Occoquan Forest Sewage Treatment Plant Property Task Force

April 4, 2008

Interim Report
1. Background:

The Task Force was established by a Prince William County Board of Supervisors (BOCS) Resolution, with participating groups selected by Supervisor Marty Nohe, to investigate future possibilities regarding the 5901 Davis Ford sewage treatment plant parcel. Many of these citizens have full time jobs and have committed significant time and energy to participate through the term of the resolution, as amended.

The Task Force members are:

Chuck Collins           Chair
Jill Claus                   Vice Chair (Riverview Estates)
Maisha O'Connor Secretary (Reserve at Crooked Creek)
Ann Stampf Occoquan Forest
Dan Peters Occoquan Forest
Allison Austin Riverview Estates
Bo Doll Reserve at Crooked Creek
Mike Johnson Civil Engineer (Development Community)
Ernie Gonzales Coles Planning Commissioner
Martin Jeter Mid-County Civic Association
Kim Hosen Mid-County Civic Association
Judy Sweet Citizens for Davis Ford Quality of Life
Bob Simon Citizens for David Ford Quality of Life

Participating at Supervisor Nohe’s’ request are Ernie Gonzales (Planning Commissioner) and Alex Vanegas (Service Authority Director). Additionally, significant support to the Task Force has been provided by Ms. Susan Roltsch, Ms. Deb Oliver and Ms. Tracy Gordon, all County employees.

2. Timeline:

The Resolution established a timeline for the Task Force. Subsequently, the Task Force determined that given their first meeting date (17 December 2007), the dates identified in the Resolution were simply unattainable. The Task Force requested that the BOCS modify the resolution and the agreed on dates are as follows. The duration of the Task Force shall be approximately 7 months with an interim report due 4/4/2008, and final report due 6/27/2008.
3. Accomplishments to date:

The Task Force commenced operation on 17 December 2007 and has held 7 meetings. In that time we have:

- Established rules and procedures for conducting meetings and elected a vice-chair
- Organized ourselves by establishing three sub-committees: **Future Use, Technology and Report Writing**
- Agreed to a plan of action to meet our goals and the ending date of the resolution.

We have hosted various county and state officials and experts to gather information. On March 10th a public meeting was held to gather citizen opinion on the subject with modest attendance. It is our opinion that the task force has identified most of the resident’s issues associated with this facility. (See attached minutes of 24 March for a summary of residents comments made at the meeting along with residents written comments received by the task force) Additionally, future considerations regarding this facility have also surfaced during our work.

The Task Force has identified three key issues regarding the Occoquan Forest Treatment Facility

- Continue provision of sewage treatment for citizens of Occoquan
- Maintain zoning along Davis Ford Road at present density level
- Disposition of treatment facility land should it be closed for whatever reason

The minutes of our meetings to date are attached.

Technology Subcommittee

The Technology Committee has set the following goals:

- Provide information on an environmentally sound treatment process for Occoquan Forest sewage
- Provide information on a renewable alternative energy source
- Provide information on high quality water for Occoquan Forest

To this end, committee members have extensively examined information in publications, newspaper articles, and on the internet concerning new alternatives for sewage treatment (in general), and research/studies being carried out on new, innovative technologies. In addition, we have looked into county and state policies and zoning requirements/ordinances

On February 11, 2008, Bryant Thomas, a representative from DEQ, provided us with feedback on our list of alternative technologies. He was very specific that no technology could be acceptable unless there was zero discharge. He also assured us that the Occoquan Policy has been on the books since the 1970’s and was established to protect drinking water and maintain high quality standards for water treatment..

The subcommittee is aware that the PWCSA does not intend to decommission at this time.

