

**Lake Roland Nature Council  
Board Meeting Minutes  
September 19, 2018 at 6:30 PM  
Lake Roland Nature Center**

**Welcome and Introductions:** Kurt Davis called the meeting to order. Ranger Wood introduced Kris Mervine from Baltimore County Recreation and Parks.

**Board Meeting Minutes:** The April 18, 2018 and June 20, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes were approved

**Treasurer's Report:** Jeffrey Budnitz reported the following:

- Cash position: \$31,124.05
- Hard Assets: \$352,550.64
- Total Assets: \$383,674.69
- Liability to Baltimore County: \$205,500.00
- Net Asset Value: \$178,174.69

**Rec & Parks Staff Report:** Ranger Wood reported on the following events:

- Fall Campout at 6:00 PM on 9/23 to 9:00 AM on 9/24
- Bats – Helpers in The Night - 10/6
- Nature Quest Serpentine Hike & Lunch 10/7 10am & 1pm
- Moon Campfire 10/19 – 7pm – 10pm
- Nature Quest Multi-Park Event 10/21 – 12pm – 2pm
- Haunted Halloween Hike 10/27 – 7pm – 9pm
- Volunteer Appreciation Campfire Event 11/2 – 6pm – 8pm

**Design Framework Committee (Environmental & Master Plan):** Elise Butler reported the following:

- Native Plant Sale
  - Preliminary Income - \$6,000.00
  - Sales continued the following week at Kay McConnell's house.
  - Final numbers will available at the next board meeting
  - Elise thanked the rangers and the Guilford Garden Club
  - Weather was great.
- Committee meetings will resume in October with a focus on the Serpentine restoration plan and the concept landscape design framework.
- Miscanthus remediation in Serpentine is coming along very well.
- Potential additional mowing of the Serpentine in March 2019
- Dwight Johnson said that the Maryland Native Plant Society did a hike of the Serpentine and were very impressed with the restoration progress.

**Paw Point Committee:** Beth Hoker reported the following:

- 1028 Paw Point Memberships to date
- Early Paw Point Walk-up Registration Event to be held 11/11 and 11/17

**Trails Committee:** Jeffrey Budnitz reported the following:

- Fishing Pier renovations are complete – Will need to schedule a Pier cleaning
- We now have three Memorial Benches ready for installation
- The county and park are doing a culvert cleanup on Lakeside Drive
- Too much rain for any general trails maintenance

**Recreation Committee:** Jeffrey Budnitz reported the following:

- The Donut Run was canceled due to weather – 22 runners showed up
- Next Donut Run is scheduled for 11/3
- Canoe trip is this Sunday at 2:00 PM – need volunteers

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**Membership Committee:** Jeffrey Budnitz reported the following:

- The membership is currently 204 members.
- Will be doing a fundraising mailing in November

**Residents Committee:** No report

**Outreach Committee:** No report

**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

- Kurt Davis reported that Susan King is resigning from the board and Art on The Trail committee due to family obligation.
- The park has been awarded a \$3,000.00 grant through the Guilford Garden Club and Americas Partners for Plants
- Art on the Trail has been awarded a \$4,000.00 grant from Baltimore County Arts and Sciences
- Annual Meeting will be moved to 11/14 – 6:30pm – a speaker will be announced and the next board meeting.
- Discussion was turned over to Dr. North regarding the DIC. Dr. North submitted an interim report outlining what the DIC had worked on for the past year. A week prior to the board meeting he had submitted a resolution (attached) modeled after the resolution of a year ago establishing the DIC, this resolution resolved to allow the DIC to continue its work. The board discussed the report and resolution and made comments. Most discussion centered on the report and its lack of any substantial information being provided to the board by the DIC. The common thread being that the items listed in the report will be handled by county and state agencies and are not decisions to be made by LRNC. A few board members commented that they believe the report lacked much substance and provided no new insight on the Vanguard development. Peter Lev did comment that he believed that Dr. North had run the DIC in an efficient and organized manner. A motion was made and seconded to vote on the resolution to extend the DIC. A vote was taken:
  - 3 members voted to extend the DIC,
  - 7 members voted to shut down the DIC,
  - 2 members abstained from the vote.
- Peter Lev requested that the Executive Committee give any development information delivered to them to the LRNC for review and to also see if we could get people from various agencies from the county/state to come to a board meeting to review the process.

Kurt Davis adjourned the meeting at 7:50 PM.

