

City of Virginia Beach Open Space Advisory Committee 2024-2025 Annual Report to City Council

Appointive Agency Chair: Clay Bernick

Date: August 25, 2025

Executive Summary

During the Fiscal Year covering July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025, the Open Space Advisory Committee volunteers, City Council liaisons and staff liaisons worked cohesively to produce the FY 2024-2025 Annual Report to City Council.

The Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) currently has 13 members, including one who also serves on the Clean Community Commission, one who also serves on the Parks and Recreation Commission, one who also serves on the Stormwater Management Implementation Advisory Group, and two who are student members. In the past fiscal year, the OSAC met eight times. Others that also attend serve on the Active Transportation Advisory Committee, the Green Ribbon Committee, the Parks and Recreation Foundation, and LRNow as informal liaisons and regularly report business updates from these committees and organizations. OSAC currently has one ongoing informal workgroup comprised of Committee members to bring recommendations to the full Committee for consideration. The workgroup addresses a wide range of matters including funding, grants, the Interfacility Traffic Area and Transition Area, and other priorities identified by the Committee that may warrant focused research and analysis prior to discussion by the full Committee.

The Committee has actively participated in coordinating with other City departments and appointed agencies, Federal and State agencies, and numerous non-profit organizations to further its mission and looks forward to ongoing participation and collaboration on initiatives for future enhancement of the City of Virginia Beach and its residents and visitors.

Our most significant accomplishments are detailed below, along with recommendations for your consideration.

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Open Space Advisory Committee shall be to serve in an advisory capacity to the City Council with respect to open space. Specifically, in furtherance of said purpose, it shall be the responsibility of the Committee:

- a. To provide recommendations regarding properties for acquisition, with such recommendations including priorities, schedule, and sequence
- To continue to include citizen involvement in all phases (acquisition and development) of the open space program
- c. To assist in the monitoring of funding sources, including Capital Funds, as well as grants
- d. To assist in the recommendation of joint partnerships, joint development, and joint management options
- e. To monitor and recommend revision, as needed, of the Virginia Beach Outdoors Plan
- f. To assist in the monitoring, overseeing, and guidance of the acquisition process, including the exercise of due diligence, analysis, and development alternatives
- g. To assist in the monitoring and review of the development process and schedule for improvements to sites
- h. To assist in the development and monitoring of the overall process for evaluation and recommendation of sites for acquisition.

Accomplishment of Goals and Objectives

Over the past fiscal year, OSAC, through its appointed volunteers and its liaisons, worked on the following key matters in furtherance of its mission:

- 1. Hosted briefing by staff on the Parks and Recreation Draft ITA Master Plan Update (7-22-24).
 - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
 - b. Complete
- 2. Hosted briefings by staff on the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind Corridor Trail Concept Plan, the Parks and Recreation Draft ITA Master Plan Update, and the draft Virginia Land Conservation Fund Grant application proposal (8-26-24).
 - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
 - b. Complete
- 3. Established an OSAC Workgroup to draft recommendations on funding development of Underdeveloped and Undeveloped Park Properties as input for the draft FY 2025-2026 City Budget (8-26-24).
 - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
 - b. Complete

- 4. Reviewed and adopted OSAC letters regarding draft Virginia Land Conservation Fund Grant application proposal and recommendation to City Council regarding adoption of a funding allocation strategy to balance acquisition needs and open space development priorities (10-28-24).
 - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
 - b. Complete
- 5. Hosted briefings by staff on Seatack Park Improvements (10-28-24).
 - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
 - b. Complete
- 6. Reviewed and adopted OSAC letters regarding Parks and Recreation Draft ITA Master Plan Update and draft FY 2025-2026 City Budget (10-28-24).
 - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
 - b. Complete
- 7. Hosted briefing by staff on draft OSAC Guidebook and draft FY 2025-2026 City Budget Schedule (12-3-24).
 - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
 - b. Complete
- 8. Hosted briefing by staff on draft Comprehensive Plan content, update process and schedule (2-24-25).
 - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
 - b. Complete
- 9. Hosted briefing by staff on draft FY 2025-2026 City Budget, received update from City Council liaison on potential property acquisitions along Crab Creek adjoining Pleasure House Point Natural Area, received update from staff on Fountain Trust Property acquisition as Natural Area for preservation (4-28-25).
 - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
 - b. Complete
- 10. Established an OSAC Workgroup comprised of Committee members to bring recommendations to OSAC for consideration on a wide range of matters (including funding, grants, the Interfacility Traffic Area and Transition Area, and other priorities identified by OSAC) that may warrant focused research and analysis prior to discussion by the full OSAC (4-28-25).
 - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
 - b. Complete

