) urges regulatory action to prohibit gas powered leaf blowers. Raises concerns about perceived decline in deer and small mammals in wooded areas.
 - xxii. Mark Doehnert, (written comments) on behalf of the Ravenwood Park Citizens Association, concerned about stream bed and preservation of open space in Mason District's Justice Park. Recommended that the School Board convey about 60% of Westfield High School property to the Park authority, who they asserted is in a better position to manage the tree covered area identified.
 - xxiii. Alan Ford (written comments) tighten or eliminate loopholes which allow for removal of mature trees. Allow dead and dying trees to remain whenever feasible.

b. After all speakers were heard, Chair Zaragoza closed the public comment.

3. Updates on the Flood Risk Reduction Study, Lake Accotink, and Budget (Chris Herrington, Ellie Coddington, Joni Calmbacher, and Paul Reynolds, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services) (Flood Risk Storymap Link: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/9adf4f9877fe49bba9df9c28b0f40a09?item=20>)

- a. Flood Risk Reduction Study- research into structural flooding risk to structures from 100-year storms adjusted for climate change. Several grant programs and outreach to community undertaken for the study. There is currently \$95 million in the 5-year CIP for flood risk reduction. A significant need exists for adequate staffing to manage the County’s flood risk management program. To address the problem of tidal flooding in the Belle Haven area, a structural solution of a floodwall was presented to Belle Haven community. The plan was rejected by the community. The Flood Risk Reduction Study also looked at other, non-tidal flooding areas. Low lying areas were mapped and overland passage of water was tracked and mapped for instances of storm sewers not working or insufficient in low lying areas. Examined structural flooding over past 30 years and identified 1,600 residences that had been impacted in past.
 - b. Budget: Director Herrington from the DPWES responded to EQAC questions and concerns about budget needs to support Stormwater, Wastewater and Solid Waste programs. Rate or tax increases are needed to continue to meet existing service needs, the growing demands for services, and maintenance. Director Herrington provided specific examples of funding needs such as Lake Accotink, leaf litter collection, maintenance and upgrades to wastewater infrastructure, solid waste collection and Zero Waste. Mr. Wilber volunteered to draft a memo on utility worker compensation for EQAC review and transmission to BOS.
4. Approval of September 28, 2023, November 8, 2023, and December 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- a. Ms. Gagnon moved approval of the September 28, November 8, and December 13, 2023 meeting minutes. Dr. Weisman seconded the motion. During discussion, Mr. Wilber suggested edits to section 1(a)(i)(3) of the December 13 meeting minutes; EQAC members requested to see Mr. Wilber’s changes. Mr. Wilber then asked to make a friendly amendment to Ms. Gagnon’s motion, to table the approval of the December 13 meeting minutes until EQAC’s February meeting. Ms. Gagnon and Dr. Weisman accepted the friendly amendment. The motion was then called and carried by a vote of 12-0, with Ms. Kalinichenko being absent from the meeting.
5. EQAC Bylaws Update
- a. Mr. Healy presented EQAC with an updated version of EQAC’s proposed bylaws, which showed the changes made at the November 8, 2023 EQAC meeting. He also shared EQAC’s comments for consideration on the remaining, undiscussed parts of the bylaws. EQAC decided to amend the proposed bylaws with the following changes:
 - Article VI, Line 128 be amended to add “at any time” following the word “interest”.
 - Article X, Line 225, “physical” be struck from the line.
 - Article X, Line 228, “Proposed” be struck and “Recommendations on” inserted.
 - Article X, Line 228, “which are” be struck.
 - Article X, Line 229, “relative” be struck.

- Article X, Line 230, “such proposal” be struck and “recommendation” inserted.
- Article X, Line 222, “annual Environmental Quality Report” be modified to “Annual Report on the Environment”.
- Article X, Line 233, “and” be struck and after “Executive.” “, and to other County bodies with environmental responsibilities” be inserted.

EQAC also discussed the frequency of public comment and asked that the topic be added to a future meeting agenda for discussion.

- b. Mr. Wilber moved and Dr. Weisman seconded adoption of the bylaws as amended. The motion carried by a vote of 12-0-0, with Ms. Kalinichenko being absent from the meeting. The draft bylaws will be reviewed by the county attorney and brought back to EQAC.

6. Chair’s Items

- a. Nothing

7. Council Member Items

- a. Nothing

8. Staff Items

- a. Dr. Law reminded EQAC that the memorandum on lobbying was distributed to EQAC via e-mail.

9. Adjournment

- a. Feb 7 virtual next meeting. Ms. Gagnon moved and Mr. Gubin seconded motion to adjourn. Vote to adjourn carried by a vote of 12-0-0, with Ms. Kalinichenko being absent from the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 9:34.