

Comparing notes with Friends of Sligo Creek

October 17, 2019

All,

Following up on my action to re-start the exercise in benchmarking with [Friends of Sligo Creek](#) from June ("whence FACC" was the agenda topic), I've gone back through notes from a conversation I had with Kit July 15th. It was a rather impromptu opportunity to talk since she was away on vacation, and that's why I didn't wait on getting you all on a conference call. I had intended to review my notes at the July meeting to explore areas we'd like to discuss further, but please accept my apologies that it didn't come to pass, since I didn't attend.

For background, I noted that Kit is qualified as CBLP Level 1 (Landscaping Professional), and as a Master Watershed Steward, and has a lawn advisory business, [Kitgage.com](#). She notes that the CBLP is about 5-7 years old, requires about 12 classes, and is more comprehensive than the Master Watersheds Steward certification.

Please review my notes below, and reply:all with any comments--I'd especially appreciate notes on topics of interest for a future meeting or conference call with Kit, Corinne, or other FOSC officers.

Thanks!

Dave

Notes from phonecon between Kit, FOSC and Dave, FACC, July 15, 2019:

FOSC Organization:

- Assigning ownership of functions and geographical areas of interest helps to sustain activities: As noted on <http://fosc.org/> and within the posted newsletters, there are standing committees, but their identification evolves over time. For example, RIP (Removing Invasive Species), works with Montgomery County Parks to organize cleanups, and aligns with Parks' division of the creek by area. RIP works with Parks' "Weed Warriors" program that offers volunteers' opportunities to participate in invasive control.

- [I'm enclosing an extract from FOSC's web site describing their committees, for reference.]

- There are also Section Leaders assigned to cover particular geographical areas, aligned with the Parks organization.

Web services:

- Donations support a part-time position for web designer: That person is now maintaining data on [fosc.com](#); However, a Word Press- based new web site is planned, with a "Database Manager" function to improve functions for joining the organization, donations, linking volunteers to tasks through a listserv.

- The Stormwater Committee has listserv meetings (old data), and is migrating to a new web site.

Membership and Meetings:

- The Board meets approximately monthly.

- FOSC organizes "Walk and Talk" activities that are open to the public, which specialize on particular topics.

- Section Leaders meet with the Board in A "Round Table" on some frequency that I didn't capture.

- FOSC meets with Parks Dept annually to review what has been accomplished, cooperation, and plans.

Fundraising: I asked what has worked, and whether they've had any dead ends of note.

- In 2018 FOSC had about \$13K in grants and about \$2K in donations. Example of the grants is "Keep MD Beautiful." Example of a neighborhood grant is Three Oaks, which had info in a June newsletter. FOSC also acts as Fiscal Agent, collecting a 5% fee for executing some stormwater projects (not income, of course).

- Kit recommends FACC avail itself of Chesapeake Bay Trust (Corinne is on the staff of Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, by the way).

Strategic Plan/Mission (One topic we discussed at FACC was whether is worthwhile to hammer out a Strategic Plan, so I asked Kit whether FOSC's published Mission statement is useful, and whether it has evolved):

- It originated in about 2001, and then when Kit was President, 5-6 years later, FOSC reviewed the Mission to check and update. The memory of that was that Mission or Guiding Principles is useful to identify and review as standards of performance.

Projects (I asked about notable projects that come to mind as successes):

- FOSC used to put in rain gardens and other features to help with stormwater management, but has evolved more towards policy level activities.

- Advocacy Committee (Kit) There was a note that not all the policy letters sent out by FOSC are posted on the web site.

Liaison with Montgomery County Parks:

- Parks trains and designates volunteer trainers. However, it is not consistent: The Weed Warrior trainer position had been vacant for several months.

- MOU? There is no MOU between FOSC and Parks; however, FOSC Policy and Practice is in place to cover how FOSC operates.

- Insurance: FOSC has liability and D&D insurance.