

**STAFFORD COUNTY WETLANDS BOARD MINUTES**  
**June 18, 2018**

The monthly meeting of the Stafford County Wetlands Board of February 26, 2018, was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Andy Pineau, in the Board of Supervisors Chambers in the George L. Gordon, Jr., Government Center.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dan Adams, Sue Henderson, Andy Pineau, Frank Rubio Ben Rudasill and Mary Rust

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Riutta

STAFF PRESENT: Joseph Fiorello, Ben Foster, Scott Rae and Denise Knighting

GUEST: Rebecca Musso and Students from Gayle Middle School

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Determination of a Quorum

Mr. Pineau called the meeting to order and then called roll to determine there was a quorum present. He stated there was a quorum present with six members present. He welcomed the students from Gayle Middle School and asked them to make their presentation

- D. Public Presentations

- 1. Presentation by Gayle Middle School Students

Ms. Musso stated she was a 6<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher at Gayle Middle School. She thanked the Board for allowing the Citizen Scientists the opportunity to share their research and improvements to the habitat in the retention pond. She explained they were awarded a grant to improve the habitat at the retention pond on the school property. She turned the meeting over to the students to explain what they did, why they did it and the results.

The first student showed pictures of the retention pond behind the school in October. He stated water runs off the athletic field at the top of the hill to the pond.

The next student stated they collected water quality data, pH data, dissolved oxygen, turbidity and temperature. She stated they removed trash from the area and planted native seeds around the pond to increase pollinators and reduce pollution. She stated the students also had fun.

Ms. Musso showed some pictures of the students collecting water quality data throughout the year and stated they used a variety of methods to do the turbidity, dissolved oxygen and so forth.

The next student explained that pH was how acidic the water was. She stated 7 to 7.5 was the best for fresh water animals. Dissolved oxygen was how much oxygen was in the water and turbidity was how clear the water was. She stated if the water was too cloudy from sediment pollution; it would block the sunlight and prevent plants from growing and could increase algae growth which would decrease oxygen.

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The next student stated trash and fertilizer would runoff into the pond and create toxic and nutrient pollution.

The next student stated dissolved oxygen was an average of 4 milligrams per liter, she stated it was low for fresh water and they saw no fish. But there was evidence of amphibians. Pictures were shown of empty egg sacks from north eastern newts, which show that the habitat is healthy.

The next student stated the temperature would change during each season and the pond froze over and the turbidity average of 0 JTU changed and became very cloudy after a large rain.

The next student stated they collected over 100 pound of trash through the year and found items such as a 50 gallon barrel and a ladder. He showed pictures of the bags of trash that was collected in one day.

The next student stated they also found an Xbox, a tire, CDs, and lots of trash/food items.

The next student stated they also found different bones, a deer spine and dog bones and old shoes.

The next student stated they grew and planted native wild flowers and grasses as well as tree saplings at the bottom of the hill to reduce pollution from the athletic field. She stated they wanted to increase pollinators to help plants grow around the pond, increase the number of habitats, to create more like around the pond and to create a more natural environment.

The next student stated it was good to see more animals around the pond, because it meant they were restoring the habitat. He stated the students saw deer families running around the area and they were surprised to see crawfish, as they are nocturnal, but it was a good indicator that the habitat was healthy.

The next student stated the pond changed a lot over the year. In October the pond was low but the heavy spring rains flooded the area, but that was good for the plants. He showed before and after pictures of the pond. He stated the native plants they chose were good for soaking up the water. He stated the students tried to help the environment.

Ms. Musso stated the students collected data at five various locations surrounding the pond in addition to the entry and exit of the pond and compared the results throughout the year. She stated at the end of the year they found the water quality had increased the area of the exit portion, because of the planting of native vegetation. She stated seeing the empty egg sacks of the amphibians was a good indicator, because in the beginning there were no indicators of anything other than frogs. She stated the students were very proud of their efforts increasing the water quality.

Mr. Pineau thanked the students and Ms. Musso and stated it was a job well done. He also wanted to thank each of the students and asked if they would stand as he read the list of names; Megan Soderholm, Kylee Meier, Sabeeha Ijaz, Noah Clampitt, Jessi Israel, Gabe Henson, Daniel Wagner, Mckenzie Alexander, Trinity Payne and Cameron Biller. He asked if the Board members had any questions.

