



## **City of Virginia Beach Open Space Advisory Committee 2023-2024 Annual Report to City Council**

**Chair:** Clay Bernick

**Date:** August 27, 2024

### **Executive Summary**

The Open Space Advisory Committee volunteers, City Council and staff liaisons worked cohesively to produce the FY 2023-24 Annual Report to City Council covering July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024.

The Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) currently has 13 members, including two who also serve on the Clean Community Commission, one who also serves on the Parks and Recreation Commission, one who also serves on the Wetlands Board, and two who are student members. In the past fiscal year, the OSAC met ten times. Others that also attend or 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 four ongoing informal workgroups comprised of Committee members to bring recommendations to the full Committee for consideration: Funding, Grants, Handbook, and Interfacility Traffic Area and Transition Area.

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
- b. 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. Participated in Parks & Environmental Joint Meeting held at Great Neck Pavilion with presentations by Clean Community Commission, Green Ribbon Committee, Open Space Advisory Committee, Parks and Recreation Commission, Active Transportation Advisory Committee, Resort Advisory Commission GREEN Committee, Lynnhaven River Now, Parks and Recreation Foundation, Virginia Beach Public Schools Environmental Studies Academy, and staff of Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works Department/Waste Management Division, and the Planning Department (7-26-23)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
  - b. Complete; staff advised property owners
- 2. Considered three acquisition requests for properties; advised City not pursue acquisition (10-23-23)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
  - b. Complete; staff advised property owners
- 3. Hosted briefing by staff on Coastal VA Offshore Wind Project Tree Mitigation Project (10-23-23)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
  - b. Complete
- 4. Hosted briefings by staff on presentation on City maintenance requirements for currently undeveloped and potential open space properties, review of proposed FY 2024-25 open space budget, and Urban Forest Management Plan (12-4-23)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
  - b. Complete
- 5. Considered one dedication requests for property; recommended City pursue acquisition (12-4-23)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
  - b. Complete; City Council determined to not accept donation

6. Hosted briefings by staff on presentation on Phase 1 of the Virginia Beach Trail, Historic Kempsville Kayak Launch, and updates on the Coastal VA Offshore Wind Project Tree Mitigation Project and Urban Forest Management Plan (1-22-24)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
  - b. Complete
7. Hosted briefings by staff on presentation on the Comprehensive Plan Update process, a tutorial on how to use the City's GIS website, and an update on Pleasure House Point Master Plan implementation (2-26-24)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
  - b. Complete
8. Held discussions on pending state legislation relative to open space issues, tree mitigation on City property and rights-of-way and non-judicial sale of properties with back taxes process by the City (2-26-24)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
  - b. Complete; clarification on City tree mitigation policy and improved coordination on non-judicial sale of properties with back taxes process
9. Conducted site visit with staff and public to potential open space acquisition site (3-25-24)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
  - b. Ongoing; property in evaluation process and coordination with other City departments
10. Hosted briefings by staff on the budget process and open space funding, priorities for development of undeveloped acquired open space properties, a briefing by an Environmental Studies Program student on tree conservation strategies (4-22-24)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
  - b. Complete
11. Hosted briefings by staff on priorities for development of underdeveloped acquired open space properties, the approved open space budget, the Department of Defense Sentinel Landscape Program, update on development of the Committee Member Guidebook, the formation and workplan for the Interfacility Traffic Area Transition Area workgroup and a tutorial update on how to use the City's GIS website (5-20-24)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
  - b. Complete
12. Hosted briefings by staff on potential transfer of Development Authority property on Crusader Circle as open space, the potential submission of a proposal to the Virginia Land Conservation Grant program, an update the Department of Defense Sentinel Landscape Program and annual election of Committee chair and vice chair (6-24-24)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC
  - b. Complete
13. Conducted closed sessions to discuss potential open space property acquisitions from willing property owners (8-28-23, 9-25-23, 10-23-23, 12-4-23 and 4-22-24)
  - a. Commensurate with the core mission of OSAC

