



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 – April 16, 2019

Next Meeting: May 21, 2019 (Third Tuesday of each month)
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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Present:

Anastasios Galatis, Sandy Collins, Philip Latasa, Julie Chang (via conference call), Kris Unger, Flint Webb
Bill Mindak – Welcome, Bill!

Upcoming events

- NVCC Green Festival, April 25, 2019
- Lake Accotink Vernal Pool Walk, April 28?, 2019
- Fairfax City Earth Day & Daniels Run Invasives, April 28, 2019
- Fairhill Elementary 3R Planting, April 30, 2019
- Mantua Outdoors Day, April 30, 2019
- Supervisor Candidate Forums May 2 & May 9, 2019
- Mason Neck Eagle Festival, May 16, 2019
- Chairman Candidate Forum June 6, 2019

FACC Subjects Discussed –

• Represent FACC:

- *NVCT 25th Anniversary Luncheon Mar. 21, 2019*
Kris attended this event, and noted Mary Cortina was also there. There was much discussion of the impacts and opportunities presented by the advent of Amazon.
- *Save the Dandelions Mar. 23 & 24, 2019*
Kris described this as a schmoozer event. M.O.M's is interested in working together on volunteer opportunities.
- *Save Blake Lane Park Apr. 27, 2019*
Philip advised this will be an awareness event to encourage support for preservation of the park, with games, a nature walk, and other activities. Flint opined that the park will stay, observing that the need for a new school is not in Oakton, but in Merrifield. Flint noted the Merrifield Task Force is seeking proffers from the INOVA/Fairview developers that may provide a school site. Flint may be able to attend the Blake Lane Park event.
- [City Nature Challenge](#) Apr. 27, 2019
Kris will coordinate with Elaine to include a vernal pool walk.
- *Mantua Outdoors Day Apr. 30, 2019*
The Mantua Outdoors Day will include talks about native plants, pollinators, natural insect repellents, and landscaping drainage solutions. Participation is welcome.

- *Mason Eagle Festival May 16, 2019*
Sandy is still working on preparation for this event at Mason Neck State Park.

- FACC Display:



Anastasios presented his redesign of the FACC display board, to approving comments. Suggestions of possible tabletop companions for the board included pervious pavers and a mini-rain garden.

- TMDL:

Kris advised the Long Branch central public outreach has been postponed to fall, to be preceded by a professional survey poll concerning salt use practices.

By email, Dave contributed that he had attended non-traditional and tracking meetings, learning DEQ drafted a BMP “straw man”. The Fairfax County representative had good progress to show. Dave reported good interaction with Community Associations Institute for homeowners association outreach.

- Lake Accotink Park Master Plan:

Philip has arranged with GMU’s Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center to do eDNA sampling in April and May for anadromous river herring as far upstream as the dam and for eels and mussels at one location above the dam. Our portion of the cost will be \$632. Kris suggested Save Lake Accotink might wish to contribute.

Philip advised that following the March 4th DPWES briefing, Save Lake Accotink has formally met and decided to continue to advocate for retaining the full lake. Kris was at the meeting and reported lengthy discussion of the smaller lake option.

Our discussion of the lake’s future mulled over FACC remaining neutral vs. taking a position. Philip reflected on how the prospect of tree loss and a permanent pipeline both make the big lake option less appealing.

- [Conservation Leadership Project:](#)

Philip noted Katie held another workday at Daniels Run Elementary on March 30th. The next workday will coincide with the Fairfax City Earth Day April 28th 2:30 – 5:00 pm, also at the school. By phone, Julie added that the flyer and poster for the April 28th workday will be ready soon.

- [4104 Woodlark Drive:](#)

Philip passed on the secondhand report that Northern Virginia Conservation Trust has approved acquisition of all four lots along Woodlark Drive in principle.

The Board of Supervisors [voted unanimously](#) April 9th to deny the appeal of the decision of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance Committee, leaving the applicant to reconsider options. Kris passed on the comments of Supervisor Smyth (whom he met at a Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions meeting) applauding the efforts to oppose the project and praising this as an important victory.

- [Clean Water Rule:](#)

Sandy submitted detailed [FACC comments](#) on the proposed change to the definition of the Waters of the United States and FACC also signed on to the Choose Clean Water letter. Sandy pointed out the value of unique and specific comments vs. form letters.