April 3, 2008
Therefore, we sub divided our search into the following categories:

- Continuing the present PWCSA and offering suggestions for the SA to consider in upgrading the present plant and/or replacing the plant (*)
  - Piping to leeching field chambers
  - Irrigation systems and/or anaerobic digestion
  - Enhance lagoon and stabilization ponds
  - Oxidation ditches (*)
  - Trickling filters (*)
  - Secondary and tertiary grinder pumps
  - Incineration/thermal treating
  - Mechanical systems/biochemical treatment
  - Filter beds (*)
  - Living machines algae based biodiesel production

- Pump and Haul

- Sewer pipe
  - Grinder pump
  - Traditional sewer line
  - Pressure sewers

- Uses for wastewater after treatment
  - Seminal system for power plant
  - Algae biodiesel

The following technologies were identified but not deemed suitable for various reasons:

- Water conservation and gray water systems
- Cluster systems and small community systems
- Vacuum sewers
- Sequencing batch reactors
- Composing
- Landfill
- Nuclear reprocessing
- Constructive wetlands
- Grey water recycling
- Composting toilets

In order to broaden our understanding and knowledge, we have designated April 14, 2008 as Task Force Technology Night. We will hold a teleconference with Professor Hatcher, Old Dominion University. John Meehan, State Department of Health and a representative from the Occoquan Water Monitoring Lab will be present to answer our questions. During the 24 March Service Authority presentation, an invitation was extended for the SA to attend this meeting. The results of these discussions will be incorporated into the Task Force final report.
Future Use (Zoning/Planning and Land Use Issues) Subcommittee

This sub-committee was formed to look in detail at possibilities for the 5901 Davis Ford parcel in the future, whether or not it is used for a sewage treatment plant. The committee so far has performed a site visit and produced the outline below. They will continue their research into the possibilities, to include funding sources.

The Task Force has identified a specific concern related to Zoning/Planning within the Davis Ford corridor. Specifically, the current zoning for this area is A-1. Comp plan designation is public land and the adjacent land requires a lot size of 1 - 5 acres with a 2.5 acre average lot size after re-zoning (SRR).

The Task Force has had members express significant concern that should the facility be deactivated and sewer and water service be established by pipelines for Occoquan Forrest, this could inadvertently lead to future Zoning/Planning/BOCS actions which significantly change the present state rural nature of Davis Ford Road and potentially enable higher density housing development. Consequently, significant energy has been expended by the Task Force in attempting to identify sewage treatment alternatives which, by design, restrict the ability to develop higher density housing on the back of the Occoquan Forrest Sewage Treatment provision.

The future usage of this property remains dependent on the modification or decommissioning of the present facility.

1. Possible uses w/o sewer line:
   - Possible partial park with smaller/alternate technology plant
   - Updated Current Treatment plant
   - Conservation easement / stream preservation bank

2. Possible uses with sewer line:
   - Park-active or passive
   - Open space
   - Houses
   - Shooting range
   - Other public facility
   - Conservation easement / stream preservation bank

The Task Force is investigating various potential funding sources for acquiring the land for continued public use or for funding promising beneficial technologies identified as alternatives by the technology subcommittee. Funding could take the form of:

- Loans
- Grants
- Partnerships
- Donations
- Conservation easement / stream preservation bank.
4. Work remaining:

To conclude our work the following activities are planned:

A. **Continue meeting with experts and officials** to gather necessary information (Technology presentations 4/14/2008, Park Authority (TBS))

B. **Integrate** the sub-committee work into the larger group

C. **Identify alternatives** for sewer service and usage of the parcel and then **create recommendations** for sewage service and future parcel usage. Where there is disagreement, minority opinions will be clearly identified within the final report.

D. **Write final report** and deliver to BOCS by 6/27/2008

5. Issues impacting the Task Force:

While there is considerable concern regarding the broad scope of the task we are undertaking, the Task Force is committed to meeting the Resolution dates.

A. **Disagreement among members regarding the Task Force purpose (Providing sewage service to Occoquan Forest vs deciding future usage of the parcel)**

The differences of opinion among the Task Force Members have been effectively resolved with the amended resolution establishing the Task Force.

