



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 – September 15, 2020

Next Meeting: October 20, 2020 (Third Tuesday of each month)

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Present:

Sandy Collins, Dave Lincoln, Flint Webb, Kim Schauer, Julie Chang, Philip Latasa
Anup Nair – Welcome Anup!
Brent Reynolds – Welcome Brent!
Nancy Hall – Welcome Nancy!

Upcoming events

- City Council George Snyder Trail hearing October 13, 2020
- Fairfax City Bicycle Transportation Plan meeting October 15, 2020
- International Coastal Cleanup September & October, 2020
- Americana Drive Cleanup November 11, 2020
- Stream Monitoring Lake Accotink Park December 12, 2020

Before we got underway, Brent shared his recollections of growing up along Accotink Creek and Anup shared his experiences of volunteering with [Project Green Teens](#) in Virginia Beach.

• Represent FACC:

- o [Walk the Walk](#) - August 25/26, 2020

As mentioned at our last meeting, this is not exactly our mission area, but the march did cross our watershed, so it was worth noting. Philip joined the march from Centreville into Washington over three days. Supervisor Walkinshaw also joined for part of one day and representatives from FLAP greeted the march in Wakefield Park.



Philip marches along Braddock Road

o VCU Invitation - Fall, 2020

Sandy is corresponding with Dr. Joe Wood regarding a presentation to his class on October 9th. Dr. Wood is looking for insight from a local group, especially on the [TMDL](#). Dave indicated the presentation will mention the TMDL [SaMS](#) group, which will resume activities this fall.

- [Long Branch central Project](#):

Philip described an exchange of emails in which Charles Smith floated the idea of incorporating a citizen science component using iNaturalist. Perhaps equally interesting was the offer of one neighbor who actually works at Esri, to make their mapping resources available. Kim described how she could set up an iNaturalist project for a defined area, such as this watershed. Philip will loop Kim into the email exchange.

- Long Branch Stream Valley Trail Paving:

There was an online public meeting September 10th. Both Sandy and Philip only managed to catch the last half hour. From the public comments at the meeting, it appears that opposition to paving has faded since the last public meetings in 2016, so we may expect the project will grind forward. Sandy observed that positive attitudes toward paving advocated bicycle and wheelchair use, while negative comments favored running. She also mentioned the presenters considered pervious pavement impractical in floodplains. Dave recounted his experience with pervious pavement estimates being multiples higher than standard asphalt. The area of trail involved runs from Olley Road eastward along the stream to Wakefield Chapel Road.

- [George Snyder Trail](#):

The August 20th public meeting offered little encouragement that anyone in City government will be moved by environmental arguments. The City Council will have a formal hearing on the trail at their October 13th meeting, with public comments. The trail is proposed to run from the intersection of Draper Drive and Rt. 50 west to Chain Bridge Road, with a connection there to the trail being built as part of the I-66 project.

Philip observed the cost of less than two miles of trail is nearly \$10 million, excluding land acquisition, which is an astonishing number, thirty or forty times what would be expected for a bike trail. The funding is entirely from a grant provided by the I-66 contractor, so the City isn't bothered. Still, Philip suggested asking the City to explain the cost and making it public may raise citizen eyebrows.

One of the trail opponents took Philip on a tour of another proposed trail in the City, the Country Club Commons Connector. This is a short route connecting two streets and using mostly boardwalk, so the [comments we submitted](#) earlier this year were not opposed. However, it seems this could be a stalking horse for a much longer streamside trail through the same woods, so we may need to revisit that position in the future. There is also already a little-known existing nearby footpath that could serve as an alternative.

Fairfax City is reviewing its Bicycle Transportation Plan, so the [public meeting on October 15th](#) is an opportunity to have input.

Kim received profuse compliments when she displayed the [story map](#) she designed to present an alternate trail route following the wastewater line already cleared of trees. She explained how the map can be tailored to various audiences. Philip explained the alternate route along the wastewater line is the proposal of Audubon Naturalist Society, while FACC has always advocated rerouting onto Ranger Road, a quiet street running parallel the entire length of the proposed trail.

