

POTOMAC WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE
Quarterly Meeting – July 9, 2021
Held Virtually Via WebEx Conference Platform
MINUTES

Meeting Recording

Voting Members/Alternates

Hon. Penny Gross, Potomac Watershed Roundtable Chair, Fairfax County
Hon. Woody Hynson, Potomac Watershed Roundtable Vice Chair, Westmoreland County
John Peterson, Northern Virginia SWCD
Laura Grape, Northern Virginia SWCD
Hon. Will Lintner, Director, Prince William Soil and Water District
Karen Pallansch, Alexandria Renew
Hon. Robert Pickett, Northern Neck SWCD

Advisory Members/Alternates (Non-Voting)

Kirsten Conrad, Virginia Cooperative Extension
Debbie Cross, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Curtis Dalpra, ICPRB
Jim McGlone, Virginia Department of Forestry
Daniel Moore, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Rebecca Shoemaker, Virginia DEQ

Presenters

Hon. Joshua Saks, Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources, Commonwealth of Virginia
Aaron Wendt, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service

Interested Parties

John Bateman, Northern Neck Planning District
Scott Cameron, Northern Virginia SWCD
Craig Carinci, Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division
Kirsten Conrad, Virginia Cooperative Extension in Arlington/Alexandria
Dave Evans, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Randy Freed, Environmental Scientist, Retired
Norm Goulet, Northern Virginia Regional Commission
Maria Harwood, Northern Virginia SWCD
Don Lacquement, Northern Virginia SWCD
Harold Post, Virginia Tech—Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory
Ben Rhoades, Reston Association
Marina Schumacher, Loudoun SWCD
Heather Shackley, Northern Virginia SWCD
Jerry Stonefield, Fairfax County Land Development Services
Jennifer Starr, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Anne “Sunny” Matheson, Home Waters Foundation
Veronica Tangiri, Prince William SWCD
Estefany Umana, Prince William SWCD
Elizabeth Ward, Green Risks

Call to Order

Ms. Gross called the meeting to order at 10:01 am and welcomed all to the meeting. She asked meeting participants to please remain muted throughout the presentations, to turn off individual videos, and to use the WebEx “raise your hand” feature to ask a question. She noted that there would be time at the end of the meeting for announcements.

The agenda had been sent out to participants before the meeting.

Minutes—February 5, 2021

The minutes of the February 5, 2021 meeting of the Potomac Watershed Roundtable had been distributed in advance of the meeting. Following a **motion** (Peterson-Gross) the minutes were approved by voice vote.

Updates from the Roundtable Chair and Virtual Tour of Leesylvania Living Shoreline Project

Ms. Gross introduced the Leesylvania Living Shoreline project, a joint effort of Prince William County and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC). The roundtable members viewed a video tour which provided a glimpse of the shoreline before the project began as well as how it looks now. Ms. Gross noted that this project has been underway for quite some time and has been very successful.

Following the video, roundtable members were encouraged to ask questions and share additional information. Ms. Grape shared some additional photographs of the project and information on why this site was selected. It was noted that the project was designed by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) and funded in part through a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust Living Shorelines grant program. The permit for the project was approved in 2012 and construction got underway in 2014. It has been recognized by the Governor of Virginia as a “treasured place.”

Mr. Goulet shared a link to video that he shot three years ago for Phase I of the project:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGw-arWF2WI&t=35s>.

Potomac Council Update. Ms. Gross invited Mr. Peterson to provide an overview of the discussion that was held at this morning’s Potomac Council meeting. Mr. Peterson reported that four of the Potomac Council’s six members were present. He expressed his appreciation to Ms. Shoemaker and Ms. Grape for their work in ensuring that the Potomac Council/Potomac Watershed Roundtable received its grant from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for this calendar year. Mr. Peterson noted that there was some discussion about succession planning for officers and membership on the council and roundtable. It was suggested that Ms. Gross, Mr. Hynson, Mr. Pickett, and Ms. Grape have a planning discussion on future leadership and membership. Finally, Mr. Peterson expressed his appreciation to Ms. Shoemaker and Ms. Cross for participating in the Potomac Council meeting this morning.