**Attendees:**

Jeffrey Budnitz  
Elise Butler  
Kurt Davis  
Jim Flannery

Beth Hoker  
Dwight Johnson  
Susan King-Byrne  
Peter Lev  
Rick North

Lydia Redding  
Kay McConnell  
Kimberly Warren  
Jonathan Wood  
Chris Merwin

Submitted for inclusion in 19 September 2018 board meeting agenda

**"Resolved, that the Development Impact Committee of the Lake Roland Nature Council shall continue studying the impact of further development of the Hollins Organic site on Falls Road on the adjacent environmentally sensitive serpentine area in the Park and on Lake Roland."**

Background (for discussion; not part of the Resolution)

- The Nature Council was formed, per its 2011 Articles of Incorporation "to improve, maintain, preserve and protect the natural environment and historic structures in Robert E Lee Park."

- On June 21, 2017 the Nature Council voted unanimously to adopt a resolution establishing the Development Impact Committee. The committee has met monthly over the past year and has submitted an interim report of its findings to the Nature Council. The developer has yet to finalize plans, and therefore the work of the committee has not yet been completed, in a number of areas, including:

Stormwater management

- Drainage and retention pond engineering
- Discharge at the perimeter onto and well into Park property

Sanitary sewer connection

Access to the park (path to be constructed by the developer)

- No position has been taken by the Nature Council, and none is taken on the basis of this resolution; but by its failure to address the development in any way, the Nature Council has allowed the developer to say the Nature Council is aware of the issues and through its silence has given tacit approval.

- No funding from the Nature Council is assumed by this resolution; volunteer efforts are expected to continue the study, and any funding needs will be addressed separately.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard North  
Chairman, Development Impact Committee

Interim report  
Development Impact Committee (DIC) of the Lake Roland Nature Council (LRNC)  
August 28, 2018

**Background:** The attached resolution was adopted unanimously by the LRNC board on June 21, 2017.

**Mission:** "We are to gather and provide LRNC accurate, factual and substantive information regarding the impact of further development of the Hollins Organic/ Vanguard site on the adjacent environmentally sensitive serpentine area and on Lake Roland."

**Meetings to date:** 2017: Sep 7, Oct 5, Nov 2, Dec 7. 2018: Jan 4, Feb 1, Mar 1, Apr 5, May 3, June 7, August 2.

**Participants:** The following have attended our meetings to date: Bill Hilgartner, Dwight Johnson, Peter Lev, Robert Macht, Kay McConnell, Tom McCord (guest), Richard North, Bob Smith (guest), Gail Stetten, Kimberly Warren, Jonathan Wood.

**Status:** Plans for the proposed Bluestem (formerly Lake Roland Village) development have yet to be finalized by Vanguard, the developer, and Baltimore County continues its review. Available, pertinent recent filings include site plans, notably drawing LA-1, dated 1/25/18 (attached). The most recent steps in the review process were a Community Input Meeting on April 9 and a Design Review Panel meeting on July 11. This interim report is based on the best information available as of this writing.

**Issues:** The DIC has identified and discussed at its monthly meetings a number of areas of potential development impact, as follows:

### **Water quality**

**Stormwater management:** Runoff from the development will enter the adjacent park, Lake Roland and its tributaries. The available plans do not provide the details necessary to assess impact in detail; in particular:

- Total impervious surface area is an important variable; as shown on current plans it occupies a very high fraction of the site. (See attached drawing.) It appears to exceed County open space requirements, compliance with which remains to be determined.
- Drainage and retention pond engineering within the development is not detailed,
- Discharge at the perimeter onto and well into Park (i.e., Baltimore City) property, as indicated on the attached drawing, remains to be determined.

The above will be important determinants of:

- flow rates and volumes
- temperature (important to trout in Jones Falls)
- content (bacterial, dissolved chemicals, oils, trash, etc.)
- local effects on the serpentine environment
- interaction with the existing stream which emerges at the base of the landfill

**Sanitary sewer:** The proposed 150 apartment units will connect to the County system, as shown on the attached map. This system has received a great deal of attention in recent years, and data from July's record rainfall are still coming in.

Water quality in Lake Roland and its tributaries is commonly graded "F" because of bacterial counts, which are particularly high after it rains. The 42" sewer main beneath the lake, which is 60 years old, and the upstream lines which converge upon it, are possible contributors; flow rates in these lines exceed specifications after it rains. Sewer capacity and integrity (backup, overflow, leakage, etc.) have been the subject of numerous reports, hearings, consent decrees, etc., which variably cite "accurate, factual and substantive information" and draw variable, sometimes opposite conclusions. Among them:

Last month, LRNC posted a document furnished by DPW on its website at <https://lakeroland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Towson-Green-Alliance-Meeting-minutes-February-16-2018.pdf> which concludes *inter alia* "there are no water quality concerns in the Lake Roland because of overflowing sewers. The water quality is affected by many things (including wildlife, pets, and septic systems . . ." For purposes of the present report, suffice it to say that this is one document among many, and none are undisputed. See attached.