B. **Lack of participation/cooperation from the Service Authority**

The SA has been reluctant to engage in conversation with the Task Force for reasons unstated. Mr. Chuck Weber, of the Service Authority, attended one of our early meetings. However, in lieu of attending subsequent meetings, the SA asked all future questions be directed to them in writing. Following questions formally submitted to the SA and receiving a response from the SA (both attached), the Task Force was highly concerned about our ability to fulfill the resolution requirements due to not having the technical support necessary to conduct our work. Through the efforts of Mr. Alex Vanegas (Mr. Nohe’s appointment to the SA Board), the SA agreed to have a representative make a presentation to the Task Force on 24 March. The SA (Mr. Lyle Beefelt) gave the presentation to the Task Force at that time and answered current and previously submitted questions, but did not provide insight into the Service Authority assessment/evaluation of environmentally beneficial emerging sewage technology which might be applicable to Occoquan Forrest.
C. Enormity of information on technical issues and lack of expertise in these areas by Task Force members.

The sheer volume and complexity of information on these subjects would be overwhelming for experts in these fields, let alone laypersons such as the Task Force members. The members of the Task Force are not experts in the Technology associated with Sewage Treatment. While the Task Force has endeavored to explore and identify potentially beneficial Technologies and Processes, the Task Force wants to advise the BOCS that our efforts are challenging. It would be expected that the Service Authority would track and monitor Sewage Treatment Technology, however, it was noticeably absent from the presentation provided to the Task Force on March 24th. (See Action Requested in Section 6a of this report).

D. Conflicting/unclear information from government sources

During the school discussions representations/statements were made by various officials regarding the future viability of the Sewage Treatment facility. During our discussions with various officials of the county and SA on this matter we have received conflicting opinions and statements regarding the facility. Several were directly contradictory. The Task Force is cataloging these statements and where possible, attempting to resolve any conflicting information.

E. Lack of confidence in County Government organizations by citizen groups

During the Task Force deliberations there has been considerable energy expended trying to identify a manner of providing continuing sewage service that is environmentally sound while simultaneously preventing change from the present rural nature of Davis Ford Road.

A specific concern expressed is that by providing a sewage pipeline in place of the present facility it could, unintentionally enable expanded development, beyond the current density along the corridor. This concern specifically relates to possible future decisions made by a different BOCS or zoning/planning organizations. The Task Force has attempted to find a way to expressly limit the future Occoquan Forrest sewage service to only those customers presently served with a provision for failed existing septic systems.

Further, some citizens are concerned that the very existence of the facility, which has had some identified failures, presents a threat to the water quality of the Occoquan Reservoir. While the Facility is licensed as a zero discharge facility, including treated effluent, there have been occasions where failures have taken place and sewage (documented) or treated effluent (alleged) has or might have reached the reservoir. Implicit in these citizen concerns is the lack of confidence in the SA to manage/maintain the facility within the operating permit and the DEQ to enforce the regulations associated with the failures of the facility.

Finally, at the public session a citizen indicated that we were “spinning our wheels, since a SA Board Member had indicated to that person that the plant will continue as is.”
6. Action(s) Requested by Task Force of BOCS:

A. The Task Force requests that the BOCS request a presentation/meeting with the Service Authority to fully understand the Service Authority’s approach to evaluating and incorporating emerging/developing technologies which could be environmentally beneficial to the environment and the community. The Task Force requests to attend this presentation to better understand the Service Authority’s future strategy and technology assessment process which will enable us to better incorporate their views and processes into our final report.

B. None

C. None

7. Attachments:

A. Task Force Resolution, as amended dated 4 March 2008
B. Minutes of Task Force meetings
C. Task Force letter to Service Authority dated 24 January 2008
D. Service Authority letter dated 29 January 2008

The Task Force encourages the BOCS to respond to this report with questions or comments.

Submitted:

Charles L. (Chuck) Collins, Jr.
Chair