



Bulletin of the Proceedings of the Friends of Accotink Creek

Our meeting notes serve as bulletins of our activities, interests, and discussions, supplemented by your submissions.

Friends of Accotink Creek Town Meeting – December 19, 2017

Next Meeting: January 16, 2018 (Third Tuesday of each month)
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

Present:

Lisa Turcios
Philip Latasa
Julie Chang
Flint Webb
Dave Lincoln
Beverley Rivera

Upcoming events

- Christmas Bird Count December 31, 2017
- General Assembly Delegation hearing January 6, 2018
- EQAC Public Hearing, January 10, 2018
- Virginia Conservation Network Lobby Day, January 22, 2018
- Sustainable Schoolyards Workshop, January 26, 2018
- Lake Accotink Park Stream Monitoring, March 10, 2018
- 2018 Lobby Day, March 21, 2018

Action Items:

- Philip – Arrange Americana Northside project
- Sandy - Obtain information on Frontier Drive

FACC Subjects Discussed –

• Represent FACC:

- *Virginia Conservation Network Assembly Preview 12/2*
Julie described attending the Fredericksburg event held by video conference at various remote locations. Her impression was that the concern was with big-picture issues such as clean energy and clean rivers. Julie was able to connect with Friends of the Rappahannock. Lisa attended the central Richmond event representing Sierra Club Great Falls chapter and noted the emphasis was on the “doable”.
- ["The Anthropologist"](#) Screening 12/6
Julie stated she had represented FACC at this screening at Arlington Central Library, hosted by Virginia Sierra Club. FACC was introduced to the audience and Julie was able to discuss our watershed and trash issues. Susan Crate, the subject anthropologist, held a Q & A session afterwards. Julies saw the possibility of outreach to local residents with Professor Crate. Lisa noted Professor Crate teaches at GMU and is active locally.

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- *General Assembly Delegation Hearing 1/6*
Julie is willing to speak at the hearing of the Fairfax members of the General Assembly, intended to gather public input before the next session. Julie & Philip will work on a slideshow.
- *EQAC Annual Public Hearing 1/10*
Dave advised he had collected input from the Sierra Club, Friends of Little Hunting Creek, Audubon, and 350 Fairfax. Dave and Philip will adapt one of our existing videos for the presentation. Lisa will also attend. Philip mentioned 350 Fairfax will also make a presentation.
- *VCN Lobby Day 1/22*
Philip inquired about plans to participate. Lisa will attend, but not sure which group she will be representing. Flint advised the key is to have a bill number to discuss with legislators. Philip observed 350 Fairfax will be there, possibly organizing a bus with the Sierra Club. Julie recounted an anecdote from last year's Lobby Day of her rejected cookie "bribe".
- *2018 Lobby Day 3/21*
By email, Kris advised this event is organized by the Choose Clean Water Coalition (CCWC), and is a good opportunity for FACC to connect with other active watershed groups and meet with our representatives in Congress. CCWC schedules meetings with individual Congresspeople, and then you meet with them as a group of 5-10 people for a few minutes. While FACC generally isn't very active at this level of politics, having 2 or 3 people show up for this is a good way for FACC to show that we are active and engaged, and spending a half-day with other people who are working hard to protect the environment is a good experience.

• *Trash Action Work Force:*

Philip remarked the Trash Action Work Force will resume regular meetings in February, aiming toward a spring action.

Flint is working on speakers from the county on the topic of trash and recycling for the Federation of Civic Associations March meeting. Speakers from FACC or the Trash Action Work Force on trash in the environment are also a possibility. Philip nominated Kris.

Philip reported 350 Fairfax is carrying on against plastic bags. They met with Delegate Alfonso Lopez & Senator Chap Petersen, who will both introduce bag bills providing for a 5 cent fee with 1 cent to the merchant for costs. In advocating for this measure, we should not mention oceans other than the Chesapeake Bay, especially trash gyres, but rather emphasize litter. Flint observed the proposed revenue to merchants is an incentive to not oppose the bills.

By email, Kris listed the "*Trash Action Workforce's 8 Asks*" for Fairfax County, which could be integrated into FACC's EQAC presentation:

1. Prohibit buying or distributing single-use water bottles at all county events and functions.
2. Make reusable water bottles available (sell or give away) to employees/participants.
3. Install at least one water refill station (or retrofit drinking fountains to refill water bottles) in every county facility, including government centers, recreation facilities, and schools.

4. No longer sell single use plastic water bottles in vending machines/cafeterias in county facilities.
5. Ban plastic straws in county-run cafeterias/restaurants.
6. Revise the litter control ordinance to require all businesses to recycle cans and bottles, in addition to paper and cardboard.
7. Evaluate the effectiveness of recycling programs in the public schools, and of stewardship education. Test and adopt new litter removal strategies.
8. Speed up the implementation of trash traps in streams (or other engineering solutions to removing litter and trash) and evaluate their effectiveness.

