



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 – August 20, 2019

Next Meeting: September 17, 2019 (Third Tuesday of each month)
Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby

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Present:

Sandy Collins, Flint Webb, Daniel Wu, Philip Latasa, Julie Chang, Sue Schuman, Kim Schauer
Guest – Tami Sheiffer

Upcoming events

- Stream Monitoring Lake Accotink Park September 14, 2019
- International Coastal Cleanup September 7 – October 12, 2019
- Plastic Free Forum September 28, 2019

FACC Subjects Discussed –

• Watch the Green Grow:

Tami explained the Park Authority Watch the Green Grow program to encourage positive action and attitudes by park neighbors. The app and website are close to launch. Residents will be encouraged to report good actions in their yards chosen from a list. Each action puts a green dot on an interactive map. The intent is to have positive, rather than negative, interactions with park neighbors. The app will be linked to the Park Authority [encroachment map](#). Tami is available to talk to interested groups.

Regarding encroachment, Philip encouraged keeping open the small park entrances sometimes taken over by homeowners.

Another aspect is distributing paper yard waste bags to residents. Sue and Tami will discuss supplying bags to Mantua.

Tami is also providing [Meaningful Watershed Experiences](#) to schools in three watersheds, Cub Run, Sugarland Run, and Accotink Creek. The program is 1½ hours @ \$8 per student. Keene Mill Elementary is scheduled. Sue suggested reaching out to School Board members to raise awareness.

• Represent FACC:

○ 350 Fairfax Plastic Free Forum

Philip advised 350 Fairfax will again be doing a Plastic Free October, and hopes to get a plastic bag bill passed in 2020. We are invited to cosponsor Plastic Free October and to table at the Plastic Free Forum on Sept 28th. Sandy will be able to staff a table.

- [Champion Award:](#)

The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services has an internal award/recognition program called the Champion Awards. Although primarily for staff, the program also includes a cooperator award. FACC was recognized this year for our mission of clean streams and outreach efforts to schools. The part of the award that includes 4 hours administrative leave was good for a few laughs around the table.



FACC members awaiting the award.

- [Daniels Run Invasives:](#)

Philip informed us Katie held another workday August 17th, addressing Porcelainberry that was reclaiming previously cleared areas. Daniel has received permission to continue clearing invasives here and along the nearby streambed. Daniel indicated he plans to first continue work by the vernal pool, then target the stream in November and December.

- [INOVA/Fairview Park:](#)

- *Nature Walk*

Sue confirmed the Nature Walk on the former Exxon Mobile site will be August 27th. She observed INOVA seems open to non-confrontational ideas. Flint described a nearby Fairview Park walk on August 13th around the lake with neighbors.

Flint mentioned the Task Force plans to push for a standard of stormwater capture of “one hour one year repeat value storm”, a number which will change over time vs. the current 1.21” fixed one-year storm standard. For instance, the July 8th storm was 3.5” in 50 minutes whereas the fixed 100-year standard in 3.25”.

Sue noted the current Fairview Park text provides for no residential building on the “peninsula” made of spoils. She added the Task Force favors no building at all there. Flint pointed out the applicant can build office space by right here. Sue indicated the applicant has no desire to do so due to no demand for office space. There is some dispute between FEMA and Fairfax County data on the limits of the floodplain.

- [I-66 Tour:](#)

Philip reported that on August 8th, representatives from VDOT, Senator Marsden’s office, Delegate Kaye Kory’s office and Friends of Accotink Creek met to review concerns with the course of the project. The venue of the meeting was a tour of several spots along the project. Unfortunately, we received no good news and the tree clearing continues relentlessly.

The last stop was the Chain Bridge Road cloverleaf, where we received the worst news of all. Most of the Mosby Woods tributary is going to be buried in a culvert. This loss of wetlands has to be mitigated by law, but that only means VDOT will pay into a wetlands bank somewhere else.

Philip advised there will be an I- 66 Outside the Beltway public meeting at the Providence Community Center on September 4th.



Mosby Woods tributary, Then and Now

- Friends of Parks:

- Insurance

Sandy passed along the news that Beverley has at last obtained insurance. Philip asked for approval of the additional \$155 Beverley paid for automobile coverage. Approval was given without objection. After discussion and pondering of hypothetical audits, the group also approved Beverley's draft [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) without objection. Such a policy is an insurance requirement. Philip observed that passing the hat around the table with a contribution of \$210 each would cover the cost of the annual premium.

Noting it was only indirectly related to the topic, Philip brought up the Friends of Nottoway Park difficulties with the Park Authority. Disagreements over handling funds mean the annual Easter Egg Hunt will be discontinued. Objections to a new background check requirement for volunteer leaders mean the invasive management area at Nottoway will also be discontinued.