Updates from Around the Region

Ms. Gross asked those present to share about what they have been doing in their districts, agencies, and jurisdictions during the last several months. The following information was shared:

Virginia Department of Forestry

Dr. McGlone reported that the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOP) is focusing on Virginia’s Chesapeake Bay Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP III) goals. The Virginia DEQ has committed Virginia to planting a lot of trees and VDOP is responsible for counting them. Part of that commitment includes hiring for a new position within the department. The position is Watershed Management Program Manager, headquartered in the Charlottesville office and covering the entire state. This person will be working on coastal resiliency, urban heat islands, social justice, and promoting tree planting efforts.

Dr. McGlone noted that, in Fairfax County, he has been working with partners on a “Plant Nova Trees” campaign to try to meet some of the DEQ promises for some of the several thousand trees that have been allocated to the northern Virginia area.

Ms. Gross noted that the Fairfax County Tree Commission just sent a letter to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors about the 22,000 trees that were planted in the county during fiscal year 2021, many of them through the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District and the Virginia Department of Forestry. She noted that she wrote this week’s column in the *Falls Church News Press* about trees and the “flagging” of the trees caused by the 17-year cicadas.

Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin

Mr. Dalpra provided some updates to the roundtable about the work of the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB). He noted that, for over a year, the ICPRB was involved with Arlington County and the state,

working on salt management strategy. The product is a non-regulatory guide with a toolbox to help private contractors and local governments find ways to put down less salt. He noted that salinization of fresh water is a thorny problem. People rely on being able to travel without restriction during winter weather. Mr. Dalpra thanked NVRC for now being the home for this toolkit. This is important work not only for Virginia, but for the entire Potomac basin. In fact, Maryland and Pennsylvania are using this toolkit to devise their own strategies.

Although the ICPRB is not directly involved, Mr. Dalpra noted that there are groups of people who are harvesting invasive water chestnuts from stormwater ponds in suburban Virginia. Water chestnut or *Trapa Bispinosa* has in the past been a real problem in the Potomac. This slightly different species of water chestnut is a potential threat to the Potomac. It has been found in a lot of stormwater ponds in northern Virginia and involves a multi-season effort to uproot and eradicate. Mr. Dalpra mentioned that Nancy Rybicki, who retired from the U.S. Geological Survey, is leading this effort, and pushing for local and state governments to formally address the problem. The water chestnuts get carried by Canada geese and other birds, with the seeds attached to the birds' plumage. There is a constant threat of new populations popping up in the area's rivers and ponds.

Ms. Gross commented that there was a tremendous problem with these invasive water chestnuts in the ponds behind the Fairfax County Government Center and asked Mr. Carinci to comment on the efforts to mitigate the water chestnut in the government center ponds.

Ms. Grape added that there are many individuals and groups working on the water chestnut issue. She suggested that perhaps Ms. Rybicki might come to a future meeting of the roundtable to share additional information. She noted that one challenge in dealing with this invasive is expense. It is not an inexpensive process, especially for homeowners' associations and private citizens with ponds on their property. It takes funding and multiple years of effort. It might be helpful to continue the discussion about the invasive water chestnut and share resources for combatting it.

Finally, Dr. McGlone reported that the Fairfax Master Naturalists have taken on removal of the invasive water chestnuts as their service project. Funds have been allocated to purchase tools and efforts are underway to work with homeowners' associations in the area.

Virginia Cooperative Extension, Arlington-Alexandria

Ms. Conrad provided some updates from the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE). She reported on an aggressive education campaign, led by Rod Simmons, currently underway to fight stream restoration efforts in Alexandria. Proposed restorations in Taylor Run, Rocky Run, and Strawberry Run in Alexandria are some of the projects at issue. The main issue seems to be that the removal of trees is felt will be bad for the community. The city council is engaged in this effort.

