

BALLSTON/BEAVER POND RETROFIT STUDY

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1: JANUARY 22, 2011

Summary of Comments

Attendees:

Name	Group Representing
Robert Atkins	Bluemont Civic Association
Suzanne Sundberg	Bluemont Civic Association Alternate
Alex Konick	Waycroft Woodlawn Civic Association
Robert Morgan	Waycroft Woodlawn Civic Association Alternate
John Kelleher	Waycroft Woodlawn Civic Association Interested Party
Conor Marshall	Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association
Lisa Larimar	Energy and Environment Commission
Alex Sanders	Energy and Environment Commission Alternate
Jim Olivetti	Parks Commission Alternate
Mary Ann Lawler	Urban Forestry Commission
Jenn Truong	Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment
Anne St. John	US Fish and Wildlife Service

Committee Members Not Able to Attend:

- **Pamela Kahn, Ballston Partnership**
- **Rick Epstein, Parks Commission**

A. General Comments

- Perhaps we should consider rats as one of the “invasive species” at the pond
 - What can the County do to help with the rat problem?
- A “jewel in our neighborhood”: I like it “just the way it is” except for the trash. How can we address the litter issue if it comes from other locations in watershed?
- Can the County analyze where trash comes from and will you consider strategies to address this issue?
 - Study will be looking at litter control on site.
 - Study will not identify specific places litter is coming from off-site, but will be looking at better ways to maintain the pond area/deal with the litter.
 - Thinks litter comes from nearby park and from viewing platform.
- Was an ecological survey done here?
 - It has been started; study team will survey plants. Wildlife will be noted only as visible.
 - Would be interesting to measure increases in wildlife as pond is improved. See a lot less wildlife now. The pond is in “shoddy condition; the place is a total mess” (noticeable difference in last 5 years)
 - There is an on-going wildlife assessment by Greg Zell that can be used.

- Does the study area include the bike path? Existing Bradford pear trees currently along the path now shade it significantly; can these be replaced with a sturdier species? Bradford Pears are considered invasive.
- How much sediment has built up over time and will the project look at ways to manage sediment incrementally?
 - The survey will reveal how much sediment has built up over time.
- Has the County evaluated the impact of road salt usage in the winter on water quality?
- Is the County aware of the high water table in the Bluemont civic association (near the Safeway on Wilson) and how this may be affected by stormwater projects?

B. What do you value about this area?

- Are there any historic photos so that we can see how the area has changed over time? (Greg Zell may have these)
 - There may be photos available at the Library in the Virginia Room
- Will there be a strategy to remove sediment regularly?
 - The study will look at this as a management issue.
- Pond area should remain open space (it is not zoned open space at present).
- Didn't realize the pond was man-made, but keep it wild. Wildlife is most significant aspect.
- Will the study recommend use of native plants?
 - The focus will be on natives, as appropriate.
- Safeguard wildlife as appropriate (e.g., amphibians, such as frogs are being killed by bikers/walkers currently)
- An "urban oasis" – enjoy walking by the area.

C. What would you like to see changed/improved?

- Graffiti on observation deck;
- Help preserve/improve wetlands;
- Volunteers clean it from time-to-time, but maintenance should be improved;
- Concern that it not be "too built up;"
- Very aware of I-66 from the pond area; would be nice to buffer it better;
- Potential for tree canopy along edges of I-66 is great;
- Improve access points to the pond; now there is no easy way to get into it from school because of the fence; better access would allow teachers to bring students out for science lessons;
 - Another overlook with better access for school groups
- The area is underutilized;
 - People sleeping on benches;
 - Smell on hot day is bad (eutrification);
- Worried that too much "public" in there will invite more graffiti and problems;
 - Safety is a consideration
- Would like to take kids fishing there – issue of how close people should get to the water;
- Will this be a "county park"? Is already a "park" /closes at 6 p.m. (sign);
 - Status should be checked

- Pond area is currently maintained by Parks Dept., need good access to allow for maintenance;
- Better interpretation is needed;
 - See new interpretive signage at Dyke Marsh;
 - Used to be a “fact sheet” displayed by US Fish and Wildlife (as a neighbor, F&W staff had been interested in the ecology of the pond at one time);
 - List of wildlife viewed at the pond;
 - See interpretive signs along Four Mile Run (Arlington Mill History etc).

D. What stories do you think it will be important to convey about the pond area?

- Wildlife;
- History of Lubber Run and how pond evolved, including the name “Beaver Pond.”;
- Drainage connections/where water goes when it leaves pond;
- Stormwater management function/roles related to the pond.

E. Any additional comments?

- Get an updated aerial photo if possible – the one being shown is not the most recent condition;
- Currently, how is the ‘lawn’ area being used: for Frisbees; dogs, etc.;
 - Consider options to this lawn area;
- How suitable is the name “Beaver Pond”?
 - “Beaver Pond”: ‘works’: there are beaver in the pond occasionally and it presents a good opportunity for an interpretive sign;
- The group is missing the stakeholders of the adjacent building owners and VDOT.