- 11. Hosted presentation by staff on the Park Needs Assessment and the draft Virginia Land Conservation Fund Grant application proposal, viewed video developed by Environmental Studies Program students on importance of student representatives on City Council appointed agencies, received update from City Council liaison on potential open space use of Bayside Middle School 6th Grade Campus (6-23-25).
 - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
 - b. Complete

Copies of all materials provided to the Committee are available upon request.

Membership and Attendance

During FY 2024-2025, the OSAC filled multiple member vacancies. One new member was appointed in October of 2024, one in March of 2025, and one in May of 2025. Chair Clay Bernick and Vice Chair Jarrod Katzer were approved by the OSAC members for a new term beginning June 24, 2024. Due to Mr. Katzer's resignation from the Committee on March 21, 2025, OSAC members approved Dianna McDowell to fill out the unexpired term as Vice Chair. The current Council liaisons are Barbara Henley (District 2) and Joashua Schulman (District 9). The Committee currently has a vacancy, and a recommendation has been sent to City Council. Attached is a copy of the membership roster for the Committee, inclusive of all who served during the fiscal year, staff liaisons and City Council liaisons. Also attached are the attendance reports for the two calendar years covering this report.

The Committee meets monthly unless otherwise noted and provides recommendations to City Council based on the evaluation of potential properties for acquisition; monitors funding, including Capital Funds as well as grants, and assists in the monitoring, oversight, and guidance of the acquisition process including the exercise of due diligence, analysis, and exploring development alternatives.

During the FY 2024-2025 annual report period, Committee members donated 439 volunteer hours of service to the City. Attached are the volunteer hours reports for the two calendar years covering this report.

Financial Report

The Open Space Special Revenue Fund provides funding for the preservation of land that has been identified in the City's Outdoors Plan as a candidate for future recreational amenities in the City. This plan calls for the preservation of 5% of the City's land for parks, trails, or natural vistas.

The Open Space Program is funded through the Department of Parks and Recreation's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as adopted by the City Council. The source of revenue for this fund prior to FY 2025-2026 was a 0.44% dedication of the restaurant meal tax and the use of fund balance. The restaurant meals tax dedication for the Open Space Special Revenue Fund for FY 2025-2026 and beyond was reduced from 0.44% to 0.17%. Revenues received from the .17% dedication will only be used for debt service and operations, not acquisition.

Due to the available funding in the Open Space Special Revenue Fund, starting in the FY 2025-2026 funding will be transferred from the fund on an as needed basis and not an annual flat transfer. Essentially, this eliminates any appropriations to the Open Space Acquisition CIP Project for the next six years starting in FY 2025-2026.

Please refer to pages 207 and 216 in the City's adopted FY 2025-2026 CIP for funding details related to the Open Space Program at https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/virginia-beach-departments-docs/budget/Budget/Adopted/FY26/FY26-CIP-Adopted.pdf.

Goals and Objectives for the Coming Year

- Evaluate all properties brought to the Committee for recommendation to acquire as open space, recreation and/or resilience opportunity in a timely manner.
- Coordinate with other City Committees and Departments to identify/address open space, recreation and/or resilience shortfalls and opportunities.
- Recommend property acquisition of properties that have the highest open space, recreation and/or resilience value, with an emphasis upon demonstrated need criteria and alignment with adopted City plans, policies and projects.
- Partner with other property acquisition programs to maximize open space, recreation and/or resilience acquisition in Virginia Beach and best leverage dedicated City funding with potential federal and state funding, grants, donations, partnerships, etc.
- Evaluate existing City properties where appropriate as potential formal designation as open space, recreation and/or resilience opportunities.
- Update as necessary the Committee Member Guidebook (adopted in July 2025) to enhance member familiarity, new member orientation, retention of institutional

- knowledge, define process of how the Committee received property inquiries for evaluation, and routine review of committee methodology.
- Update as necessary documentation of the land acquisition approval process steps from initial property inquiry to Committee submitting recommendation for City Council action to final action and disposition by City Council.

