

FINAL Meeting Minutes
Rivanna River Basin Commission

August 11, 2010

2:00 pm – 3.30 p.m.

706 Forest St., Suite G, Charlottesville, VA 22903

Rivanna River Basin Commission (Commission) Members Present:

Dr. David Brown, RRBC Chair, Charlottesville City Council

Mr. Marvin Moss, Fluvanna County Citizen

Ms. Ann Mallek, RRBC Vice Chair, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors

Mr. Jim Frydl, Greene County Board of Supervisors

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members present:

Ms. Tamara Ambler (RWSA)

Mr. Darren Coffey (Fluvanna County)

Mr. Todd Scanlon (UVA)

Others present:

Ms. Leslie Middleton, RRBC Executive Director

Ms. Nicola McGoff, RRBC Program Coordinator

Meeting Summary

Leslie Middleton introduced this meeting as the working group of RRBC and TAC members whose purpose is to craft the process for undertaking an effective planning process during the upcoming joint RRBC and TAC retreat. The TAC has already been spent quite a bit of time on “who are we, how do we relate to the RRBC, etc”, and the background of these meetings were provided ahead of time: TAC Meeting Summary excerpt July 14, 2009; TAC Meeting Summary, January 12, 2010; TAC Meeting Summary, February 16, 2010.

Marvin Moss suggested that RRBC and TAC should remember through this process to celebrate the successes and “pat ourselves on back, too.” Having been involved in many organizations, he finds the RRBC launch has been swift and successful, with the RRBC being seen as non-partisan. One area for improvement may be to communicate better. The TAC played a key role in the beginning, identifying the problems with hydrologic alteration in the Rivanna, but the question remains, “What do we do with this knowledge? How can the RRBC guide the TAC to use its collective skills?” The TAC is a diverse group of professionals who each look at the questions from a different perspective (i.e. planners, scientists, etc.). Through all of the changes (chairmanship, new staff, funding), this is still a vibrant organization even with these changes. So how do we build on our strengths? What problems are we trying to solve?

Darren Coffey said with this variety of backgrounds we need to get both the TAC and RRBC on the same page; better utilize the staff; sort out our priorities and decide who tells whom what to do; get the lines of communication open; keep them open; and start to move in a set direction. Tamara Ambler pointed out that policy folks (staff) talk on a

general level while scientists are very specific. In order to be efficient, the TAC needs to know the questions that it needs to answer. Darren Coffey pointed that the locality staff members who participate on the TAC are not accustomed to directing their Boards.

Marvin Moss said there were two issues identified by the TAC in January (2010): (1) turnover of RRBC commissioners (both citizen-appointed and elected officials); and (2) how to bring the Commission as whole up to speed, since each Commissioner comes in with a different understanding of these complex issues. He suggested that the focus of retreat should be to help solve these problems. Should we change the composition of RRBC? The TAC?

Ann Mallek added that the Bay TMDL is providing an immediate focus for jurisdictions and the state, but there are different issues in each region. She would like the TAC to develop a prioritization of issues to address that the RRBC could then articulate to localities. Marvin Moss agreed saying that we should view these court mandates [the Bay TMDL] as a golden opportunity. He believes that the RRBC should continue to facilitate meetings with various interest groups so that it cannot be accused of making decisions without broad input.

Darren Coffey suggested that the key to RRBC success revolves around communication, between the TAC and the RRBC, in both directions.

Jim Frydl said that the RRBC has a vague mission and, in order to effectively provide guidance, RRBC needs a list of issues, resolutions, costs and priorities. This technical advice and guidance will help provide the political will to go forward.

Ann Mallek added that it might be useful to look at how the counties can share information and processes. Albemarle County made a huge improvement in erosion and sediment control when it took the recommendations from someone else [RCS, SELC, and UVA] who did all the background work. Maybe RRBC and TAC could look into how the different problems in different localities are being addressed and see if localities can share information and where RRBC could provide support for localities.

David Brown said in summary that it sounds like there needs to be a joint RRBC/TAC meeting scheduled annually in order to set priorities for the TAC and RRBC. He also said that, since the TAC has already identified many of the issues and questions, the upcoming joint meeting can build on this effort. He said that it would be helpful to hear from the different localities solutions to various problems. He suggested that the annual RRBC priorities could be reviewed half way through the year, with the TAC providing information and clarification at that time.

Jim Frydl said that it is the problem of the chicken and the egg: TAC and RRBC both need to know direction to go to be able to direct. David Brown suggested it might be more like the relationship between city staff and elected Council: staff provides the ideas/options and the Council makes the decision on how to proceed.

Marvin Moss talked about the healthy waters grant, which focuses on maintaining the healthy segments of the Rivanna. What do we do with this information? What are the

priorities with Bay TMDL? What role can the TAC play in defining a reasonable approach to fixing the river basin? How will we be using the NFWF monitoring data?

Leslie Middleton added that we should consider what is reasonable to expect of TAC members and RRBC staff, given the time that TAC members have available.

Tamara Ambler asked the group what was the anticipated vision of RRBC, and how much do Commissioners know and want to know? Ann Mallek replied that she wants sound information to convince her board to do the right thing. David Brown said that when folks ask, "What is this TMDL?" elected officials need enough information to be able to answer. The group generally agreed that more informational presentations at the RRBC meetings would be useful.