Ms. Conrad reported that VCE has developed a lot of good resources during the pandemic. She expressed her pleasure that the office has been able to continue its service to the community, both locally and at the state level. She noted that the plant disease and identification labs as well as the soil testing lab have all been working throughout the pandemic. Locally, they have had great success with their online public education programs and have been able to reach many more people than ever before. She believes that online education is here to stay.

The VCE Alexandria office is hiring a new extension agency for its 4-H program. They have been very busy with urban agriculture efforts. During the pandemic, many people have been interested in having a garden. This has been a great opportunity to educate folks about aspects of urban agriculture, including soil health and pesticide and fertilizer use. Finally, they are providing education on invasive pests including Crepe Myrtle Bug Scale and Spotted Lantern Fly. A VCE resources link was placed in the meeting's chat box: <https://resources.ext.vt.edu/>.

Ms. Gross commented that the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) has a Farm Committee which is comprised of regional food and agriculture members. There will be a proposal at the September meeting of MWCOC to make this a full policy committee. She noted that there are many people in the region who are interested

in small-scale farming and some who oppose this. This may be an interesting topic for a future roundtable meeting, especially to take a broader look at farming and agriculture in the urban areas of the region.

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

Mr. Moore reported that DEQ is in the process of drafting ordinance amendments to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act regulations. The two primary areas of interest and emphasis are on the protection of mature trees and climate resiliency/adaptation measures. Most of the work was done by Justin Williams in the DEQ Office of Watershed and Local Government Assistance. On June 29, 2021, the State Water Control Board reviewed the proposed language at a meeting held in Henrico County. The meeting was well attended, including several individuals who were apart of the Stakeholder Advisory Group for the process. The State Water Control Water Control Board approved the amendments. The updated regulations will be published in the Virginia Register, and the amendments become effective 30 days after publication. DEQ will be working with the William and Mary Coastal Policy Center and the VIMS to draft guidance to support the regulations. Mr. Moore will have more details by the time the roundtable meets again in October.

Coastal Resilience Master Planning Framework and Flood Mitigation Fund

Joshua Saks, Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources

Ms. Gross introduced Mr. Saks, provided a brief biography, and thanked him for joining the roundtable this morning.

Mr. Saks began his presentation by providing information on the impact of climate change and sea level rise in the state. He noted that Virginia is struggling significantly with flooding and other issues related to the changes that are occurring and the state is doing its best to address these issues. The state has capped carbon pollution from fossil fuel power plants in Virginia and has joined the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a project of the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, the first mandatory cap and trade program in the United States to limit carbon dioxide from the power sector. At the same time, it is important that the state begin to grapple with the effects that are on the ground right now. To do this, several initiatives have been set in motion:

Coastal Resilience Master Plan

Virginia has committed to creating a Coastal Resilience Master Plan for the coastal zone of the commonwealth. The plan is divided into four geographic regions, with each area within a region having similar challenges. It is hoped that by the end of the year, they will start to have a sense of what actions should be taken to make the commonwealth more resilient to floods. They are working with a consultant, Dewberry, in Virginia Beach. They have created a robust Technical Advisory Committee of citizens, academics, and other subject matter experts who are working to inventory the risks, to catalog existing solutions, and to develop a plan. The hope is that this plan will include projects to reduce flooding that are nature based as much as possible. As the plan takes shape and the consultant gathers data, it is important that localities and groups like the Potomac Watershed Roundtable find ways to engage in the project.

Community Flood Preparedness Fund

The state has not had a significant way to fund the master plan. In other states existing revenue sources are available. However, Virginia has had to create a funding source and has done so in the Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF). The Virginia General Assembly recently passed legislation that divided up the revenue collected from quarterly RGGI auctions to sell carbon credits. 45% of revenue generated by each auction will go to the CFPF. Based on the first two auctions of this year, prices have been stable and are going up. Estimates are that this fund will generate \$100 million annually for flood control projects, studies, and capacity building projects across the commonwealth. Projects and initiatives within the coastal/master plan zone will likely get priority for funding.

