



Quarterly Meeting Notes
August 7, 2015 – 1:00-3:30 PM – Conference Rooms 4&5

NOTES

Attending: Philip Latasa, Norbert Pink, Betsy Smith, Nancy Vehrs, Alan Ford, Dan Schwartz, Patti Stevens, Elise Cleva, Karen Fuentes, Jim McGlone, Barbara Tuset, Terry Liercke, Noel Kaplan, Amy Gould

Sustainable Sites Initiatives, natural landscaping, & bee resolution: Jim McGlone discussed the recent Board Resolution regarding the planting of vegetation that supports bee populations and a subsequent meeting with Keith Cline of DPWES Urban Forestry. This is an opportunity to further promote & educate on sustainable and natural landscaping which the BOS endorsed back in 2007. Jim will be taking the lead on developing this aspect further with the staff assigned to the matter.

The meeting with NVAR's Policy Committee was summarized and their resulting resolution to hold a Realtor Forum before the end of 2016 was discussed along with their interest in native plants. The announcement of the forum that appeared in Re+View Magazine was passed around. When FCRP met we went requesting sponsorship of a Conference introducing SITES and we still hope that will be a result of the Forum.

The Re+View article can be found here on Page 15:

http://issuu.com/nvarmagazines/docs/re_view_julaug15_issuu

We also discussed arranging for staff training for SITES introducing them for future engagement with the SITES initiative. Terry Liercke pointed out that these programs have no "boots on the ground" and the opportunity to partner with FCRP's non-profit sector is ripe for engagement on these programs. While Alan Ford pointed out in the summary of PlantNovaNatives, SITES does not exclusively promote natives, FCRP's engagement would certainly focus on the native aspect in our need to restore biodiversity. Educational efforts are being scheduled by the PNN effort now along with retailer outreach. The PNN program has been refunded through 2016 in a grant from DEQ.

Fall For Fairfax: FCRP's participation in Fall For Fairfax is being developed now. Suzy Foster and Betsy Smith are working on the map, key and elements of the "Treasure Hunt". Website support has and is being developed to support FCRP's effort for the Hunt and the Green Roof tour. Karen will be meeting with the staff handling Fall for Fairfax to ensure we have permission to use their logo on our website and that they will link to our website for info on the treasure hunt, getting list of the food trucks participating or determining another type of prize/reward, and Amy is looking for signage for both.

Green Streets & SWM: Betsy Smith summarized the effort at this point and indicated it would take a while but that the staff connections with Housing are developing. Not too much progress has been made to date but the staff connections foundation will make it go smoothly as this goes forward. The location at the top of Accotink Creek along with the co-funding potential makes it a great project to pursue.

Accotink Gorge: Dan Schwartz gave a presentation on the Friends of Accotink efforts on Accotink Gorge. The site is about a mile long in an industrial area along Fullerton Road. The Park Authority, Dominion VA Power, and the Army all have parts of ownership of the area. Patti Stevens will pass along a connection with the Army that she just made through the Fairfax County Chamber. The site photos were incredibly beautiful and show the remote nature of the area along with many of the unique features like the beautiful water falls, dense forest, unique native species and the plethora of invasive wisteria that threaten them. It's difficult access make it a low priority for the Park Authority and for volunteer efforts. The presentation can be found here:

http://www.accotink.org/2015/Accotink_Gorge_PowerPoint.pptx .

Website Updates & traffic: The updates on the website were discussed as was the traffic. The site currently has about 230 steady users that average 7:10 on the site. Total site traffic runs around 1,080 users.

I-66 Update – FCRP's input & Status Update: At our last Leadership Team meeting Mark Thomas spoke about the status of the I-66 project. The next plan incorporating the comments will be released in Mid-September. Jim McGlone mentioned the Federal Highway Administration recommends native plantings for road projects which can be found here:

https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/ecosystems/veg_mgmt_rpt/vegmgmt_ecoregional_approach.asp Much of what FCRP addressed in its comments (below) can also be found in the County's comments so it was a consistent message.



Thank you for the opportunity for the Fairfax County Restoration Project (FCRP) to comment on the I-66 corridor project.

While FCRP understands the importance of improving commuter corridors and the need to improve commuter times, there is an overwhelming sense that VDOT has not updated its methods of accomplishing these goals in a very long time. Other surrounding jurisdictions have upgraded their systems, making their road projects more sustainable. We attach the DDOT green infrastructure document for your information as a case in point.

