Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) Meeting Minutes
11/9/17

PRESENT: Chair Sue Beffel; Vice-chair Irwin Flashman; Committee Members Robin Duska, Carl Mitchell, Jon Damm, Doug Britt, Emily Vorek; Staff Liaisons Katie Shaw, Claudia Thompson-Deahl

ABSENT WITH CAUSE: Committee Members Eric Weinstein, Lois Phemister; Board Liaison Eric Carr

I. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

A. Call to Order & Opening Remarks
   Sue called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m., and a quorum was established.

B. Adoption of Agenda
   Doug moved to adopt the November 9, 2017 agenda. Carl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Adoption of Minutes
   Robin moved to adopt the minutes of the October 3, 2017 meeting. Carl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Member Comments
   1. Doug commented on the Hidden Creek Golf Course purchase by Wheelock Communities. He attended a country club members meeting with the developer at which the developer expressed a clear intent to seek a rezoning of the course so that at least part of it can be developed for residential units.

   2. Doug commented on the Soapstone Connector Environmental Assessment Meeting held at Dogwood School. The conclusion of the assessment is that the project will have no substantial environmental degradation beyond the existing condition. Doug would like to see the County go beyond basic stormwater measures to improve the existing condition.

      Robin made a motion that the agenda be amended to add the Soapstone Connector as an action item. Irwin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The connector became item N on the agenda.

   3. Doug commented that he and Claudia attended the Urban Forest for Your Health: How Trees Can Save Your Life conference hosted by Trees Virginia.
4. Robin commented that she briefed the Multi-modal Transportation Advisory Committee and the Pedestrian Lighting Task Force about light pollution on October 19.

II. PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

E. Town Center North Project
Carl and Emily prepared comments on the Town Center North Project plans related to stormwater management and tree preservation. Fairfax County may allow some grandfathering of old rules. The committee would like greater preservation of mature tree canopy areas. A sketch and written comments will be sent to committee members for review prior to sending them to Reston Association’s (RA) Land Use Planner Kelsey Steffen for forwarding to the County.

F. County Proposal to Raise Density Caps
A meeting on the proposal to raise the density cap in Reston occurred on October 23rd at South Lakes High School. The decision on the proposal has been postponed to next year.

G. New County Planning Commissioner
Frank de la Fe’s term has expired. RA has requested participation in the process to name a new County Planning Commissioner who will be appointed by Supervisor Hudgins. Members are encouraged to share the position opening with planners.

H. Reston Annual State of the Environment Report (RASER) – Approvals & Next Steps
The committee congratulated the working group on the RA Board approval of the report. It began review of a next steps handout for 2018. The committee discussed the need to identify the recommendations that would require RA Board policy decisions versus RA Board public positions. It will aim to go back to the RA Board with policy/position recommendations in January or February.

The working group will meet on the chapters and would like to recruit new members. A call for members will be shared in RA News, a flyer to post in locations such as the Nature Center, and with area environmental groups such as Fairfax Master Naturalists.

I. Litter Working Group (LWG) – Status Report
The first pilot project is running at the Lake Newport soccer fields. The RA Design Review Board (DRB) approved modified signs to be used in a reduced quantity on the weekends during soccer season, which will end in November. The working group is monitoring the area and will make reports on what litter is found after games. So far, only a minimal amount of litter has been found.

The LWG will meet on November 15 to determine next steps.

Jon left the meeting.
J. Biophilic Cities Application
   On October 24, the RA Board Operations Committee voted to include approval of the Biophilic
   Cities application on the November RA BOD consent calendar.

K. RA News Tips
   The November tip will be on reducing engine idling to decrease air pollution. The committee
   reviewed a revised list of 2018 topics. It would like to see a consolidated tips document shared with
   clusters.

   Sue moved to approve the 2017-2018 EAC Tips topics as revised. Doug seconded the motion. The
   motion passed unanimously.

L. EAC 2018 Work Plan
   The committee discussed revisions to its 2018 Work Plan. A draft will be sent to members to review
   before the next meeting.

M. Lake Fairfax Redevelopment Plan
   The County held a public meeting about changes to Lake Fairfax Park. Topics included preserving
   natural areas within the park as well as trail closures and improvements. The committee would like
   to see redevelopment that avoids tree loss and habitat destruction particularly in areas around the
   lake and in key birding spots. The County is accepting public comments.

N. Soapstone Connector
   The committee discussed the Soapstone Connector project in light of member comments by Doug.
   The County is accepting comments until November 18. The Federal Highway Administration will
   make a final decision in early 2018. 2026 is the target date for the connector to be operable.

   Carl moved to submit the below comment on stormwater management to the RA BOD for
   submission to the Fairfax County Department of Transportation in response to the Soapstone
   Connector Environmental Assessment Public Hearing held on November 8.

   “The tributary of Colvin Run and its downstream reaches potentially affected by Build Alternatives 1
   and 2 are presently degraded owing to past development in the watershed. Simply designing
   stormwater management to prevent further degradation of current baseline conditions is not
   enough. We believe the Soapstone Connector Project should include stormwater management
   structures and practices designed to “improve” conditions in the Colvin Run tributary and/or its
   immediate downstream reaches. Reston has little recourse in fixing water resource problems caused
   by past practices except through new infrastructure improvements and redevelopment projects.”

   Emily seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
O. Announcements, Upcoming Activities & Meetings
Claudia announced that stormwater improvements at Wakerobin Lane and Cedar Cove are at an impasse with the County due to the lack of a permanent access easement for maintenance.

Committee members are encouraged to save the date for Reston’s first BioBlitz to be held on Saturday, June 2.

Transco will be installing two more pipes near North Shore Drive and Golf Course Island Garden Plots. Staff is working with them to determine the best location with the least disturbance.

III. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

P. Adjourn
Doug moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. Carl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Shaw
Nature Center Manager/Staff Liaison