Philip indicated he also finds the new background checks somehow distasteful and has not submitted the forms. After the September 1st deadline, our invasive management sites at Americana Park and Lake Accotink Park may cease to be official Park Authority activities.

- International Coastal Cleanup:

Philip let us know the schedule is posted online for the International Coastal Cleanup. Our first day will be September 7th. The schedule was changed from the draft we saw at last month's meeting in order to accommodate a request from the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, who will join us October 5th at the Pickett Road location.

- Grants:

Kim is in discussion with Kris about grant opportunities, including a DEQ citizen water quality grant due by the end of August. After discussion, Kim decided to go ahead and apply. The intent would be to use the grant to fund student water monitoring gear to be located in Long Branch central near Canterbury Woods Elementary. Flint suggested coordination with the Fairfax County Public Schools air quality project

- eDNA Study:

Philip explained the eDNA migratory fish samples taken in May by GMU have still not been processed. This is apparently due to the slow turning of bureaucratic wheels. They just asked for our contribution of \$732 to the cost at the end of July, which Beverley has sent. We may hope to see results eventually.

- Thompson Farm:

The Thompson Farm hearing at the Planning Commission has been rescheduled for September 25th, due to revision of the developer's plans. Therefore, Philip did not submit the [comments](#) we approved at our last meeting, waiting to see what the revisions might be. There do not seem to be any revised documents online yet.

- Maple Ave Development:

Philip described a development being proposed on Maple Avenue at the headwaters of Long Branch central. It would consolidate three or four parcels totaling just over 8 acres. Since the proposal is to build only 7 houses, it is by-right, with no zoning change or exception required. The proposal would cover portions of an intermittent stream and the existing old farm pond. Unfortunately, there is no legal protection for these features.

- [Nottoway Park BMP's:](#)

A stormwater improvements project is getting underway in Nottoway Park. The project involves installation of seven new dry swale and bioretention BMP's and a retrofit of an existing stormwater pond.

- [Code Amendments:](#)

Some of us were copied before Philip submitted [comments](#) regarding proposed changes to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance and Stormwater Management Ordinance. This opened a can of worms of information about ongoing changes to land use planning in Fairfax County. Philip described this information as arcane administrative adjustments beyond his comprehension. However, some people see an ominous and deliberate pattern of reducing public input and acquiescing to developer requests.



Sue added that the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance Exceptions Review Committee had not been consulted on proposed changes to the ordinance. Flint mentioned that Commonwealth-level approval may be required for changes to the ordinance.

We have a [webpage](#) linked to some of the information and containing a Reston 20/20 blog article that goes into detail. Philip encourages anyone who can make sense of this to please enlighten the rest of us.

- [Natural Landscaping:](#)

Philip reported Fairfax County is considering an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan entitled "Natural Landscaping at County Facilities." There is a community input workshop taking place tonight. The issue goes before the Environment Committee of the Planning Commission on September 26th. It should go before the full Planning Commission in October or November and the Board of Supervisors by December.

- [Flag Run Restoration:](#)

Philip advised the Flag Run stream restoration project is underway and should continue through next summer. The intention to continue the restoration all the way downstream to Lake Accotink is firming up and active planning should begin in the next two years.

At the same time, two of our members, Elaine and Beverley, have undertaken to establish an Invasive Management Area at the mouth of Flag Run, by the carousel. This is an area that was once the site of a native planting project that was neglected and overtaken by invasives. Much of the motivation for the new invasives management project was the recent loss of milkweeds involved in the relocation of the nearby pollinator garden.

Due to some fear that the eventual restoration project could damage the invasives management area, Beverley, Elaine, and Philip will be meeting at the site tomorrow with Stormwater Planning and park management to discuss its future. [NOTE: The meeting resulted in assurance the invasive management project is not in danger.]

- *Virginia Conservation Network:*

Philip reported we recently renewed our Dogwood level membership in the Virginia Conservation Network. Beverley has sent in the check for \$100.

Julie mused on the value of our membership and recalled her own and Dave's participation in the annual VCN Lobby Day in Richmond. Flint remarked on the value of crosschecking VCN's priority issues with those adopted each year by the Federation of Civic Associations.

- *Donations:*

Philip listed the donations received in recent weeks:

- \$200.00 on behalf of the Environmental Sustainability Committee of the City of Fairfax.
- \$45.00 from Paul Twohig, who attended a meeting or two last year.
- \$8.75 from the AmazonSmile Foundation as a result of AmazonSmile shopping activity between April 1 and June 30, 2019.

- *Tivoli Newsletter:*

Philip shared an article in the newsletter of The Tivoli Condominiums, his former residence adjacent to Lake Accotink Park.

- *Mapping:*

Kim recommended [Jade](#), a versatile new Fairfax County mapping tool for citizens.

- *Whither FACC:*

Discussion deferred.
