

TASK FORCE ON THE FUTURE OF LAKE ACCOTINK

Monday, December 4, 2023
7:00 p.m.

Government Center
Conference Room 11

Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Sharon Bulova, Individual (Chair)
Vicki Arnold, North Springfield Civic Association & Save Lake Accotink
Ken Balbuena, North Springfield Civic Association
Anne Ball, Sierra Club – Great Falls
Matt Bright, Earth Sangha
Bryan Campbell, Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley
Karen Campblin, Fairfax NAACP
Sandy Collins, Friends of Accotink Creek
Mary Cortina, Planning Commission
Michael Deloose, West Springfield Civic Association
Charlotte Hannagan, Kings Park Civic Association
Kerry Hubbard, Individual
Mary Keeser, Friends of Lake Accotink Park (FLAP)
David Kepley, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
Chris Landgraf, Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC)
Marta Morrissey, Franconia District Land Use Committee
Gail Nittle, Springfield Civic Association
Allan Robertson, Save Lake Accotink
Ernest Rodriguez, Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE)
Martin Shepherd, Ravensworth Farm Civic Association
Evelyn Spain, Planning Commission
Kiel Stone, Park Authority Board
Delegate Vivian Watts, Virginia House of Delegates
Steve Yannucci, Individual
Larry Zaragoza, Environmental Quality Advisory Council

County Representatives Present:

John Burke, Natural Resource Branch Manager, Fairfax County Park Authority
Joni Calmbacher, Director of Stormwater Planning, Public Works and Environmental Services
Aaron George, Project Coordinator, Public Works and Environmental Services
Brendon Hanafin, Fairfax County Park Authority
Christopher Herrington, Director, Public Works and Environmental Services
Andrea Lewis, Staff Aide, Braddock District Office
Marcia Pape, Senior Legislative Assistant, Braddock District Office
Justin Pistore, Project Manager II, Public Works and Environmental Services
Charles Smith, Project Coordinator & Branch Chief, Public Works and Environmental Services
Aimee Vosper, Deputy Director, Fairfax County Park Authority
Adam Wynn, Senior Planner, Planning and Development Branch, Fairfax County Park Authority

LimnoTech Representatives Present:

Lynne Mowery, PE, CFM, Project Manager, WSP
Tim Schmitt, Senior Environmental Scientist/Principal
Craig Taylor, PE, Hydraulics and River Rehabilitation Specialist

Members Absent:

John Cook, Individual
Cathy Field, North Springfield Civic Association
James Heo, Mount Vernon/Springfield Chamber of Commerce
Diane Hoffman, Braddock District Land Use and Environment Committee
Chris Jones, GMU – Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center
Jakelin Lake, Individual
Hasan Shah, Individual
Meghan Walker, Danbury Forest Civic Association

Public Members in Attendance:

Sandra Frieswyk
Richard Hildebrand
Bill Penoyar
Sandra Penoyar
Phil Shiman

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 explained the steps for presenting the Findings Report to the Board of Supervisors. Tuesday, December 5, is the last Board meeting of the year and the agenda is full. Supervisor Walkinshaw will present a Board Matter briefly reviewing the creation of the Task Force and make a motion that the Board accept the Findings Report. Chairman Bulova will be recognized to say a few words. The actual discussion will take place on December 12 at the Board's Environmental Committee meeting. Forty minutes have been reserved on the agenda for presentation of the Findings Report and Q&A from Board members. Chairman Bulova stated that it was important to orchestrate the presentation to keep it within time constraints. The video being produced by Channel 16 will be shown, then Chairman Bulova will begin the presentation. She would like for each subcommittee chair to say a few words, with each subcommittee limited to a maximum of three minutes. The total for the video and presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes to leave time for Q&A.

In response to a question, Chairman Bulova stated that Supervisor Walkinshaw would ask that the Findings Report be referred to the Environmental Committee for consideration. She said that action is usually not taken at that time, but would likely be in January or February of 2024. The action would probably involve directing staff to evaluate options and do cost estimates. The condition of the dam will also need to be evaluated. It is a complicated process. Chairman Bulova suggested that Task Force members may want to visit with new members of the Board to brief them on the topic.