Mr. Saks briefly outlined the functions of the CFPF. The first function is capacity building, with the primary goal to have every community have some sort of resilience plan in place. The second will be project grants which will be of special interest to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs). Mr. Saks provided some examples of the highest priority projects, tiered by score. They include wetland and floodplain restoration, living shorelines and vegetative buffers, dam removals, streambank restoration and stabilization, and restoration of floodplains to natural and

beneficial functions. He noted that the grant program has four eligible application types. They are local governments, tribal governments, SWCDs and Planning District Commissions (PDCs).

Finally, Mr. Saks noted that there are two planning exercises happening right now in the commonwealth. There is the macro plan effort as a part of the Coastal Resilience Master Plan, and then there is the local effort which includes aggregating existing plans. There are opportunities for SWCDs and the Potomac Watershed Roundtable to engage in both planning exercises.

Questions and Answers

Mr. Moore asked Mr. Saks to expand on the topic of inventory risk. Mr. Saks reported that this means mapping a wide array of existing data sets according to overlaid risk analysis. The data would include that pertaining to food distribution centers, transportation, package delivery systems, hospitals, electricity providers, and urban neighborhoods. This analysis will help inform the master plan, evaluate projects, and show the public the reason behind the projects. In addition, asset identification will also be conducted through surveys being sent to PDCs and to local governments to identify needs, projects, vulnerabilities, and assets needing protection.

Dr. McGlone commented that he is intrigued by the idea of the funding coming through REGI as he sees a disconnect in that the land on which the projects will need to be installed is private property. He explained that in his area of expertise, tree planting, he understands that one of the best ways to increase tree canopy is to engage private landowners and to get them to plant trees on their property. There is a very limited amount of public land on which beneficial projects could be installed. How is the funding going to be funneled to these landowners to undertake projects for the public good? Mr. Saks noted that the goal will be to work at the community scale and to benefit the most people and the highest use of economic resources. He added that the primary goal is flood protection.

In response to a question from Ms. Grape about whether there were any limitations on the use of the funds on private property, Mr. Saks said that there wouldn't be if the project area has been identified as a priority. He clarified that the funds are available for use on both public and private properties.

Mr. Goulet noted that the public-private question was raised during the development of the grant manual. In answer to Dr. McGlone's original question, Mr. Goulet noted that the eligible applicant groups will be able to develop partnerships with individuals or other entities to install practices on private land. He added that a lot of what is being talked about here is in the very early days of development. There will be a data call coming out to the localities through the PDCs, there will be an in-person charrette, as well as a public comment meeting. Mr. Goulet encouraged all to stay tuned for upcoming announcements.

In response to a question from Mr. Lintner about the third function of the grant funding mentioned, Mr. Saks noted that there will also be funding for studies, including hydrologic studies and collection of rain fall data. In a follow up question, Mr. Lintner asked if the funding will provide for the cost of administering the projects through the SWCDs? Mr. Saks stated that the funding rules do not allow funds to be used for administering grants but there are capacity grants which can work together with the project grants to provide funding for administration.

In response to a question from Ms. Grape about the grant availability period, Mr. Saks noted that the grant window is three years, with the option for an extension. There is also the option to complete projects in phases. For example, applying for a scoping or engineering grant, followed by a project grant. Furthermore, Mr. Saks noted about grant timing that their hope is that the grant will run at least twice a year and the grant rounds will abut one another. The timing is different this year as the program gets started. The current grant round will end on September 3, 2021 and another one will start shortly after that.

In response to a question from Ms. Grape about the ways in which the roundtable can assist with the Coastal Resilience Master Plan Mr. Saks noted that Mr. Goulet had put some information in the chat about upcoming opportunities to engage. He encouraged active engagement in the process, stating that the more active SWCDs and groups like the Potomac Watershed Roundtable can be, the better the product that can be put in place.

The following links were shared in the chat box:

- <https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ei368trn749ceb31&oseq=&c=&ch=>
- <https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ei368u4ma132dea2&oseq=&c=&ch=>
- <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/dam-safety-and-floodplains/document/2021-CFPF-Manual.pdf>

Closing and Thank You

Following some additional discussion among members about the differences in community approaches to stormwater management and flooding—from “gray” to “green” infrastructure or a combination of both—Ms. Gross thanked Mr. Saks for his presentation today. She said that she looks forward to hearing more and to collaboration over the next several months.