- b. Ongoing; some properties in evaluation process and coordination with other City departments; others complete and staff advised property advised City not pursue acquisition

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

## **Membership and Attendance**

During FY 2023-24, the OSAC filled multiple member vacancies. Four members were appointed in October of 2023 and one in January of 2024. Chair Clay Bernick and Vice Chair Jarrod Katzer were approved by the OSAC members for a new term beginning June 24, 2024. The current Council liaisons are Barbara Henley (District 2) and Chris Taylor (District 8). The Committee currently has one open seat and has made a recommendation for filling to the 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 2023-24 annual report period, Committee members donated 486 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 sources of revenue for this fund are a 0.44% dedication of the Restaurant Meal tax and the use of fund balance. The Open Space Program is funded through the Department of Parks and Recreation's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as adopted by the City Council. In FY 2023-24, funding was continued to the Open Space Acquisition Program for acquisition of and associated costs for preservation or future improvement for recreational purposes. The FY 2024-25 Capital Improvement Plan, passed by City Council in May 2024, ensures future continued support of \$2.5M for the Open Space Acquisition Program. Please refer to pages 224, 236 and 244 in the City's adopted FY 2023-24 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/FY24-to-FY29-Adopted-CIP.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.
- Complete development of Committee Member Guidebook to enhance member familiarity, new member orientation, retention of institutional knowledge, and routine review of committee methodology.
- Complete development of document as to how Committee receives property inquiries for evaluation.
- Complete development of document 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.
- Development of Questionnaire references for evaluation prompts.

## **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.
- Pursue allocation of a portion of open space funding towards development priorities for both undeveloped and undeveloped sites purchased through the Open Space Acquisition Program.

## **Additional Information**

Attachments:

Membership Roster

2023 Attendance Report

2024 Attendance Report

2023 Volunteer Hours Report

2024 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 – FY24 ROSTER

**Meetings:** 4<sup>th</sup> Monday every month at 3:00pm  
**Location:** Parks and Recreation Administration Building  
 2154 Landstown Road, Forum Room 101

**Composition:** 13 members with one being 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

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Beginning Date</b>	<b>Expiration Date</b>
<b>Bernick, Clay</b>	<i>Chair</i>	11/19/2019	10/31/2025
<b>Alley, Marguerite</b>	Member	10/17/2023	10/17/2023
<b>Baggett, Kevin</b>	Member	3/21/2023	9/7/2023
<b>Bowhers, Vincent</b>	<i>Member</i>	12/10/2019	10/31/2025
<b>Bowie, Richard “Tuck”</b>	<i>Member</i>	10/4/2022	12/31/2026
<b>Drumm, Francis J.</b>	<i>Member</i>	10/4/2022	10/31/2025
<b>Fleming, William W.</b>	<i>Member</i>	10/4/2022	10/31/2025
<b>Hill, Maury</b>	<i>Member</i>	6/7/2016	5/31/2025
<b>Hines, Phillip J. (PRC)</b>	<i>Member</i>	10/17/2023	2/28/2026
<b>Katzer, Jarrod L.</b>	<i>Member</i>	10/4/2022	10/31/2025
<b>Kocan, Cecilia A.</b>	<i>Student</i>	10/17/2023	6/30/2024
<b>McDowell, Dianna</b>	<i>Member</i>	8/15/2023	8/31/2026
<b>Olivieri, John</b>	<i>Member</i>	9/1/2020	8/31/2026
<b>Simmons, Paige (Kathleen)</b>	<i>Member</i>	1/16/2024	5/14/2024
<b>Wehr, Gavin M.</b>	<i>Student</i>	10/17/2023	6/30/2025
<b>Green, Corinna</b>	City Staff Liaison <a href="mailto:cgreen@vbgov.com">cgreen@vbgov.com</a> 757-385-1215		
<b>Harrell, Trina</b>	City Staff Liaison <a href="mailto:tmharrel@vbgov.com">tmharrel@vbgov.com</a> 757-385-1115		
<b>Henley, Barbara</b>	Council Liaison <a href="mailto:Bhenley@vbgov.com">Bhenley@vbgov.com</a>		
<b>Taylor, Chris</b>	Council Liaison <a href="mailto:ChTaylor@vbgov.com">ChTaylor@vbgov.com</a>		

