

TASK FORCE ON THE FUTURE OF LAKE ACCOTINK

Monday, July 24, 2023
7:00 p.m.

Government Center
Conference Room 11

Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Sharon Bulova, Individual (Chair)
Ken Balbuena, North Springfield Civic Association
Matt Bright, Earth Sangha
Bryan Campbell, Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley
Sandy Collins, Friends of Accotink Creek
John Cook, Individual
Mary Cortina, Planning Commission
Michael Deloose, West Springfield Civic Association
Cathy Field, North Springfield Civic Association
Charlotte Hannagan, Kings Park Civic Association
Diane Hoffman, Braddock District Land Use and Environment Committee
Mary Keeser, Friends of Lake Accotink Park (FLAP)
Stella Koch, Environmental Quality Advisory Council
Chris Landgraf, Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC)
Marta Morrissey, Franconia District Land Use Committee
Gail Nittle, Springfield Civic Association
Ernest Rodriguez, Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE)
Martin Shepherd, Ravensworth Farm Civic Association
Evelyn Spain, Planning Commission
Kiel Stone, Park Authority Board
Meghan Walker, Danbury Forest Civic Association
Gary Bangs, Friends of Accotink Creek (ALTERNATE)
Richard Hildebrand, Save Lake Accotink (ALTERNATE)

County Representatives Present:

James Walkinshaw, Braddock District Supervisor
Christopher Herrington, Director, Public Works and Environmental Services
Charles Smith, Project Coordinator & Branch Chief, Public Works and Environmental Services
Adam Wynn, Senior Planner, Planning and Development Branch, Fairfax County Park Authority
John Burke, Natural Resource Branch Manager, Fairfax County Park Authority
Marcia Pape, Senior Legislative Assistant, Braddock District Office
Andrea Lewis, Aide, Braddock District Office

Members Absent:

Anne Ball, Sierra Club – Great Falls
Karen Campblin, Fairfax NAACP
James Heo, Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce
Chris Jones, GMU – Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center
David Kepley, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
Jakelin Lake, Individual
Allan Robertson, Save Lake Accotink
Hasan Shah, Individual

Call to Order and Introductory Remarks

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Sharon Bulova at 7:02 p.m. Attendance was taken, and a quorum was present.

Chairman Bulova briefly discussed the agenda.

Approval of Minutes from June 26, 2023 Meeting

Mary Keeser and Mary Cortina jointly made a motion to approve the minutes. Charlotte Hannagan seconded the motion. Minutes were approved by a unanimous vote, with the change of “County’s recommendation” to “County staff’s recommendation” in the third paragraph.

Public Comment

John Hurley thanked the Task Force for their time and effort and mentioned several concerns he had with comments made at the previous meeting.

Presentation of Dredging Examples and Continued Discussion of County Staff’s Recommendation on Dredging Lake Accotink

A presentation was made by Charles Smith, Branch Chief, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, Fairfax County, on “Dredging Examples” that compared and contrasted the Accotink Creek Watershed with other watersheds in Virginia and Maryland where there have been successful dredging operations. The presentation explained the different methods used to maintain those reservoirs and waterways, the amount of material dredged, along with associated costs.

A discussion and question-and-answer period followed the presentation.

Discussion of Proposed Task Force Sub-Committees

Chairman Bulova described three proposed Task Force Sub-Committees. Discussion was held, predominantly regarding potential overlap, but no changes were made to the proposal. The Sub-Committees are as follows:

- The Value of Lake Accotink and Lake Accotink Park to the County: Socio-Economic, Environmental, Recreational, to be chaired jointly by Allan Robertson and Gail Nittle
- Impacts of and Issues with Staff Recommendation to Not Dredge, Allow the Lake and Wetlands to “Return to Nature” and Proceed with a Re-Planning of Lake Accotink Park, to be chaired by Chris Jones
- Options to Consider Other Than Traditional Full Dredging, to be chaired by John Cook

Task Force members were asked to let Chairman Bulova and/or Ms. Pape know on which

subcommittee they would like to serve prior to the August 7 Task Force meeting. Sub-Committee chairs are responsible for scheduling meetings, finding locations to meet, doing their own research, and taking minutes. The full Task Force will meet monthly to get updates from the Sub-Committees.

Discussion of Scoping Questions for Managed Wetland/Hybrid Options at Lake Accotink

Supervisor Walkinshaw introduced the new consultant, LimnoTech, which will be researching what a managed wetland could look like as an alternative to dredging Lake Accotink. After reviewing the Task Force's objectives as outlined in the original Board Matter, Supervisor Walkinshaw requested that the Task Force get involved up front and aid in determining the scope of the consultant's research, receive updates, and then report back on the findings. He cautioned that it is important to clearly lay out the scope up front, because frequent changes in scope may hinder the consultant's work.

A list of questions based on the concerns of residents expressed in the most recent Lake Accotink survey was introduced, and Task Force members were invited to add more questions to this document. It was requested that these questions be submitted before the next meeting of the Lake Accotink Task Force to allow the consulting group to begin research as soon as possible.

Additional questions the Task Force requested the consulting group to explore included:

- What is the viability of dredging a smaller open water area/lake as opposed to the entire lake? At what scale could the amount of infrastructure mentioned in Arcadis' proposed plan be reasonably reduced?
- What is being done to keep the lake from filling in while the Task Force is considering options?
- What will the cost(s) be of alternatives to dredging?
- What, if any, are the legal ramifications of changing the designation of Lake Accotink, e.g., to a wetland?
- How will climate change be considered in research?

Closing Comments

Chairman Bulova concluded by reminding Task Force members to select the subcommittee they would like to serve on by the next meeting on August 7, 2023. That meeting will begin with a presentation by Davis Grant on his experience with Lake Barcroft, followed by time for the Sub-Committees to hold their first meeting. The full Task Force will meet again on September 11.

Chairman Bulova asked that a recording of this meeting of the Task Force be made available to the consultant to aid in their development of a scope of work for the managed wetland/hybrid option. Additional questions to add to the consultant's scope of work, requests for Sub-Committee designation, and other comments may be submitted to Chairman Bulova and/or the Task Force at BOSLakeAccotinkTaskForce@fairfaxcounty.gov

or LATF@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.