At the Community Input Meeting on April 19, the developer indicated that rather than connecting to the existing sewer main adjoining the development on Falls Road, they were considering pumping sewage uphill and to the south, into smaller lines which bypass the main line under Lake Roland. As these lines ultimately connect to the same, overloaded system in the City, and as the added flow could only increase back pressure in the main line under the lake, "accurate, factual and substantive" analysis would be required to show that this measure would in fact reduce or eliminate impact on the lake and the Park.

The DIC continues to monitor discussions.

## **Serpentine environment**

**Plants:** The proposed development is surrounded by ecologically sensitive serpentine which inspired the name Bare Hills. One of our members has studied the area immediately adjacent and to the north of the development for many years; he has prepared a detailed spreadsheet on Bare Hills Herbaceous Plants, which includes some rare and endangered species. A copy of this, useful for monitoring development impact, is attached.

Not only plantings by the developer, but also plants introduced by tenants (particularly on balconies) have the potential to spread or seed into the serpentine. The developer has met with representatives of the Guilford Garden Club (which is represented on this committee as well), and some recommendations have been made as to native plantings for the development and policies governing tenants' choices of plants.

The development will increase access into and through the park, and this has the potential to affect plant life, soil erosion, soil quality and deposits. Earlier proposals by the developer showed a parking lot for vehicles on park property, with expanded trail access; this no longer appears on the site plan. Access to the Orange Trail is shown, however, via a path to be constructed by the developer, details of which remain to be determined. DIC members and park staff have visited the site to assess the route; we have discussed the goals of minimizing the extent (especially length) of construction, and avoiding introduction of any new soils or materials. We have also established the goal of conveying traffic as quickly as possible through and away from the sensitive serpentine, via existing trails, into the deciduous areas of the park.

Traffic from the development is expected to consist primarily of pedestrians, some of whom will be accompanied by dogs. Notwithstanding park regulations, enforcement of which is subject to staffing and accessibility, some dogs will be off leash (and there will be some bicyclists). Whether on leash or off, dogs will relieve themselves in the park, and some solid waste will remain, even if plastic bags are provided by the park,

at any new entrance. This will add nutrients which are not normally present in the serpentine soil, apart from wildlife contributions.

Although we have been unable to estimate the magnitude of any effect of dog waste effect on the serpentine, it is safe to say it would be less if dog traffic were reduced. An obvious measure (noted already as unresolved) would be to provide more open space within the development in compliance with regulations.

**Birds** and other wildlife in the park, particularly those that nest on the ground, might be affected by increased traffic, in particular off-leash dogs (and cats, if any venture outside the apartment building). A Baltimore Bird Club representative on our committee reports that there are no rare or endangered birds in the serpentine. He notes further that an enormous number of birds are killed or injured by collisions with glass windows, particularly during migration, and that "bird-friendly glass," which has a pattern that allows birds to perceive it, has been developed to mitigate the problem. At the aforementioned Community Input meeting, the developer stated his intention to use bird-friendly glass and other bird-friendly design practices for the project.

**Visibility** and views from the park: On May 29 balloons were lofted by Vanguard, presumably to show the profile of the proposed development as seen from the surrounding park and neighboring property. LRNC was informed by Vanguard and passed the information along by E-mail; the ensuing dialogue concluded (apparently from Vanguard) "No visibility from any part of the serpentine." However, photos were taken showing visibility from the serpentine, at the origins of both the orange and yellow trails to the north and south. (See attachments.) To the east, deciduous trees on landfill block visibility at this time of year.

## Conclusions

The Bluestem development is a work in progress; in fact, actual development will not begin for many months, and plans have yet to be finalized and approved. Accordingly, this document is of necessity an interim report, based upon the best information available. The issues discussed above deserve continued attention by LRNC as planning and construction proceed, and even after construction is complete, as tenants occupy the new development.

The DIC looks forward to continuing its work and reporting to LRNC in detail, as provided in the June 2017 resolution, adopted unanimously. This resolution set no time limit, as is appropriate, but as the DIC is not one of the "standing committees" of LRNC, annual resolutions will be required to continue our activities. We would welcome the opportunity to continue serving LRNC.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard North

Attachments appear on line, on a Google drive at  
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1s88O11Kix2MKj-Y47K0ZGlg5JoZrbWPF?usp=sharing>

Resolution 21 June 21 2017 establishing DIC  
CPC Falls Rd. Project - Concept Landscape Plan 2018-1-26  
JF North Map of sanitary sewer system  
DPW minutes of meeting with GTA  
Bare Hills Plot native plant spreadsheet  
Balloon photos