

LAKE ACCOTINK PARK MASTER PLAN REVISION

APRIL 30, 2018 COMMUNITY MEETING SUMMARY

A community meeting was held on April 30, 2018 at Lake Braddock Secondary School to continue the discussion with the community about the various lake management options being considered for Lake Accotink Park. The meeting was jointly hosted by Supervisors Cook and McKay and the Park Authority. 213 names were captured on the sign in sheets although total attendance exceeded this number. Also in attendance were:



- Supervisor John Cook, Braddock District
- Supervisor Jeff McKay, Lee District
- Supervisor Herrity, Springfield District
- Supervisor Penny Gross, Mason District
- Sara Baldwin, Deputy Director of the Park Authority
- Judy Pedersen, Park Authority Public Information Officer
- Dave Bowden, Director of Park Planning and Development,
- Andrea Dorlester, Manager of Park Planning
- Samantha Hudson, Park Planning Supervisor
- Chris Goldbecker, Lakefront Parks Manager
- Kristin Sinclair, Ecologist III
- Tony Bulmer, Naturalist/Historian/Senior Interpreter
- Gayle Hooper, Master Plan Project Manager, and
- Frank Graziano, Director of Engineering, Wetland Studies and Solutions

The format for the evening included a welcome by Supervisor Cook, a brief presentation by the Park Authority to quickly outline the lake management options, followed by approximately 1 ½ hours for community members to comment on the options and ask questions.

Following is a summary of the comments/questions expressed and the responses to those comments, when a response was provided.

- Speaker 1
 - Speaker 1 stated that depth is critical to forebay design, not so much its surface area. The speaker considers the area near Braddock Road to be big enough for a forebay and dewatering area.
 - The speaker questioned whether the dredging will be deep enough to sustain a longer period between full dredge cycles?

Response: Yes, the initial dredge will be deeper than previous dredges. The addition of a forebay will help extend the time interval between dredges within the main lake but will require annual dredging to maintain the forebay.



▪ Speaker 2

- Speaker 2 can't believe there is consideration of letting the lake dry up and go away and considers Option C to be the best solution. The speaker questioned if there has been consideration of installing multiple forebays, suggesting the creation of a second forebay just for Long Branch.

Response: Many options are being considered. If anyone has specific ideas, please sketch them up and send them in. Share your ideas.

- The speaker suggested that if it is not possible to pump the sediment to Wakefield Park, the county should consider having trucks drive along the CCT to avoid impacting the neighborhoods.

Response: There are a number of different places where access can happen. Again, if there are other ideas, sketch them up and send them in.

▪ Speaker 3

- Speaker 3 suggested looking at the upstream erosion for the solution and taking a systems engineering approach to understand every aspect of the streams. This speaker wants to save the lake, noting that people come from far way to see the lake.

Response: The county's Stormwater Planning Division has plans to repair the waterways upstream of the lake; however, that will take a number of years and can't be completed by 2025 (which is estimated to be when the lake will lose its recreational value). Yes, fixing streams is necessary in the long run.

▪ Speaker 4

- Speaker 4 suggested that the county should consider combining some of the options, such as, with Option C, establish a forebay and then continue to slowly dredge of main lake. The speaker suggested designing the forebay to remove 22,000 cubic yards a year so there is no further infill of the lake.

Response: We need to get the lake into a fixed condition – but there may be value to a slow dredge option. The intent is not to only partially fix the problem. We need to think in terms of the long term solution.

▪ Speaker 5

- Speaker 5 expressed his thanks to the supervisors and the Save Lake Accotink group, which has only been in existence since February 15. The speaker noted that, obviously, the lake is very important to the community; and, it is extremely important to the environment. Removal of the dam would have a huge impact downstream and on the Chesapeake Bay. The speaker believes that the county will save money by saving the lake. There are hidden costs that no one has even considered. Speaker 5 has heard that further study is to be done relative to options C and F and wants the community to know that information before a decision is made. The speaker suggested extending the comment period further.
- The speaker asked how the Save Lake Accotink group can better engage the rest of the Board of Supervisors?



Response: *It is the intent to keep to the current time schedule. The additional study to be done is further exploration into the concepts shown and not any distinctly different options. Nothing is being considered other than what has been presented. Further engineering is necessary.*

Supervisors Cook and McKay have been working to inform other supervisors of the situation. DPWES staff is looking at the impact of capturing sediment load if the dam were to be removed. Supervisor McKay has met with other supervisors during the recent budget process and discussed the Lake Accotink project. Supervisor McKay suggested that citizens reach out to other board members to express their concerns. Once the Save Lake Accotink group presents their petition, Supervisor Cook intends to present that to the Board of Supervisors at the June 5th meeting.