Supervisor Walkinshaw was introduced to offer comments. He began by thanking everyone for their work. He stated that he had read the findings and was deeply appreciative of what the group had done in providing a potential path forward. Supervisor Walkinshaw echoed that this has been a challenging process and there is more work to be done in terms of analysis. He thanked staff for answering questions and responding professionally when the work of their department was questioned.

Chairman Bulova recognized Fairfax County resident Bill Penoyar for presenting the idea of creating kayak trails early in the Task Force's work. Chairman Bulova said that his suggestion was a positive start and encouraged Task Force members to look beyond dredging and to think more creatively about possible options for the lake.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of November 27, 2023 Minutes

Chris Landgraf made a motion to approve the draft minutes. Ken Balbuena seconded the motion. Gail Nittle proposed changing the word "beauty" to "benefit" on page four, paragraph four of the minutes. The minutes, as revised, were approved by a majority vote.

Presentation of Final Report by the Subcommittee to Draft the Lake Accotink Task Force Findings Report

Before Subcommittee Chair Bryan Campbell began his presentation, Task Force member Michael Deloose asked that Chairman Bulova recognize members who worked on drafting the final Findings Report. Chairman Bulova noted that it was challenging for the subcommittee to edit the final report within the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) guidelines and congratulated Mr. Campbell for creating a process to make it possible for everyone to edit the report. Mr. Campbell then expressed his appreciation to the staff of DPWES, the Park Authority, Marcia Pape, and the editors from the subcommittees. The editors from the Subcommittee on the Value of Lake Accotink to Lake Accotink Park and to the County were Anne Ball and Kerry Hubbard; Vicki Arnold from the Subcommittee on Impacts of and Issues with Staff Recommendation to Not Dredge; and Mary Cortina and Charlotte Hannigan from the Subcommittee on Options to Consider Other than Full Dredging. He worked separately with Martin Shepherd on his chapter. In addition, Mr. Campbell thanked John Cook for working with him on presentation of the conclusion.

Mr. Campbell explained the writing process, stating that each editor was responsible for their subcommittee's respective chapter of the final report. Other editors then came in with fresh eyes to look for consistency across chapters. Formatting guidelines were established, staff comments were addressed, and editors addressed suggested editorial comments such as source citations and converting references to footnotes. ADA-compliant captions were also added to tables.

Chairman Bulova congratulated the subcommittee on accomplishing a huge amount of work in a short timeframe. She then offered a motion for the Task Force to accept the Findings Report. Mr. Campbell and Mr. Shepherd seconded the motion.

The Task Force considered friendly motions to make additions, deletions, minor corrections and formatting changes to the Executive Summary of the Findings Report. All revisions accepted by the Task Force were forwarded to Mr. Campbell for inclusion in the Executive Summary to be presented to the Board of Supervisors the following day. Of note, the Task Force discussed the size to be used for Lake Accotink in the Findings Report. The Park Authority requested that 55 acres be used as the official size of the lake, but various Task Force members stated that estimate was from 2017-2018 and the surface area has been reduced by siltation. The agreement was to use "49 to 55 acres" and add a footnote to explain the discrepancy. Sandy Collins moved to amend the report of the Subcommittee on Impacts of and Issues with Staff Recommendation to Not Dredge, which she chaired, to remove two pages of text and substitute the language inserted in the revised Executive Summary. The motion to accept the Findings Report, as modified, was unanimously approved.

Closing Comments

Chairman Bulova thanked members of the Task Force for coming to the table to work through issues, adding that one should never underestimate the process of community engagement. She invited all Task Force members to attend both the presentation of the Findings Report to the Board of Supervisors at their December 5 meeting and the Board's Environmental Committee meeting on December 12, where the findings will be discussed in more detail.

Questions/comments for Chairman Bulova and/or the Task Force may be submitted to BOSLakeAccotinkTaskForce@fairfaxcounty.gov or LATF@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.