Recommendations to City Council

- Communicate the successes of the Open Space program to the public and continue to support open space acquisition to ensure adequate parks, facilities, and natural areas for Virginia Beach residents and visitors.
- Always consider redevelopment opportunities before allowing open space properties to be developed.
- Minimize any net loss of tree canopy, pervious surfaces and wetlands, and make efforts to increase the quantity of these resources to help implement the adopted Sea Level Wise Plan.
- Ensure that City Council actions related to land use and open space align with adopted City plans and policies.
- Pursue open space actions and options that help provide multiple benefits and optimize leveraging of available City funding.
- Consider that the Committee size be adjusted or realigned when filling vacancies to help ensure that each voting district and geographic area of the City are represented on the Committee.
- Explore opportunities to better protect City properties that are not currently identified as open space areas that may warrant designation and protection as open space.
- Pursue allocation of a portion of open space funding towards site improvements priorities for both undeveloped and underdeveloped sites purchased through the Open Space Acquisition Program.

Additional Information

Attachments:
Membership Roster
2024 Attendance Report
2025 Attendance Report
2024 Volunteer Hours Report
2025 Volunteer Hours Report

Closing

Should you have any questions or desire a formal City Council briefing on the work of the Committee, please feel free to reach out to:

Clay Bernick, Open Space Advisory Committee Chair cbernickiii@gmail.com (757) 377-3120

Corinna Green, Open Space Advisory Committee Staff Liaison Planner III, Planning, Design & Development Division cgreen@vbgov.com (757) 385-1215

Trina Harrell, Open Space Advisory Committee Staff Liaison Administrative Specialist II, Planning, Design & Development Division tmharrel@vbgov.com (757) 385-1115

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE - FY25 ROSTER

Meetings: 4th Monday every month at 3:00pm

Location: Parks and Recreation Administration Building

2154 Landstown Road, Forum Room 101

Composition: 13 members, including a member of the P&R Commission and two High School Students (1 Junior

& 1 Senior), who are nonvoting members and do not count towards the quorum

Term: 3 years with no member serving more than 3 consecutive 3-year terms

Name	Role	Beginning Date	Expiration Date								
Bernick, Clay	Chair	11/19/2019	10/31/2025								
Bowhers, Vincent	Member	12/10/2019	10/31/2025								
Bowie, Richard "Tuck"	Member	10/4/2022	12/31/2026								
Drumm, Francis J.	Member	10/4/2022	10/31/2025								
Fleming, William W.	Member	10/4/2022	10/31/2025								
Green, Tangela C.	Member	3/18/2025	8/31/2026								
Hill, Maury	Member	6/7/2016	5/31/2025								
Hines, Phillip J. (PRC)	Member	10/17/2023	9/30/2024								
Katzer, Jarrod L.	Member	10/4/2022	3/21/2025								
Malaby, Heather	Member	5/6/2025	10/31/2028								
McDowell, Dianna	Vice Chair	8/15/2023	8/31/2026								
Olivieri, John	Member	9/1/2020	1/16/2025								
Perry, Jenny	Member	9/3/2024	5/31/2028								
Rockefeller, Steve (PRC)	Member	10/15/2024	2/28/2026								
Stuart, Cooper C.	Student	7/2/2024	6/30/2026								
Wehr, Gavin M.	Student	10/17/2023	6/30/2025								
Wing, Jeremy	Member	6/3/2025	5/31/2028								
Green, Corinna	City Staff Liaisor	n cgreen@vbgov.com 757-	385-1215								
Harrell, Trina	City Staff Liaison	tmharrel@vbgov.com 757	7-385-1115								
Henley, Barbara	Council Liaison Bhenley@vbgov.com										
Schulman, Joash F.	Council Liaison jschulman@vbgov.com										
Taylor, Chris Council Liaison ChTaylor@vbgov.com											