- Davison Airfield:

Dave advised he had sent a [letter to Fort Belvoir](#) regarding the draft Environmental Impact Statement for proposed expansion of the Davison Army Air Field. He explained the proposal would remove 23 acres of riparian Resource Protection Area, as well as various and sundry other negative impacts, while redress would be limited to financial payments to wetland banks or projects elsewhere. Dave noted Fort Belvoir has 50-some other projects, mostly in the Dogue Creek part of the base, and his letter had urged applying environmental standards above and beyond those that are required. The letter also advised using a “leaf count” metric, as opposed to tree canopy, an addition which Flint had proposed.

Discussion included:

- Flint wondered whether salt or ethylene glycol was used for winter treatment on paved surfaces and whether [AFF firefigthing agent](#) contamination could be an issue.
- Dave questioned whether current floodplain and Resource Protection Area boundaries will be adequate in future higher water, higher rainfall conditions.
- Sandy observed Federal funds are not allowed for floodplain projects unless there is no alternative, to which Philip pointed out the proposal mentions that a Memo of No Alternative has already been submitted.

- Proposed Developments:

- [INOVA Springfield](#)

Sandy learned from the Lee District office that the Inova hospital will be built within the boundaries of the [Liberty View](#) project, rather than being a separate issue we need to watch.

- Frontier Drive Extension

Sandy also confirmed from the Lee District office that this project remains on the books, but has been in limbo for some time, as no funding is available.

- [Western Annandale CBC](#) (Community Business Center)

Philip described a group of neighbors in opposition, citing mostly the standard neighborhood issues. There appears to be a stretch of ephemeral stream running between the residential houses that are proposed to be incorporated. The Mason District Task Force voted in favor, against the [County staff recommendation](#). It should go to the Planning Commission in November and the Board of Supervisors in January.

Flint queried as to whether there may have been designations of open space in perpetuity as a condition of the original development of the residential area. Flint will connect with the neighbors.

- [International Coastal Cleanup](#):

Philip recalled at our last meeting we speculated whether the virus situation would mean fewer volunteers or more. So far, it seems it will be fewer as only seven people have signed up for this weekend, except for a group of maybe 20 Lewis High school students we expect at the Fullerton Road site.

Philip advised he had taken a covid test due to some slight symptoms and would need backup in the unlikely case the results are positive. Sandy and Dave will cover if needed.

- [Plastic Free Challenge](#)

We have signed on with 350 Fairfax to again cosponsor the Plastic Free Challenge. The challenge begins with an [online forum](#) September 26th, then asks people to take the plastic-free pledge for the month of October.

• [Lake Accotink Park Master Plan](#):

Sandy has not heard back any update from the Braddock District office, but will try again. Philip shared the vaguely-heard news that the dewatering area at least may be moved from the forests of Wakefield Park to the open ballfields of Howery Park even if the dredge spoils pipeline is still routed through the woods along the creek.

• Creek Critters Project:

It is tentative, but Philip let us know Audubon Naturalist Society is seeking a grant for a demonstration [Creek Critters](#) project in Fairfax City, possibly inviting City Council. This might take place at Daniels Run Elementary, together with [Lands & Waters](#), which has monitored with students there for years. We provided a letter of support.



• Plastic Bag Tax:

Sandy emailed Supervisors Lusk and Storck, expressing support. She received a nice reply back from Supervisor Storck advising the matter had been passed by the Board of Supervisors, with implementation to follow in about six months, covid permitting. A discussion followed of retailers accepting or not accepting reusable bags in the time of covid.

Dave asked what other groups might be leading a push to support the local bag tax and suggested we all probe our contacts to find out.

Flint noted the Fairfax County Federation of Civic Associations annual survey includes a bag tax question.

• [Whither FACC](#):

We decided some months ago not to renew our Meetup membership. Philip didn't realize renewal was automatic without notice, so we are now paid up for the next six months. The automatic renewal is now turned off.

By contrast, Volunteer Fairfax doesn't send a notice even when membership lapses. Philip renewed for one year for \$75 and requested reimbursement for this item, which was approved without objection.

We had previously discussed trying Free Conference Call for meetings, since Sandy has an account. She will do some tests and let us know. Kim mentioned her access to Google Meet, if we wish to try it.

An online comparison of [Free Conference Call to other services](#) and [Skype features](#) .