▪ Speaker 6

- Speaker 6 questioned what would be the extra cost of addressing water quality for Options A, E, and F? What would be the impact on flooding? Has there been any coordination with the Department of Defense regarding flooding concerns to Ft. Belvoir?

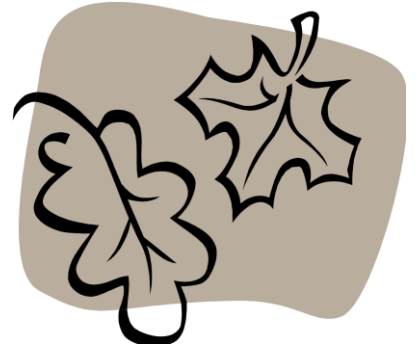
Response: *The estimated cost of addressing additional water quality concerns has not been shared yet as Stormwater Planning is still studying that issue.*

▪ Speaker 7

- Speaker 7 originally voted for Option E or Option F due to concerns about the debt impact. The speaker expressed concern about floating another bond that the burden will be passed along to our children and grandchildren. Also, concern was expressed about the recreational cost of

dredging (loss of trail use) as well as concerns about impacts to wetlands and the ecological impact of frequent dredging.

Response: *Dredging is difficult and impactful, lasting for 1 to 2 years. The decision will require tax dollars, though, so the supervisors want to hear the community's preference.*



▪ Speaker 8

- This speaker is interested in restoring the health of Accotink Creek and works for a group that oversees removal of dams to support natural fish passage.

Response: *Options E and F would entail a modification of the existing dam (rather than full removal of the dam). The modification, however, is expected to be significant enough to permit species to migrate along the waterway.*

▪ Speaker 9

- Speaker 9 questioned why the dam was created? As a civic nicety? Flood control? Is sediment control a requirement? Is sediment control part of our requirement?

Response: *The lake was created as an alternate source of drinking water for what is now Ft. Belvoir. Although the lake captures a large amount of sediment, it is not attributable to addressing the county's regulatory stormwater compliance goals. However, if the dam were to be removed, then the county would be responsible for addressing any downstream impacts.*

- The speaker questioned how the costs noted with the Lake Accotink project compare to other projects?

Response: *The example was given that provision of a traffic light costs approximately \$350,000.*

▪ Speaker 10

- Speaker 10 stated that Lake Accotink Park is a jewel in the crown of Fairfax County Park Authority – and the lake is the key. The speaker questioned why the county is not seeking to address the causes of sedimentation with as much enthusiasm as it is attempting to address the effects?

Response: *Stream restoration is being addressed but it will take a long period of time. The lake will lose its functionality before the streams can be fully restored. The county is working towards stream restoration; however, property ownership issues complicate the process where streams have migrated onto private land. Additionally, restoration efforts can be quite disruptive. Several years ago, the Board of Supervisors set up a stormwater*

tax for just this purpose and projects are going on all the time. These projects take time, are expensive, and complicated. It is a long range plan.



▪ Speaker 11

- This speaker prefers Option F; however, tonight's discussion has mentioned the possibility of extending impacts to the north side of Braddock Road (location of forebays, dewatering sites, truck traffic). Speaker 11 questioned if there is a plan to extend the consultation period so that communities north of Braddock Road have additional time to weigh in if the potential impacts expand.

Response: *There will continue to be opportunities for community input as the project moves forward but the intent is not to delay the project any further. The goal is to gain direction from the community as to the general concept preferred. Following that, additional engineering will be done and shared with the community.*

- The speaker also noted that there is a lot of interest in retaining the lake, particularly by those who live around the lake. Could there be a special tax district established so the broader community doesn't have to bear the burden?

Response: *No. The county will seek to finance this project as Lake Accotink Park is used by people from all over the county.*

▪ Speaker 12

- Speaker 12 questioned whether the downstream impacts been considered. There would be severe scour and more sedimentation downstream if the dam were removed.

Response: *It is being analyzed.*

▪ Speaker 13

- In terms of hidden costs, the speaker questioned whether there would be a cost of lost revenue from Lake Accotink Park. How much revenue does the park generate?

Response: *The concessions and rentals at Lake Accotink Park are roughly a break even proposition.*

- The speaker also questioned how often the smaller lake would need to be dredged.

Response: *The newly constructed lake would be fed by Flag Run (undergoing restoration) and set off from the main flow of Accotink Creek. It is not anticipated that dredging would be necessary.*

- The speaker asked when does the county need to comply with the Bay TMDL?

Response: TMDL deadlines keep changing. The point to remember is that if an action is taken that adds more sediment to a stream, the ultimate plan will need to account for that.



- Speaker 14

- Speaker 14 stated that the solution is to bring back the forests and the beavers; but, that won't work if we want our roads and our lawns. We need to coexist with nature. Speaker 14 suggested that everyone get involved and stay involved. It makes a difference.