City of Virginia Beach Open Space Advisory Committee 2024 Attendance Record

Members Attendance

Name	Term Expires on:	Jan 22 nd	Feb 26 th	Mar 25 th	Apr 22 nd	May 20 th	Jun 24 th	Jul 22 nd	Aug 26 th	No mtg	Oct 28 th	No mtg	Dec 2 nd	Total Present
Bernick, Clay Chair	10/31/2025	P	P	Р	P	P	P	P	Р	N/A	P	N/A	P	10/10
Bowhers, Vincent	10/31/2025	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	N/A	Р	N/A	Р	10/10
Bowie, Richard "Tuck"	12/31/2026	Α	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	N/A	Р	N/A	A	8/10
Drumm, Francis	10/31/2025	Р	Р	A	Р	E	A	Р	Р	N/A	Р	N/A	Р	7/10
Fleming, William W.	10/31/2025	Р	Р	Р	Р	E	Р	Р	Р	N/A	Р	N/A	Р	9/10
Hill, Maury	5/31/2025	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	N/A	Α	N/A	Р	9/10
Hines, Phillip J. (PRC)	2/28/2026	Р	Р	Α	Р	Р	Р	Р	Α	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6/10
Katzer, Jarrod Vice Chair	10/31/2025	Р	Р	E	Р	Р	E	Р	Р	N/A	A	N/A	Р	7/10
McDowell, Dianna	8/31/2026	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	Α	Α	Р	N/A	Р	N/A	Р	8/10
Olivieri, John	8/31/2026	Р	Р	Р	Р	Α	Α	Α	Α	N/A	Р	N/A	Р	6/10
Perry, Jenny C.	5/31/2028	N/A	N/A	Р	N/A	Р	2/2							
Rockefeller, Steve (PRC)	2/28/2026	N/A	N/A	E	N/A	Р	1/2							
Simmons, Paige	5/31/2025	Р	Р	Р	Α	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3/4
Kocan, Cecilia Student	6/30/2024	Р	Р	E	Р	Р	Α	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4/6
Stuart, Cooper Student	6/30/2025	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Р	Р	N/A	Р	N/A	E	3/4
Wehr, Gavin Student	6/30/2025	Р	Р	Α	Р	Р	Α	Р	Р	N/A	E	N/A	Р	7/10
Total Present		10/11	11/11	8/11	10/11	7/11	6/10	8/10	8/10	N/A	8/11	N/A	10/11	

City Council Liaisons/Department Staff Liaisons

Council Member Liaison	N/A	Р	Р		Р	Р	Р	Р		N/A	Р	N/A		7
Barbara Henley														
Council Member Liaison	N/A									N/A		N/A		0
Chris Taylor														
Staff Liaison Corinna	N/A	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	Р	N/A	Р	N/A	Р	10
Green														
Staff Liaison Trina Harrell	N/A	Р	Р	Р	Р		Р	Р	Р	N/A	Р	N/A	Р	9
	,									,		,		

Key: Present (P) Present/Virtually (P/V) Absent (A) Resigned (R) Excused Absence (E) Cancelled (C)

City Council and Staff Liaisons should be marked either P or P/V, if not in attendance, the block should be blank

If Commissioners participate P/V, it must be annotated in the Minutes where they remotely participated from and the reason – does not apply to City Council or Staff Liaisons.

Meetings lacking a quorum of Members attending <u>in-person</u> should be designated with an asterisk (*)

City of Virginia Beach Open Space Advisory Committee 2025 Attendance Record

Members Attendance

Name	Term Expires on:	Jan 27 th	Feb 24 th	Mar 24 th	Apr 28 th	May 26 th	Jun 23 rd	Jul 28 th	Aug 25 th	Sep 22 nd	Oct 27 th	Nov 24 th	Dec 1st	Total Present
	-					_		20	25	22	21		<u> </u>	
Bernick, Clay Chair	10/31/2025	Р	Р	С	P	С	Р					С		4/9
Bowhers, Vincent	10/31/2025	Р	Р	С	Р	С	Р					С		4/9
Bowie, Richard "Tuck"	12/31/2026	Р	Р	С	Р	С	Р					С		4/9
Drumm, Francis	10/31/2025	Р	Р	С	Р	С	Р					С		4/9
Fleming, William W.	10/31/2025	Р	Р	С	Р	С	Α					С		3/9
Green, Tangela C.	8/31/2026	N/A	N/A	С	Р	С	E					С		1/7
Hill, Maury	5/31/2025	Р	Α	С	Р	С	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	С	N/A	2/3
Katzer, Jarrod Vice Chair	10/31/2025	Р	Р	С	N/A	С	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	С	N/A	2/2
Malaby, Heather	10/31/2028	N/A	N/A	С	N/A	С	E					С		0/6
McDowell, Dianna	8/31/2026	Р	Р	С	Р	С	Α					С		3/9
Olivieri, John	8/31/2026	N/A	N/A	С	N/A	С	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	С	N/A	0/0
Perry, Jenny C.	5/31/2028	Р	Α	С	Α	С	Р					С		2/9
Rockefeller, Steve (P&R)	2/28/2026	Α	Р	С	Р	С	Р					С		3/9
Wing, Jeremy	5/31/2028	N/A	N/A	С	N/A	С	Р					С		1/6
Stuart, Cooper Student	6/30/2025	Р	Р	С	Р	С	E					С		3/9
Wehr, Gavin Student	6/30/2025	Р	Р	С	Р	С	E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	С	N/A	3/4
Quorum		9/10	8/10	С	9/10	С	7/11							