Updated 8/22/2024

**City of Virginia Beach  
Open Space Advisory Committee  
2023 Attendance Record**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Term Expires on:</i>	<i>Jan 23<sup>rd</sup></i>	<i>Feb 27<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Mar 27<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Apr 24<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>May 22<sup>nd</sup></i>	<i>Jun 26<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Jul 24<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Aug 28<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Sep 25<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Oct 23<sup>rd</sup></i>	<i>Nov mtg</i>	<i>Dec 4<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Total Present</i>
Alley, Marguerite	5/31/2025	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	A	N/A	N/A	0/1
Anoia, Nick	5/31/2023	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5/5
Baggett, Kevin V.	5/31/2025	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	A	A	C	A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1/4
Bernick, Clay Chair	10/31/2025	P	P	P	A	P	P	C	P	P	P	N/A	P	9/10
Bowhersh, Vincent	10/31/2025	P	P	P	P	P	P	C	P	P	P	N/A	P	10/10
Bowie, Richard “Tuck”	12/31/2026	A	P	P	P	P	P	C	P	P	P	N/A	P	9/10
Drumm, Francis	10/31/2025	P	P	P	P	P	A	C	P	P	P	N/A	P	9/10
Ewell, Jill P&R Commission Liaison	2/28/2026	P	P	P	A	A	A	C	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3/6
Fleming, William W.	10/31/2025	P	P	P	P	P	A	C	P	P	P	N/A	P	9/10
Hill, Maury	5/31/2025	P	P	P	P	P	P	C	P	A	P	N/A	P	9/10
Hines, Phillip J. P&R Commission Liaison	2/28/2026	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	N/A	A	1/2
Katzer, Jarrod Vice Chair	10/31/2025	P	E	P	P	P	P	C	P	P	P	N/A	P	9/10
McDowell, Dianna	8/31/2026	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P	P	N/A	P	4/4
Olivieri, John	8/31/2026	P	P	P	P	A	P	C	E	P	P	N/A	P	8/10
Kocan, Cecilia A. Student Member	6/30/2024	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	N/A	P	2/2
Wehr, Gavin Student Member	6/30/2024	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	N/A	P	2/2



<b>Total Present</b>		9/10	9/10	10/10	9/11	8/11	6/10	C	8/10	8/9	10/11	N/A	9/10	
Council Member Liaison Barbara Henley	N /A	P	P	P	P			C	P	P	P	N/A	P	8
Council Member Liaison Chris Taylor	N/A		P	P				C		P	P	N/A		4
Staff Liaison Corinna Green	N/A	P	P	P	P	P	P	C	P	P	P	N/A	P	10
Staff Liaison Trina Harrell	N/A	P	P	P	P	P	P	C	P	P	P	N/A	P	10

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 *in-person* should be designated with an asterisk (\*)