- [Vernal Pools:](#)

- [Patriot Park Walk](#)

Kris related the story of this exploration with Mike Hayslett, wherein the outraged party encountered a known vernal pool in the process of being devastated by house construction. Kris was in the process of filing reports, only to realize after the fact that the correct location was nearby and the pool was still intact (for now). Kris considered this a case where “the system worked – but imperfectly”. A Northern Virginia Conservation Trust representative accompanied the walk and could be an ally in vernal pool preservation.

- [Lake Accotink Park Walk](#)

Final plans for a Lake Accotink Park vernal pool walk are pending and likely to become a part of the City Nature Challenge, above.

- [Lake Accotink Park Sediment](#)

Kris commented that this pool had previously had Wood frog tadpoles, but now appears dead. He lamented both that the damage is in some sort of enforcement limbo and that repairs to the pipe likely could not be accomplished without equipment damage to the pool and its surroundings. Philip noted that when the sediment finally fills the pool and flows over the park road, the means of enforcement will be found.

- [INOVA/Fairview Park:](#)

Flit described the process whereby the area in Fairview Park formerly thought to be in a floodplain was, in fact, excluded from the floodplain some years ago by the Corps of Engineers, allowing development to proceed there.

Flint mentioned the Merrifield Task Force is suggesting preservation of ½ of the INOVA property and trying to keep development within the existing footprint. There is the complicating issue of Exxon still being the owner of the land and paying taxes, whereas INOVA is a non-profit that will pay no taxes.

Kris is trying to encourage the formation of a Friends of Holmes Run within a group of persons interested in the INOVA/Fairview developments. [cont.]

Kris is working on a nature walk at the INOVA site. He pointed to the example of the watershed-friendly practices employed at [MedStar Harbor Hospital](#) in Baltimore.

- Fairfax Healthy Communities Coalition:

- *Cable TV debate*

Philip reminded that the Fairfax Healthy Communities Coalition debate for candidates for Chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is on May 13th, and will be televised live on Channel 10. Although FACC is a named partner, Kris indicated we are not required to have representation at the debate. Philip queried whether any of our particular issues would be among the questions and Kris will check.

- Elections:

- *350 Fairfax*

Philip observed we are a partner with 350 Fairfax, Food and Water Action, and Our Revolution for three supervisor candidate forums. One will be May 2nd, for north County supervisor districts, one on May 9th for south County districts, and one on June 6th for Chairman candidates. Kris plans to attend all three; Flint plans to attend the north County forum; and others are welcome to represent FACC at any of the three.

Philip shared the questions that will be provided to candidates beforehand:

1. Earlier this year the Board of Supervisors passed a board matter titled Fairfax Green Initiatives, which outlined several steps the county might take to address climate change. As a supervisor, what policies (either from Fairfax Green Initiatives or alternatives) would you advocate to make Fairfax County carbon neutral?

2. The Virginia Green New Deal includes four objectives: (1) a just and equitable 100% renewables plan that leaves no workers or communities behind; (2) direct large investments and job-training programs in renewables, building an energy-efficient smart grid, residential and commercial energy efficiency, and more; (3) clean water and air for all Virginians; and (4) investments in local-scale agriculture in communities across Virginia. Do you support the Green New Deal? Why or why not?

3. As a supervisor, how would you work with the school board and the state legislature to advance climate-related programs and policies?

4. What will you do to protect Fairfax County's green spaces and streams and to promote healthy habitats?

5. How can the Board of Supervisors take the lead in reducing the plastic pollution that threatens green spaces and streams in the county?

6. What have you done as a consumer, in your work/career, and in your public life to address climate change?

- *Fairfax League of Conservation Voters*

Flint confirmed the League is still working on its list of questions. Kris confirmed the League will not act during the primary elections.

- *Providence District Council*

The Providence District Council candidates forum has been postponed to May 6th.

- *Monica Billger Candidacy*
Flint confirmed Monica Billger (whom some know from her days with Audubon Naturalist Society) is a candidate for Board of Directors of Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District.

- 495 Express Lanes/I-66 Tour:

Kris is still working on dates for the tour, but has found VDOT unresponsive.

Kris mentioned the rather forlorn hope, heard expressed by persons at a recent Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions meeting, that the trees lost to the 495 Express Lanes will be replaced 'somewhere'.

- Follow the Water:

- *Fairhill Elementary*
Kris advised help will be welcome at the Fairhill Elementary native garden planting April 30 led by DPWES. Kris described the plan as a "pizza garden" similar to that done at Little Run Elementary, with species grouped in wedges for ease of identification. Kris will also be leading an alternate activity, perhaps an examination of life in the soil.