City Council Liaisons/Department Staff Liaisons

Council Member Liaison Barbara			С	Р	С					1
Henley										
Council Member Liaison Joashua			С	Р	С	Р				2
Schulman										
Staff Liaison Corinna Green	Р	Р	С	Р	С	Р				4
Staff Liaison Trina Harrell	Р	Р	С	Р	С	Р				4

Key: Present (P) Present/Virtually (P/V) Absent (A) Resigned (R) Excused Absence (E) Canceled (C)

City Council and staff liaisons should be marked either P or P/V, if not in attendance, the block should be blank

If commissioners participate P/V, it must be annotated in the minutes where they remotely participated from and the reason – does not apply to City Council or staff liaisons.

Meetings lacking a quorum of members attending in person should be designated with an asterisk (*)

Note: John Olivieri's term ended on 1/16/2025.

City of Virginia Beach Open Space Advisory Committee 2024 Volunteer Hour Record

Name	Term	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Name	Expires on:	Jaii	reb	IVIAI	Арі	iviay	Juli	Jui	Aug	Зер	Oct	NOV	Dec	Hours
Bernick, Clay Chair	10/31/2025	13	20	15	24	20	17	15	30	25	22	21	3	225
Bowhers, Vincent	10/31/2025	19	11	11	12	8	7	7	6		8	6	2	97
Bowie, Richard "Tuck"	12/31/2026		2	3	3	2	2	2	3		2			19
Drumm, Francis	10/31/2025	3	7		3			2	3		2		2	22
Fleming, William W.	10/31/2025	3	7	3	3		2	2	3		2		2	27
Hill, Maury	5/31/2025	3	2	3	6	2	2	6	3		3	2	2	34
Hines, Phillip J. (PRC)	2/28/2026	3	2		3	2	2	2	14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	28
Katzer, Jarrod Vice Chair	10/31/2025	3	2		3	2		2	3				2	17
McDowell, Dianna	8/31/2026	3	2	3	3	2			3		2		2	20
Olivieri, John	8/31/2026	3	2	3	3						2		2	15
Perry, Jenny C.	5/31/2028	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		2		2	4
Rockefeller, Steve (PRC)	2/28/2026	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			2	2
Simmons, Paige	5/31/2025	3	2	5		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10
Kocan, Cecilia A. Student	6/30/2024	3	2		3	2		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10
Stuart, Cooper Student	6/30/2025							2	3		2			7
Wehr, Gavin Student	6/30/2025	3	2		3	2		2	3				2	17
Total Hours		62	63	46	69	42	32	42	74	25	47	29	23	554

City of Virginia Beach Open Space Advisory Committee 2025 Volunteer Hour Record

Name	Term	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Name	Expires on:	Jan	Tes	IVIGI	Api	IVIAY	Juli	Jui	Aug	Зер	Oct	1404	Dec	Hours
Bernick, Clay Chair	10/31/2025	26	9	4	18		25							82
Bowhers, Vincent	10/31/2025	8	5		6		15							34
Bowie, Richard "Tuck"	12/31/2026	2	2		2		2							8
Drumm, Francis	10/31/2025	2	2		2		2							8
Fleming, William W.	10/31/2025	2	2		2									6
Green, Tangela C.	8/31/2026	N/A	N/A	N/A	2									2
Hill, Maury	5/31/2025	2	2		2		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6
Katzer, Jarrod Vice Chair	10/31/2025	10	4	4	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	23
Malaby, Heather	10/31/2028	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A								0
McDowell, Dianna	8/31/2026	2	2		2									6
Perry, Jenny C.	5/31/2028	2					2							4
Rockefeller, Steve PRC	2/28/2026		2		2		2							6
Stuart, Cooper Student	6/30/2025	2	2		2									6
Wehr, Gavin Student	6/30/2025	2	2		2									6
Wing, Jeremy	5/31/2028	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2							2
Total Hours		60	34	8	47	0	50							199