Ms. Rust asked the students what was the one thing they saw more than others in the trash that was taken out of the pond and pond area.

One student stated the Xbox was silly.

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Ms. Rust asked what thing the students saw the most.

A student responded plastic bread wrappers.

Other students stated a lot of soda cans, beer cans and glass bottles.

Mr. Pineau asked if the area had fencing and if it was secure. He stated he tried to come by the school and take a look at the pond but found lots of locks on gates. He asked how the furniture and odd items were able to get into the pond if the area was secure.

A student stated people climb over the fence.

Ms. Rust stated she felt if you turn something that is run down into something positive, others tend to respect the area more and hopes that will be true with the pond.

The students stated they also found a water heater thrown and tires.

Ms. Henderson asked the students what they thought the future for the pond would be since some of them would not be there next year. She asked if another class would take on the responsibility.

Ms. Musso stated the majority of the students were 6<sup>th</sup> graders, but two were 8<sup>th</sup> graders. She stated she anticipates the students will continue with their environmental endeavors.

Ms. Henderson stated it would be nice to see the plants grow and more animals in the area over the next few years.

Mr. Pineau thanked the students again and stated it was a marvelous presentation and the Board applauds the commitment of the students to the environment.

Ms. Henderson asked where the students received their grant.

Ms. Musso stated it was an innovated teaching grant, through partnerships with local communities. She stated it was a \$600 grant that had to be applied for.

Ms. Rust stated perhaps these students could mentor other students.

Ms. Musso agreed and stated between 68 and 70 total students participated throughout the years on the project, but these students stayed through the entire project.

Mr. Pineau moved on the approval of minutes and asked if there was a motion to approve.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

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Mr. Rudasill made a motion to approve the minutes.

Ms. Rust seconded.

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The motion passed 6-0 (Mr. Riutta was absent).

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

Mr. Pineau asked if there were any public hearings.

Mr. Fiorello stated there were no public hearings at this time.

Mr. Pineau stated there was not old business to discuss and moved on to new business.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Fiorello stated there was no new business.

Ms. Henderson stated she did not know if this was where she should say she has new business or not. She stated it was a simple question and was not sure how the process works. She asked if the people who attended the workshop were to be reimbursed for their fee to attend.

Ms. Knighting stated in the past, members were not reimbursed, but she would verify and get back with the Board members.

Ms. Henderson stated she would appreciate that.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

➤ Wetlands Workshop

Mr. Pineau stated he handed out information from the workshop that he, Ms. Henderson Mr. Adams and Mr. Foster attended last week. He stated the general theme was case studies in looking at and assisting with living shorelines. He stated he felt the purpose behind the objective was risk avoidance and protect, restore and enhance natural shoreline habitat. Protect erosion control and water management and maintain coastal processes. He stated the workshop included studies of the Elizabeth River project in the Tidewater area. The presenters for the case studies included residential scale models as well as urban estuary around oil tank farms. He stated they were presented with ways they had restored habitats in those areas using natural shoreline techniques. He stated another piece, which they felt was meaningful, a presenter with the Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service. He passed out pamphlets to the Board members and stated they were free to the public and stated if a consumer wanted information relative to their property, they could contact this organization and for free they will provide information relative to analysis of the site, technical assistance, writing reports and construction plan review. He stated he felt it was a critical service provided by the State that people should be aware of before going through the permitting process and perhaps could get information concerning the type of shoreline protection needed. He handed out additional information concerning some of the presenters with their contact information and website information. He stated they were supposed to receive an actual presentation of the workshop, which he would forward to all Board members upon receipt. He asked if the Ms. Henderson or Mr. Adams had any additional information or thoughts.

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Mr. Adams stated he was impressed to learn that the Elizabeth River restoration project had 4,700 individual homeowners to participate in the bank reclamation effort. He stated the reports received from the progress were impressive and involved a lot of volunteer help. He stated the services of the Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service were comprehensive and no charge to the individual up to and sometimes including a construction plan. It was a significant piece of information and a new resource to everyone attending.

Ms. Rust asked how new the resource was.

Ms. Henderson stated it had been there a while, but maybe the word was not getting out. She stated they had a conversation on the way home concerning the possibility of having a public session. She stated Mr. Wendt of DCR will come to any locality and give a presentation and talk to everyone interested. She stated they were particularly interested in speaking with realtors and home owners associations as well as property owners so they can share knowledge and offer the free services. Realtors could know they could be selling property and know the service was available. She stated it was her hope to hold a public session, perhaps in the winter, and invite Mr. Wendt to attend and speak.