Major development projects such as is being proposed have a significant and sometimes overwhelming effect on the habitat and the wildlife it supports. While land transformation is unavoidable, the water regime is often only addressed with respect to maximum volume and runoff management. FCRP strongly advocates addressing these challenges during the design phase by using sound practices for protecting ecosystem functions, providing quality habitat for resident and migratory species, and improving the aesthetic quality of the project.

An important element in all of this is water, including surface and groundwater quality and supply. With predicted weather changes, it is likely that precipitation in our area will occur as shorter more intense storms with rapid runoff and reduced infiltration into the soil than is now experienced. This will cause reduced groundwater recharge which otherwise sustains the flow of our stream systems. The increased energy of intense runoff will also cause further erosion and degradation of receiving streams.

Following are some practices that we expect to be implemented as part of the I-66 widening project that will address these concerns.

- To prevent steep and uniform slopes, incorporate slope breaks into the finished grading of the land and waterways adjacent to the paved sections of I-66. This will allow for increased runoff capture and infiltration into the underlying soil.
- Use ripper bars/sub-soilers to break underlying compacted soils to a depth of 3-feet prior to finished grading and planting of the slopes and waterways.
- Use annual oats and/or rye for temporary erosion control seeding instead of the standard erosion control seed mix until final seeding and planting takes place. Do not use fescue, lespedeza and other species typically called for in VDOT projects.
- During finished grading, further amend the ripped soil by incorporating 1-2 inches of organic compost.

- Utilize seed mix recommended by FCRP in final seeding and plant with only native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants.
- Conventional pipe outfalls are similar to hydraulic cannons in their erosive impact to downstream channels and habitat. Although rock riprap is generally used to counter this erosive energy, it typically fails over time. The expansion of I-66 will do nothing but exacerbate this situation. Install a plunge pool, a step pool system, or a combination of the two at all feasible outfall locations. Fairfax County Stormwater Division, DPWES, has installed a number of these successful systems and can offer construction drawings and specifications.
- Shallow wetland pools located at the lower end of these plunge or step-pool outfalls further buffer the receiving stream systems and provide habitat. These should be installed at every opportunity possible.
- Retrofit parking lots and other large paved areas adjacent to and in close proximity to the I-66 project along with their outfalls where public/private partnerships are possible to improve water quality and reduce runoff.
- Design all stormwater detention ponds associated with the I-66 project with diverse bottom grading to allow for high and low pools, wetland habitat, and native plants as was done on several ponds on the 495 Express Lanes project.

We would like to point out that many of these suggestions will not cost more from a funding perspective, but they will require prior planning and upfront thinking to accomplish. As a result, these are not afterthoughts but must be part of the planning from the early stages.

Additional areas of concern are as follows:

- We expect VDOT to employ a robust inspection program to ensure compliance with erosion and sediment control standards, whether or not the I-66 project is let under the public-private partnership mechanism or if it is entirely public. There were several documented problems with the erosion and sediment controls on the 495 Express Lanes project and we believe this must be avoided from the outset on the I-66 project.
- Since VDOT has agreed to pull back on the number of homes it will seize by eminent domain, we believe the money previously budgeted for that must be used to mitigate the environmental degradation that will result from this project within the specific watersheds that are affected. This could be an opportunity for VDOT to partner with our local governments to achieve stream restoration projects and to provide grants to help communities recover from the impacts of the project taking place in a heavily populated area. VDOT (not Fairfax County) should be required to fund a public relations/education program as part of any grant program that is proposed in place of

in-the-ground BMP devices. This could provide a good public relations outcome for everyone involved and impacted.

- FCRP would appreciate the opportunity to review and have input on the final planting plan.

The collaboration between VDOT and FCRP partners was a positive experience with positive outcomes for the 495 Express Lanes project, and we hope to develop another positive experience for the I-66 project. There are many opportunities listed above around which FCRP can play a role in helping facilitate and develop partnerships. We hope to have the opportunity to work with the VDOT team in the near future as the plans progress.

Respectfully submitted,

Fairfax County Restoration Project

www.fcrpp3.org

Enclosures: DDOT Green Infrastructure
FCRP's recommended Seed Mix

Cc:

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Member of Congress

Senator Janet D. Howell

Senator David W. Marsden

Delegate David L. Bulova

Delegate Kaye Kory

Delegate Mark L. Keam

Delegate Vivian E. Watts

The Honorable Sharon Bulova, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Supervisor John Cook

Supervisor John Foust

Supervisor Penelope Gross

Supervisor Linda Smyth

Michelle Holland