Accelerating Living Shoreline Implementation in Rural Coastal Virginia

Aaron Wendt, Environmental Specialist with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation – Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service

Ms. Gross introduced Mr. Wendt, provided a brief biography, and thanked him for joining the roundtable this morning.

Mr. Wendt began his presentation by noting the Leesylvania presentation earlier in the meeting as well as Mr. Saks’ presentation are great lead-ins to his presentation.

Mr. Wendt used a PowerPoint presentation to share information on the Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service (SEAS), living shorelines in Virginia, shoreline management and the Chesapeake Bay WIP, as well as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s (NFWF) Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction 2021 Grant.

Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service

Mr. Wendt provided the information about the Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service. SEAS was established in 1980 and provides science-based technical assistance on environmentally sound shoreline management alternatives to private property owners and public land management agencies experiencing erosion. This includes both tidal shorelines or non-tidal streambanks and impoundments.

SEAS services include on-site field investigations, written advisory reports, review of designs and plans, construction inspections, and guidance on financial incentives. All SEAS services are provided at no cost to the property owner.

Living Shorelines in Virginia

Mr. Wendt provided information on both “green” and “gray” shoreline solutions and the difference between living shorelines and coastal structures like breakwaters, revetments, and bulkheads. Living shorelines use plants or other natural elements, sometimes in combination with harder shoreline structures, to stabilize estuarine coasts, bays, and tributaries.

Policy Directives

Mr. Wendt described some of SEAS’ policy directives and their enacting legislation, noting that living shorelines are commonwealth’s preferred alternative for shoreline stabilization and that the Chesapeake Bay WIP III includes goals for shoreline stabilization, including living shorelines. There are legislative guidance and executive orders that work to increase Virginia’s resilience to sea level rise and natural hazards. The Coastal Resilience Master Plan presented earlier in the meeting is a part of the effort, as is the Community Flood Preparedness Fund.

Living Shorelines Financial Incentives

Mr. Wendt then reviewed the programs that are currently in place to provide incentives for living shorelines. He mentioned low interest loans on residential, business, agricultural, and public property, cost share on agriculture and individual property such as the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share and Virginia Conservation Assistance Programs managed by the SWCDs.

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan

Mr. Wendt provided a brief overview of the Chesapeake Bay WIP III and the goals of shoreline management that are built into the program. He noted that Phase III was released in 2019, is to guide actions through 2025, and includes basin-level goals for shoreline management BMPs, including living shorelines. He reviewed the specifics of some of these goals and accomplishments thus far broken down by major basins in the commonwealth.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction 2021 Grant

This grant was recently received and is in place from now through June of 2024 to help accelerate the scale and rate of living shorelines in rural coastal Virginia. This is a \$1 million federal grant, plus a \$2 million match from the commonwealth, which is being funded by the NFWF and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The funding will be used to reach four major objectives:

- To grow and enhance existing partnerships engaged in living shoreline implementation across rural coastal Virginia.
- To develop a cache of “shovel-ready” living shoreline projects with completed engineering designs on socially vulnerable sites, agricultural sites, and other priority sites.
- To provide financial incentives to construct new living shorelines on socially vulnerable sites.
- To document installation of recently implemented shoreline management projects across tidewater Virginia that have not yet been credited towards WIP goals.

In addition, through this grant, it is hoped that existing partnerships can be enhanced and strengthened. A goal will be to work to improve effective collaboration by exploring formal mechanisms for coordination and communication. Mr. Wendt noted that they want to utilize existing forums such as this group and other roundtables in the state as well as SWCDs and PDCs to have these discussions. He welcomes suggestions from the roundtable on this list of potential projects. There is a three-year window for project implementation.

Work continues on field verification. Over the past four years, SEAS has reported 1,199 sites for WIP goals, however hundreds of sites remain to be initially documented and reported. On-the-water site inspections continue as well in association with the Friends of the Rappahannock, the James River Association, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and DCR.

