

LAKE ACCOTINK PARK MASTER PLAN REVISION

MARCH 14, 2016 PUBLIC COMMENT MEETING

MEETING SUMMARY

A public information meeting was held at Cardinal Forest Elementary School on March 14, 2016 to include the community in the master plan revision process for Lake Accotink Park. The meeting started at 7:00 and was facilitated by Judy Pedersen. The names of 75 attendees were captured on the sign-in sheets. Also in attendance were:

- Chairman Sharon Bulova
- Supervisor John Cook
- Jordan Barrack, staff representative for Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay
- Erika Dyer, staff representative for Springfield District Supervisor Pat Herrity
- Tony Vellucci, Park Authority Board, Braddock District representative
- Ed Batten, Park Authority Board, Lee District representative
- Kirk Kincannon, Park Authority Director
- Sara Baldwin, Park Authority Deputy Director, COO
- Dave Bowden, Park Planning and Development Director
- Park Authority staff and members of the master plan team.

OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Bulova was appreciative of the great turnout to help plan one of the most beautiful parks in Fairfax County. Some of her favorite aspects of the park include the Cardboard Boat Regatta, Braddock Nights concerts in the park, and jogging the trail around the lake. Revising the master plan is an opportunity to review what has been accomplished since the last plan revision and evaluate where priorities may have changed over the years. Community involvement is a critical aspect of the process and Chairman Bulova encouraged all to stay engaged in the master plan process.



Supervisor John Cook was also appreciative of the large crowd. Through questioning the group, Supervisor Cook noted that this would be the first opportunity for many to participate in the master planning process. He noted his involvement in two previous master plans – Monticello Park and Kings Park Park. His experience suggests that this may be one of the most rewarding opportunities for community involvement. Lake Accotink Park is a gem and we want it to be a gem 50 years from now. Supervisor Cook encouraged those involved to think outside the box and truly be visionary about the future of Lake Accotink Park. He encouraged all to stay involved in the process.

Tony Vellucci welcomed the group and acknowledged all those in attendance who are members of the Friends of Lake Accotink Park (FLAP). He suggested that one of the best ways to move one's interests forward is to become a part of a group with like interests. Mr. Vellucci also acknowledged the interest in Lake Accotink Park that extends beyond FLAP including the Friends of Accotink Creek, the Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley, the Friends of Audrey Moore RECenter, and the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park. Mr. Vellucci encouraged everyone to join a group where their interests can be put to action.

Ed Batten was offered an opportunity to address the group but graciously deferred for the sake of time.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Gayle Hooper, project manager for the Lake Accotink Master Plan Revision, provided background about the planning process and some brief history of the park. The presentation is available on-line for viewing at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/lakeaccotink.htm>

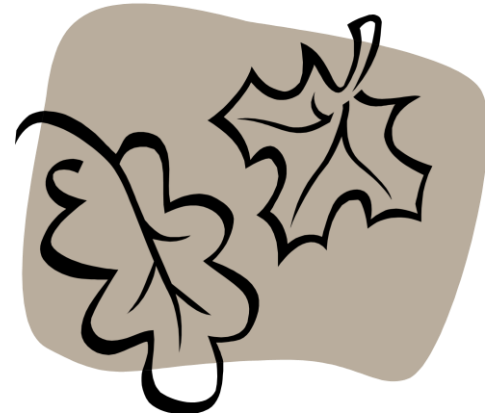
COMMUNITY COMMENT

Following the staff presentation, the floor was opened for a period of public comment, which is summarized below. Speakers representing a group are mentioned by name. The names of individuals speaking on their own behalf are not included for this summary.

SPEAKER #1

Speaker #1 felt that most of the information presented tonight was very accurate. Speaker #1 has lived in the community for 50 years and seen the park degrade over that time. Speaker #1 would like the Park Authority to develop a comprehensive management plan with an ecological focus. The previous GMP is a good plan but it has not been followed. The primary purpose of that plan was to protect natural resources. No action plan has been developed to implement the recommendation of the GMP. There is also some confusing terminology that should be clarified. Speaker #1 recommends moving forward with an action plan. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that Lake Accotink Park be identified as a Natural Resource Park.

**NOTE: The Comprehensive Plan identifies Lake Accotink Park as a Countywide Park (Comprehensive Plan, Annandale Planning District Overview, Parks and Recreation, page 15). Within the Parks and Recreation Recommendations for the A6-Accotink Community Planning Sector (page 127), Lake Accotink Park is noted as a Countywide Park with the term "Natural Resource Park" in parentheses. This is an indication that there are significant natural resource areas in the park; however, it is not a designated park classification.*



SPEAKER #2

Megan Walker, President of the Friends of Lake Accotink Park
Ms. Walker noted that many people use the park for a variety of different reasons – some for conservation, some social, some recreational. Ms. Walker indicated that county officials demonstrate the importance of a project by the allocation of funding. FLAP would like to know the county's commitment to funding improvements for Lake Accotink Park. Are there funds identified in the next bond?

SPEAKER #3

Mike DeLoose, Springfield Civic Association
Mr. DeLoose noted that he is also a FLAP member. Lake Accotink Park is a countywide and community asset. On-the-water activities are the focus of the park; but the sedimentation must be addressed. Mr. DeLoose stated that he loves Huntley Meadows Park but doesn't feel that "Accotink Meadows Park" is a good idea. He has noticed change in the community including that now people can walk into to the park from more locations.

SPEAKER #4

Chris Unger, Friends of Accotink Creek

FACC have teamed up with a local environmental non-profit to provide clean up, invasive removal, restoration and outreach. The 495 construction deposited a lot of sediment into the lake. The plan for Lake Accotink Park should be environmentally sustainable, focused on habitat, wildlife, and the ecosystem. Studies supported by FACC have found eels as well as mussels below the dam.

SPEAKER #5

Speaker #5 wanted to speak to the goals of this process. Preserve the natural areas. Maintain what we have. Add a trail below the dam. Stop paving and stop building.

SPEAKER #6

Speaker #6 supported keeping the resources the way they are. Stop paving trails.

SPEAKER #7

Julie Childers, Trails for Youth

Ms. Childers said that the trails should be better marked and organized, allowing natural areas to be explored. By welcoming children into the park, we are growing the natural stewards of tomorrow. Ms. Childers supports connecting trails to other parks.

SPEAKER #8

Speaker #8 agreed with Supervisor Cook that Lake Accotink Park is a gem . . . and we need to polish the gem. Speaker #8 encouraged people to attend the April 2nd Watershed Clean Up Day.

SPEAKER #9

Natalie Tomashevski, Cardinal Forest Unit Owners Association

Ms. Tomashevski noted that Cardinal Forest has worked with the Park Authority in the past to develop the pedestrian access to Lake Accotink Park from Carrleigh Park. The association would be pleased to look for additional opportunities to expand on pedestrian connections to the park. Ms. Tomashevski noted that she hated to see trails paved in the park but also noted that it makes the park accessible to more people.

INFORMATION STATIONS

Following the public comment, attendees were given time to meet members of the master plan team and discuss various aspects of Lake Accotink Park. The five information stations and staff included:

- Recreation Julie Tahan, Lake Accotink Park Manager
Chris Goldbecker, Lake Front Park Manager
- Cultural Resources John Rutherford, Heritage Resource Specialist
- Natural Resources Kristen Sinclair, Ecologist III
- Trails Liz Cronauer, Trail Coordinator
- Watershed Sajjan Pokharel, Senior Engineer III, Stormwater Planning