- Friends of Parks:

- *Insurance*
Sandy was unable to gain useful information on insurance at the recent Friends of Parks meeting, as it was mostly about coordinating with the Park Authority. It seems most groups have avoided insurance issues by becoming unincorporated Park Volunteer Teams. Beverley will proceed with acquiring insurance at about \$1400 per year.
- *Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley*
Philip remarked that Friends of [Long Branch Stream Valley](#) have drunk the Park Volunteer Team Kool-Aid, as [Friends of Nottoway](#) already did last year. Kris indicated FLBSV has complicated ambitions to maintain a degree of independence.
- *Wisdom from Nottoway*
Philip shared some rules for effective advocacy within County government Friends of Nottoway learned during the recent Friends groups meeting:
 1. Relate your \$ need to your park and/or the Park Authority, not the BOS member who is reading your email.
 2. Don't remind staff that they only have a 4-year job. In plain English, don't threaten your Supervisor about the next election.
 3. Be concise.
 4. You sent 300 form letter emails. You sent 1 email, and 299 were lost.
 5. For budget advocates, not a lot will change in the budget in this fiscal year, but it is a great time to request for future years.
 6. Invite your Supervisor to something outside their district. Talk about the park system (General Fund).
 7. Develop a relationship with your Supervisor; don't just communicate at budget time. Schools, police and fire were constantly visiting his boss.

- Grants:

- *Fairfax Water*

- Kris suggested he may pursue a Fairfax Water Education Grant, as we have done before. Applications are due by May 15th.

- *Dominion*

- Philip reported Senator Surovell passed along information on Dominion's environmental grants for up to \$25,000, due by April 30. There were some earlier discussions with Friends of Little Hunting Creek about applying for this grant for a trash project. Philip wondered if we could put something together for the Americana north meadow project, being that the area is beneath Dominion power lines.

- Potomac Watershed Cleanup:

Our cleanups begin this Saturday, April 20th. Twenty-one people are signed up

Dave's church, Grace Presbyterian, may do its own cleanup May 19th or thereabouts.

Project Clean Stream is not offering cleanup financial support this year, so that will be six or seven hundred dollars we will not receive.

- Stormwater:

Flint discoursed on the frustrations of convincing local officials on updates to stormwater standards. The standard of capturing the first 1" of rainfall needs to increase by a factor of 2 to 2". The Army Corps of Engineers uses data that looks backward 50 years, rather than forward.

Flint also mentioned a talk to be given to the Federation of Civic Associations on April 18th about environmental features of the GMU campus, especially stormwater, and including the [stormwater micro-turbine](#) project.

- *C-PACE*

- During this year's Virginia General Assembly session Senator Chap Petersen passed [SB1400](#) allowing local [C-PACE](#) (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy) financing to cover stormwater management. Financing for individual residential failed to pass. Flint confirmed that Fairfax County has already included stormwater in its C-PACE ordinance, but noted the complication of stormwater projects not offering the kind of financial payback that energy projects do.

Flint is spreading the C-PACE message to chambers of commerce around the county and could use leads on any that would be interested. Any effort we can make to spread the C-PACE word would be useful.

- *VDOT Resolution*

- The Board of Supervisors March 19th meeting [formally requested](#) all current and future VDOT projects located in the County meet the County's local stormwater management regulations.

• *Americana Drive Cleanup:*

Philip provided some American Drive Cleanup Updates:

VDOT will

- Clear vines along the soundwall
- Repair the shoulder where trucks have been parking on it
- Paint parking lanes, to discourage parking on shoulders
- Do some replanting in spots

Police will be doing a one to two week parking enforcement campaign. Police attention has been drawn to the area by recent crime incidents.

Although it exceeded the maximum authorized \$200 set at our January meeting, without objection the group approved reimbursement of \$234.52 to Philip for refreshments at the cleanup.

• *Return of the Prodigal Founder:*

The founder of FACC. Harris (Duane) Murphy, currently residing in Colorado, is selling his property there and may be back in town at an uncertain future date for an uncertain period. He is interested in reconnecting and we should have in mind ways to make use of his return.

• *Daventry CCT Project:*

Via email, Dave informed us start is still expected this spring on repairs to the Cross County Trail in the Daventry area downstream from Old Keene Mill Road. This area has been a mess for years after washout damage from heavy storms.