A focus of the funding will be the building of new living shorelines. This will be aimed at socially vulnerable sites and will include two to four shoreline projects. Although the term “socially vulnerable” is vague, Mr. Wendt said that the goal is to reach across multiple parcels and involve several property owners. The NFWF has a Coastal Resilience Evaluation and Siting Tool (CREST) which they will use to evaluate the list of possible sites. In addition, the Virginia Public Access Project has a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Social Vulnerability Index which can be used to help evaluate projects in Virginia. Finally, there is a lot of data available from VIMS about coastal resiliency and shoreline management.

Another goal will be to document what has been done. The areas of focus will be on rural coastal Virginia which encompasses a 12-county region including the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, and the Eastern Shore. This is just the beginning of a three-year grant and SEAS is looking for partners such as the Potomac Watershed Roundtable to assist with project implementation.

Questions and Answers

Ms. Gross thanked Mr. Wendt for his presentation and noted that there are a lot of areas in Fairfax County that are vulnerable but not necessarily socially vulnerable. One example of this is the Fort Belvoir property as it is surrounded on several sides by water. She asked Mr. Wendt whether federal facilities would be included in the planned funding initiative. In response, Mr. Wendt noted that federal facilities have their own objectives under the WIP and gave some examples of this along with some examples of factors that are considered when determining social vulnerability.

Ms. Grape expressed that there is great value in the roundtable supporting and discussing this program. In response to a question from Ms. Grape about the geographic area involved and whether it included the Stafford or King George regions, Mr. Wendt said that those areas are not included. The area included is defined by the statutory definition of “rural coastal Virginia.” However, information from other areas can be used to inform a strategic plan or to discuss the possibility of talking with NFWF about program expansion. Ms. Grape reported that there are ample opportunities for living shorelines along the Potomac and along the Northern Neck of Virginia. She expressed her gratitude that these resources are going to be available and asked Mr. Wendt to keep her informed on how the roundtable can support the program.

Roundtable Discussion

Ms. Gross asked members of the roundtable for updates from around the region. She also indicated her desire to discuss plans for the next meeting of the roundtable.

Ms. Grape noted that the grant proposal submitted to DEQ includes a plan for virtual meetings at least through the end of this year, adding that although the in-person element is missing, the virtual option allows for greater participation from across the watershed. This would be a good time to begin to think about what the roundtable will look like in the coming years. There is a possibility for both virtual and in person meetings, perhaps incorporating periodic field trips into the meeting schedule. Ms. Gross added that she would prefer to have a mixture of in person and virtual meetings as the virtual meetings are efficient but that she misses the networking opportunities available at in person meetings.

Mr. Hynson added that he, too, misses the in-person component of the roundtable meetings, it would be a good idea to find a central spot for in person meetings that is easier for all to get to. Also, he has an idea that there should be one number that farmers and other landowners can call for assistance. He feels that some of the personal contact with people has been lost and a better job needs to be done in addressing this. The landowners need to feel that there is someone whom they can call and on whom they can count for assistance when needed.

Ms. Gross followed up by stating that she understands that the extension services provide this type of assistance however there have been budget cuts that have impacted the extension service. She raised the question about advocating for some additional funding for Virginia Tech and the Virginia Cooperative Extension because these agencies have been the backbone of the agricultural community for a long time. The structure for the type of assistance Mr. Hynson mentions is already in place but it is no longer able to provide the same level of service because of funding cuts.

Ms. Conrad expressed her appreciation for these comments.

Dr. McGlone commented that VDOF has seen its share of budget cuts as well.

One topic of conversation for an upcoming meeting is how best to introduce the Potomac Watershed Roundtable and its work to members of the General Assembly. Another related topic might be advocacy. Although this body is non-partisan, it can have a role in advocating for issues as it has done in the past.

Adjournment. Ms. Gross thanked everyone for their attendance and engagement in the meeting. She noted that the next meeting will be held virtually on Friday, October 8, 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 12:37 pm.