- Speaker 15

- Speaker 15 described Lake Accotink as a jewel and how impressive the view is from his kayak. The speaker also expressed concerns about the impacts of installing a forebay.

- Speaker 16

- The speaker stated that there is no lake like Lake Accotink. The speaker expressed appreciation for park staff that help take care of park, appreciation for Fairfax County, and appreciation for the ability to gather together. Speaker 16 suggested working with a company that could make use of the dredged material OR dump it in the stream valley area to lower the cost.

- Speaker 17

- Speaker 17 stated that, through the efforts of the Save Lake Accotink group, more than 2,800 signatures have been collected for Option C. Speaker 17 considers Option C to be cheaper than Option E or F due to the cost of additional sediment control. The speaker encouraged Fairfax County Park Authority to add those values to the cost analysis. The speaker recognized the Friends of Lake Accotink Park and the Friends of Accotink Creek as groups who have long worked to improve the quality of the area.

- Speaker 18

- The speaker suggested looking at the near-term as well as the long-term benefits and costs of each option. It is necessary to take action now; however, it should be done with a long-term view in mind.

▪ Speaker 19

- Speaker 19 stated that, if the dam were to be removed, all of that sediment will flow into lower income districts. The local community around Lake Accotink is very diverse. The supervisors were very impactful in creating One Fairfax. The speaker suggested that the community should keep lower income families in mind that use Lake Accotink.



▪ Speaker 20

- Speaker 20 questioned whether the options have been coordinated with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation? The speaker suggested that the county should be seeking permits now so that an option isn't pursued that can't be put into action.

Response: *DPWES has been closely involved and is coordinating for compliance with the county's Chesapeake Bay goals.*

- The speaker questioned whether there has been any outreach to National Fish and Wildlife regarding protection of eagles to get a permit?

Response: *Once a decision has been made about the option to pursue, the county will be certain to obtain all necessary and applicable permits. (NOTE: Bald eagles are no longer listed as a threatened or endangered species and, therefore, are not subject to the Endangered Species Act. No special permitting would be required relative to bald eagles.)*

▪ Speaker 21

- Speaker 21 wants to keep the lake and expressed concern that the least expensive option could be the most expensive option and vice versa. The community should have more information.
- The speaker suggested that, if the biggest cost element is removal of the sediment, the county should be calling in favors, talking to people. The use of rail could make it cheaper.
- The speaker noted that any option selected will entail impacts to the wildlife and would like to better understand what could be expected. It was suggested that environmentalists be involved.

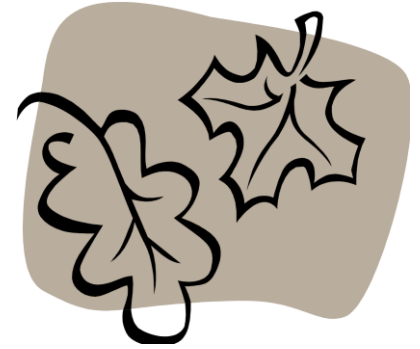
▪ Speaker 22

- Speaker 22 questioned how is there any other option but to keep the lake?

▪ Speaker 23

- Speaker 23 suggested focusing on taking care of the causes, not the results, or we'll be back here again. The flow of water needs to be slowed down. Swamps should be refilled, not drained. Roads and streets are causing the

problem through runoff and sand. The speaker stated that nature needs to be allowed to balance itself.



▪ Speaker 24

- Speaker 24 is accustomed to seeing cost benefit analyses performed on federal projects and recommended the same approach for the Lake Accotink project. The speaker feels the overall analysis is "cloudy" because it doesn't address the downstream cost. The speaker questioned if there has been confirmation that everything proposed will work within the Corps of Engineers' permit and the EPA's requirements?

Response: *All regulatory elements will need to be addressed with any of the options. Staff has been in discussion with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality as well as Chesapeake Bay staff. Downstream costs were not factored into the initial cost analysis.*

▪ Speaker 25

- Speaker 25 questioned the process for making the final decision? Who will make the decision and how will they make it?

Response: *Ultimately, Lake Accotink is the property of the Park Authority. However, as the cost of several of the options exceeds the Park Authority's ability to fund such a project, the supervisors are closely involved. The Park Authority will put forward a preferred alternative; but, because of the funding, it will need to come before the BOS.*

▪ Speaker 26

- Speaker 26 questioned whether Lake Accotink Park makes or loses money on concessions?

Response: *It is a break even proposition at best. Once the decision is made on the lake, then the focus of the master planning efforts will shift to look at the overall use of the park and what is appropriate.*

▪ Speaker 27

- Speaker 27 questioned when will the additional numbers that factor into the decision be made available for review?

Response: *Those numbers must be made available to the Board of Supervisors before they make a decision.*