**City of Virginia Beach  
Open Space Advisory Committee  
2024 Attendance Record**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Term Expires on:</i>	<i>Jan 22<sup>nd</sup></i>	<i>Feb 26<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Mar 25<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Apr 22<sup>nd</sup></i>	<i>May 20<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Jun 24<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Jul 22<sup>nd</sup></i>	<i>Aug 26<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Sep 23<sup>rd</sup></i>	<i>Oct 28<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Nov mtg</i>	<i>Dec 9<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Total Present</i>
Bernick, Clay Chair	10/31/2025	P	P	P	P	P	P					N/A		6/11
Bowhers, Vincent	10/31/2025	P	P	P	P	P	P					N/A		6/11
Bowie, Richard “Tuck”	12/31/2026	A	P	P	P	P	P					N/A		5/11
Drumm, Francis	10/31/2025	P	P	A	P	E	A					N/A		3/11
Fleming, William W.	10/31/2025	P	P	P	P	E	P					N/A		5/11
Hill, Maury	5/31/2025	P	P	P	P	P	P					N/A		6/11
Hines, Phillip J. P&R Commission Liaison	2/28/2026	P	P	A	P	P	P					N/A		5/11
Katzer, Jarrod Vice Chair	10/31/2025	P	P	E	P	P	E					N/A		4/11
McDowell, Dianna	8/31/2026	P	P	P	P	P	A					N/A		5/11
Olivieri, John	8/31/2026	P	P	P	P	A	A					N/A		4/11
Simmons, Paige (Kathleen)	5/31/2025	P	P	P	A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3/11
Kocan, Cecilia A. Student Member	6/30/2024	P	P	E	P	P	A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4/6
Wehr, Gavin Student Member	6/30/2025	P	P	A	P	P	A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4/6
<b>Total Present</b>		10/11	11/11	8/11	10/11	7/11	6/10							
Council Member Liaison Barbara Henley	N /A	P	P		P	P	P					N/A		5
Council Member Liaison Chris Taylor	N/A											N/A		0

Staff Liaison Corinna Green	N/A	P	P	P	P	P	P					N/A		6
Staff Liaison Trina Harrell	N/A	P	P	P	P		P					N/A		5

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 *in-person* should be designated with an asterisk (★)

**City of Virginia Beach  
Open Space Advisory Committee  
2023 Volunteer Hour Record**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Term Expires on:</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Total Hours</i>
Baggett, Kevin V.	5/31/2025	N/A	N/A	N/A				3		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3
Bernick, Clay Chair	10/31/2025							7	12	10	12	16	6	63
Bowhens, Vincent	10/31/2025							3	2	2	2		3	12
Bowie, Richard “Tuck”	12/31/2026								2	2	2		3	9
Drumm, Francis	10/31/2025							3	2	2	2	5	3	17
Fleming, William W.	10/31/2025							3	2	2	2		3	12
Hill, Maury	5/31/2025							3	2		2		3	10
Hines, Phillip J. P&R Commission Liaison	2/28/2026	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2			2
Katzer, Jarrod Vice Chair	10/31/2025							3	5	2	2		3	15
McDowell, Dianna	8/31/2026	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	2		3	9
Olivieri, John	8/31/2026							3		2	2		3	10
Kocan, Cecilia A. Student Member	6/30/2024	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2		3	5
Wehr, Gavin Student Member	6/30/2025	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2		3	5
<b>Total Hours</b>								28	29	24	34	21	36	172

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

<i>Name</i>	<i>Term Expires on:</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Total Hours</i>
Bernick, Clay Chair	10/31/2025	13	20	15	24	20	17							109
Bowhers, Vincent	10/31/2025	19	11	11	12	8	7							68
Bowie, Richard “Tuck”	12/31/2026		2	3	3	2	2							12
Drumm, Francis	10/31/2025	3	7		3									13
Fleming, William W.	10/31/2025	3	7	3	3		2							18
Hill, Maury	5/31/2025	3	2	3	6	2	2							18
Hines, Phillip J. P&R Commission Liaison	2/28/2026	3	2		3	2	2							12
Katzer, Jarrod Vice Chair	10/31/2025	3	2		3	2								10
McDowell, Dianna	8/31/2026	3	2	3	3	2								13
Olivieri, John	8/31/2026	3	2	3	3									11
Simmons, Paige (Kathleen)	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 Member	6/30/2024	3	2		3	2		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10
Wehr, Gavin Student Member	6/30/2025	3	2		3	2								10
<b>Total Hours</b>		62	63	46	69	42	32							314