Ms. Rust stated there had been some discussion in the past about getting information to the citizens before starting the permitting process. She asked how that information could be distributed to the public.

Mr. Fiorello stated a public meeting on the subject and invite citizens. He stated Fairfax County had their fair and asked if Stafford County had a fair.

Ms. Henderson stated no, nothing like that.

Mr. Fiorello stated one avenue would be to possibly have a booth set up in a community type activity.

Ms. Rust suggested perhaps on the Stafford County Environmental web page could have a notation concerning shoreline protection or preservation with the information available.

Mr. Fiorello stated that could be done as well.

A brief discussion between Board members and staff ensued concerning the possibility of ways to get the information out to the public. It was suggested that information could be included in the Parks and Recreation quarterly publication that is sent to all citizens in the county.

Mr. Pineau stated the restoration studies that were done on the Elizabeth River received so many volunteers to help with the projects and suggested getting the information out in a county newsletter or something similar if there was ever help needed on a project in Stafford County. He stated he has been attending the workshop for a number of years, and this was the first year the County has been so well represented with staff and Board members present. He then moved on to staff report concerning permit activity.

STAFF REPORT

➤ Permit Activity

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Mr. Fiorello stated there were 28 wetland permits submitted for 2017, none of which came before the Wetlands Board as they were in non-tidal waters. In 2018 there have been 7 applications, which were also in non-tidal waters. There was one permit renewal, which was the CSX permit. The RPA layer on the GIS Mapping is up to date with an addition of 244 RPS added to the current buffer.

➤ 2019 Legislative Agenda

Mr. Fiorello asked if the Wetlands Board had suggested changes to recommend to the Board of Supervisors for 2019 legislative priorities for the General Assembly.

Mr. Pineau asked if that was something that could be brought back to the July meeting or if there was a deadline.

Mr. Fiorello stated he was not sure of a deadline and would check on that and get additional information from Mr. Harvey.

Mr. Pineau stated if the Board would have their July meeting, that information could be brought to the meeting.

Mr. Adams asked if a grant program could be developed under the Wetlands Board that could utilize some of the in lieu fees accumulated to assist individual land owners with shoreline restoration.

Mr. Fiorello stated the in lieu fees have to be used for public projects.

Ms. Henderson stated she thought the conversation concerning grants had to do with the Virginia Water Facilities Revolving Fund, which works with localities to give grants from the State if there was an established grant program in the locality, which was why we thought we could get money from the State to encourage people to be more conscious.

Mr. Fiorello stated that would be separate from the in-lieu fees.

Ms. Henderson stated she understood that Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities managed most of the County's properties. Particularly Aquia Landing or anything adjacent to Crow's Nest and those areas, have we asked if they have projects that are in need of funding for this purpose, since we have to use it for that purpose.

Ms. Rust stated she was on the Friends Board at Widewater State Park and they may be working on restoration of an existing wetlands and working around creating a living shoreline adjacent to a boat ramp. They have already put in one living shoreline, but they only have so much funding and they definitely could use the funding, and she felt that was an appropriate place to use the funds as well as Crow's Nest.

Mr. Fiorello stated perhaps recommending to the Board of Supervisors a change to allow this Board to use the funds for advertising the programs. He stated as staff he would be in support because you need to start somewhere and get the information out to the public. He stated the more people are aware of other options other than a bulkhead. He stated he felt that might be a good recommendation for the Board of Supervisors for their legislative priorities.

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Mr. Pineau stated he thought last year it was brought up that there was a Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission in which grants are provided, that includes the counties in the Northern Neck area. He thought initiating something similar so homeowners that are interested in constructing living shorelines can take advantage of grants.

Ms. Henderson stated she thought the funds were from the Virginia Water Facilities Revolving Fund.

Mr. Pineau stated he felt it was something worth looking into. He then asked if there was a meeting scheduled for July 16<sup>th</sup>.

➤ Next Meeting – July 16, 2018

Mr. Fiorello stated there were no applications, so there was no new business for July.

Mr. Pineau asked for a motion to adjourn

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Rust made a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Henderson seconded.

The motion passed 6-0 (Mr. Riutta was absent).

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.