Marvin Moss said that the new state park at Biscuit Run provides an opportunity for the RRBC to become involved to insure that the park showcases good stormwater management practices. He asked that the TAC evaluate this idea for a RRBC project. Tamara Ambler said the TAC had considered, when Biscuit Run was slated for high-density development, encouraging the developer to make it a showcase for stormwater BMPs. Leslie Middleton asked that consideration be given to fully understand the burden and responsibility of this kind of project on the TAC and suggested that staff may need to find other resources besides TAC.

Darren Coffey noted that the presentations to RRBC are important, but presentations to localities are also important. He said that RRBC staff couldn't do all the work and that it would be very helpful if RRBC Commissioners report to their Boards (and Council) updates on the work of the RRBC. Ann Mallek asked if the RRBC is pursuing the five recommendations put forward by the TAC previously, and if so, it would be good to affirm this with the group. [Note: The five recommendations were translated into the five components of the NFWF stormwater grant and are being implemented.]

David Brown said that at the first RRBC meeting he attended, (RRBC Commissioner) John Martin complained strongly that the RRBC wasn't driving the work of the RRBC, as it should be doing. David said that he believes the RRBC needs to be guided by the person with the best overall knowledge and picture of the RRBC. Darren Coffey agreed that this is a fundamental question that needs to be clarified as a group. Everyone agreed that this issue should be discussed and an approach forward finalized at the retreat so that this question does not keep coming up.

Leslie Middleton reported that she sees that one of the roles of the RRBC is to provide value to the localities, through guidelines, technical support, studies, communication, and bringing people together. The RRBC is then seen as a neutral and important player. It will be a mark of the RRBC success when the community can talk as a whole watershed. Leslie also said that the effort to get clarity between StreamWatch, RCS, TJPDC and all the other players [the work of the "Rivanna coalition"] is helping clarify the role of the RRBC and make it easier to work with the other Rivanna players.

There was a discussion on suggested facilitators for the retreat: Mike Foreman (DCR), Tanya Denckla (IEN) and Angela Neilan (DEQ).

There was a discussion on timing and duration needed for the retreat. It was agreed that a Friday would suit best, and approximately five hours would be needed with a lunch break to divide the topics being discussed.

Leslie Middleton brought up the suggested Rivanna river trips in October for all commissioners, TAC members, local planners, and local staff. This will be a minimum of 45 and as much as 60 or more persons getting on the water. The group discussed whether this should be obligatory for RRBC and TAC members, and it was agreed that it would be strongly recommended that RRBC and TAC members participate and others (planning commissioners and planning staff) be encouraged to attend.

Tamara Ambler said that TAC discussions continually go back to the question of whether there should be separate TAC subcommittees for policy, science, education etc. and asked if the retreat would cover this topic. Leslie Middleton suggested that if the retreat is planned carefully, the necessary structure for the TAC might become obvious. She added that we list this as a goal to for the retreat.

Ann Mallek suggested that a list be prepared of all of the projects the RRBC is currently involved in, and what issues are raised by each project that the TAC could address.

Leslie Middleton asked if the RRBC should come to the retreat after first having had a discussion at the preceding Commission meeting [October 25] on priorities for the retreat. David Brown disagreed, and Ann Mallek said maybe the RRBC could consider the suggestions that the TAC has already developed. Leslie Middleton asked if at the next RRBC meeting there should be some presentations such as “Stormwater 101” and “Background on the RRBC.” David Brown agreed that this would make the retreat more productive, and he also suggested required readings prior to the retreat. Darren Coffey added that repeating this type of information is very beneficial.

The group discussed possible locations for the planning retreat and the two possible dates of November 5th and 19th. There was a general agreement that the 5th would be better, but a decision on the date will be made once the facilitator and location have been confirmed – and the RRBC commissioners and TAC members have been polled as to their availability. Leslie Middleton, Ann Mallek, and Tamara Ambler will work together to determine the location and facilitator and a subset of this planning team will meet with the chosen facilitator to develop the agenda, process, and materials for the retreat.

David Brown summarized that, based on this discussion, the goals for the retreat are:

- Clarify roles of RRBC and TAC (and the structure of each)
- Come to agreement on the priorities in the watershed and the priorities for the work of the RRBC
- Set specific goals for the work of the Commission
- Enhance communication between RRBC and TAC
- Determine how to enhance communication between RRBC and member localities as well as the public

Next steps:

- Staff will work with Ann Mallek, Marvin Moss, and Tamara Ambler to select the location and facilitator for the planning retreat.
- Staff will poll all Commissioners and TAC members on availability for November 5 and 19.
- Staff will schedule the next planning meeting based on availability of the selected retreat facilitator.
- Staff will assemble a suggested list of required reading materials for the retreat.
- Staff will prepare informational presentations (and select presenters) for the October 25 RRBC meeting (possibly: Stormwater 101 and the Background of the RRBC).
- Staff will schedule Rivanna river trips in October for Commissioners, TAC members, and others.

Attachments:

TAC Meeting Summary excerpt July 14, 2009

TAC Meeting Summary, January 12, 2010

TAC Meeting Summary, February 16, 2010