ANS URGES THE CITY OF FAIRFAX TO POSTPONE ACTION ON NORTHFAX WEST DEVELOPMENT

Misleading information about this week’s meetings latest concern

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For Immediate Release – June 22, 2020 – On Tuesday June 23, (tomorrow), the City of Fairfax’s City Council is to decide if it will move forward with the Northfax West development plan. That plan calls for removing four acres of forested riparian habitat, while permanently burying the North Fork of the Accotink Creek, home to fish, salamanders, and frogs.

The Audubon Naturalist Society has made three primary asks of the mayor and council: 1) That all decisions relating to culverting the stream be postponed for 3 months; 2) That the City work with an independent expert ecologist to better evaluate the City’s value of this overall habitat; 3) That alternatives be sought to preserve the healthier, “A1”, section of the stream to better match the City’s overall Small Area Plan vision and to help the City reach its land use and environmental goals.

In a follow-up 18-page letter written last week, ANS Northern Virginia Conservation Advocate Renee Grebe reiterated ANS’s initial concerns and pointed out another problem:

“…on June 16th, a resident stopped, in-person, to photograph the sign on the Northfax West property giving public notice for the June 22nd and 23rd hearings. These signs explicitly stated that the hearing would be held in-person at City Hall and did not describe the virtual meeting options. This is confusing, to say the least, and may effectively reduce public participation from those who were planning to attend online and via phone but would not go in person. The City does not currently plan to hold the meeting in person, meaning that this information is completely incorrect, and may lead to people arriving at City Hall on an election night where there is not a public hearing being held, so they will be unable to testify.”

Grebe also told the City that moving forward without additional research and consideration would be “environmentally irresponsible,” considering the City of Fairfax has the opportunity to reimagine the area with a more appealing plan that would incorporate the North Fork of Accotink Creek as “its living heart” and be enjoyed by many more residents and visitors alike.

About ANS: Throughout its 123-year history, ANS has played a pivotal role in conserving our region's iconic natural places from development including the C&O Canal, Dyke Marsh and, most recently, Ten Mile Creek. Past ANS member and board president, Rachel Carson, author of Silent Spring, is credited with launching the now global environmental movement. ANS's nature experts provide hundreds of opportunities each year for children and adults to enjoy, learn about, and protect the environment.