- Route 1:

By email, Kris commented that while only a small section of the Accotink watershed will be affected by the Route 1 redevelopment, this is a major project for the County, and some of our partners (FOLHC, ANS), are very involved. This is a good opportunity to push for stronger engagement on trash issues as part of the project, e.g. community engagement, trash traps, and other litter prevention initiatives.

- Park Authority Friends Groups Task Force:

Julie announced the third Task Force meeting went line by line over the draft memorandum of understanding and also discussed the elephant in the room – lack of trust between the Park Authority, Park Foundation, and friends groups. The friends groups are hesitant to share financial information, fearing control. Flint noted the fear of the Park Authority cutting funding to parks with well-financed friends groups. He mulled on the possibility of compromise with informal information sharing.

Julie advised there will be a public meeting January 9th, preceded by meetings with individual friends groups on their particular concerns. There followed a discussion of the applicability of the memorandum of understanding to FACC. Dave suggested “let sleeping dogs lie”, recalling the delays over an agreement on the Accotink Gorge. Philip mentioned our obligation to support Friends of Lake Accotink Park which is unincorporated.

- Clean Water Rule Delay Letter:

Philip let us know the EPA tried to rescind the Waters of the United States rule establishing jurisdiction over smaller bodies of water, but could not in the face of 700,000 public comments. Now they propose delaying the implementation date. Kris signed FACC onto the Southern Environmental Law Center letter opposing the delay.

- TMDL Salt Management:

Dave advised there will be a meeting on a salt management strategy January 17th. Lisa noted the January 13th Green Breakfast will also be on the topic of salt management. Flint shared his anecdote of commenting to a Metro station manger on heavy salt use and being told “It’s calcium chloride, not salt!” Lisa supposed the Virginia Sierra Club transportation group currently being organized may be interested in the topic.

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

Julie shared handouts from a Choose Clean Water workshop on diversity in environmental interest groups. Flint mentioned how this related to the Air & Waste Management Association’s siting of meetings according to geographic distribution of members.

- *Frost Middle School/Get2Green Workshop:*

By email, Kris reported this went well. We partnered with Matt Bright (Earth Sangha), Get 2 Green (FCPS), and Frost MS. We had about 12 educators and a good discussion. They were particularly appreciative of our looking at “messy” projects - ones that didn’t work out as planned, or failed, and acknowledging the challenges of maintaining these projects. We have scheduled the next Sustainable Schoolyards Workshop for Friday, January 26, 2018 – 9am-12pm at Woodson High School, titled “Planting and Tending Native Schoolyard Gardens”

- *M.O.M.S.:*

Philip mentioned there has been renewed interest by M.O.M.s in Merrifield in partnership with FACC. Kris exchanged emails suggesting something early in the next year.

Lisa brought up [5% fundraising](#) done at stores like M.O.M.s and mentioned an amusing article about [M.O.M’s as a cult](#).

- *Revitalizing Annandale:*

Philip recalled an article in the Annandale Blog describing a panel, which was set up to develop strategies for revitalizing Annandale. Among the projects recommended is an “open streets event” to be held in spring 2018. This would be closing a street for pedestrian and bicycle use only. Although not directly connected to watersheds, this is something we included in our Braddock Road comments.

Lisa elaborated that the proposal is to close ½ mile of Columbia Pike, and has \$125,000 in funding from the Board of Supervisors. Lisa will be on the watch for display opportunities for FACC.

- *4104 Woodlark Drive:*

Philip let us know we were alerted to this case by Betsy Martin involving one of four near identical lots, created in 1941 and never developed. Now they are almost entirely within the Resource Protection Area. A developer of distressed properties bought one and was able to use the standard grandfather provisions to intrude into the RPA. A neighbor obtained a court order to enforce the deed covenant requiring a 75 foot setback from the street. Now the developer is seeking to intrude even further into the RPA with an exception granted by the Chesapeake Bay Exception Review Committee.

Kris and Amy Gould made presentations at the hearing December 6th. Several neighbors testified that this was a problematic area to build, since there is regular flooding. Apparently it was rather acrimonious, and the Committee voted to postpone their decision until they could meet in January with a Fairfax County government lawyer who could better explain the situation.. Amy has been in touch with other county agencies and DEQ.

Flint brought up a similar case along Long Branch north where house construction was permitted very close to the banks and the owner has now cut trees in the RPA. Flint will follow up on possible enforcement.

- *FACC Election:*

Beverley and Julie were unanimously reelected as Purser and Conservator-at-Large Terms will run January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019.

- *Goodshop:*

Philip confirmed we received a check from Goodshop for \$37.50. He reminded all that doing our online shopping through [Goodshop and Amazon Smile](#) pay dividends to FACC.



A "big" check, but it could be bigger if we all used Goodshop and Amazon Smile