

City of Alexandria, Virginia

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Public Hearing and Regular Meeting
Thursday, October 15, 2015, 7 p.m.
Charles Houston Recreation Center
901 Wythe Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Summary Minutes

Members Present: Jennifer Atkins, Chair, Judith Coleman, Vice Chair, Gina Baum, Stephen Beggs, Rich Brune, Secretary, William Cromley, Angela Lalwani, new student representative, and Catherine Poulin.
Excused: Ripley Forbes, Brian McPherson.

RPCA Staff Present: James Spengler, Director; James Nichols, Division Chief, Park Operations; Jack Browand, Division Chief, Public Information, Special Events, Waterfront Operations; Ron Kagawa, Division Chief, Park Planning, Design and Capital Development; Lyndon Murray, Regional Program Manager, William Ramsay Center, Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, Dana Wedeles, Park Planner, Bethany Znidarsic, Landscape Architect/Park Planner; Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant.
Absent: Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director, Park Operations, Ron Kagawa, Division Chief, Park Planning, Design and Capital Development.

Other City Staff: Anthony “Tony” Gammon, Acting Deputy Director, Department of Project Implementation (DPI), Jason Kacamburas, Potomac Yard Metro Coordinator, DPI.

Guests: Eddie Diaz, Darrel Drury, Joan Drury, David Fromm, Skip Graffam, Olin Studio, Heather Owens, Bill Rivers, Chair, Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics (AAA), Margaret Townsend, Elizabeth Wright.

I. Call to Order: Chair Jennifer Akins called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. She said she would need to leave early.

II. Public Hearing: Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan: Dana Wedeles, Park Planner, gave a brief presentation to review changes of the Final Draft of the Neighborhood Park Plans. The presentation is posted at:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/DraftNeighborhoodPlanPRCOctober2015.pdf>

Wedeles reviewed each of the 17 neighborhood park plans and highlighted the changes made since the previous draft. She noted there are 19 neighborhood parks and Mount Jefferson and Beverly Park are undergoing a separate process. Recommendations and implementation strategies are included in the plans including cost estimates and prioritization (low, medium, high priorities).

Total proposed improvements are estimated at \$14 million, budgeted over ten years through the City’s CIP process.

Atkins said she received many positive comments about how Dana Wedeles and Park Planning staff worked with the community during the parks review process. Vice Chair Coleman conducted the public hearing.

Public comments submitted by email will be included in the hearing’s public record:

Ali Ahmad, President, Wakefield Tarleton Civic Association; Katie Alarcon, Marla Brin, Janet Cochran, Director, St. Anthony’s Day School; Rick Cooper, NorthEast Citizens’ Association, Andy Duncan, Suzanne

E. Duddy, Marguerite L. Lange, Brian Limperopulos, Catherine and Nicholas Miliaras, Carrie Phillips, Ashley Walker, Steve Watkins, Linda Williams.

Public Comments:

1. Bill Rivers, 15 Mt. Ida Avenue, Chair, Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics (AAA). Rivers thanked Wedeles and Park Planning staff for their hard work on the park plans:
Lee Center: AAA supports the plan; long-term proposal for a therapeutic pool, and developing an interim use for the currently closed pool. Landover Park: AAA would like to see maximization between the park area and the new Warwick Pool. AAA would also like to see aquatic features added wherever possible in the City. Rivers said children love playing at the spray ground at Potomac Yards Park, and he recommends including restrooms near aquatic facilities where possible. Ewald Park: He personally endorses a second basketball court, and use of synthetic turf on the open field, rather than grass.
2. David Fromm, 2307 E. Randolph Avenue, said he supports the overall park plans, but questions the process. He acknowledged Mount Jefferson Park is being done separately from the neighborhood park plans, but said the plan does not address the entire park. He asked how the removal of invasive plant and cost estimate will get into the neighborhood park plan.
3. Heather Owens, 114 Colonial Avenue, spoke about Powhatan Park. She said Park Planner Wedeles has some exciting ideas, and the community is pleased about the plan. She supports maintaining the tennis courts, and likes the open space. Owens would like to see all improvements for this park made a high priority. She said there are many young families and seniors who can benefit from the park improvements, and the process has been fantastic.
4. Daryl Drury, 1030 N. Royal Street, complimented Wedeles and Park Planning staff for their work. He spoke about the Montgomery Park Plan, and said some of the survey questions were misinterpreted, or responses did not get reflected in the draft plan. He said there also was no reference in the plan to the larger survey. The survey asks a question about grading the center of the park and creating a passive lawn. He said 23.6% of respondents said they love it, but 34% said they do not prefer having an open lawn. He said 10 of the 17 comments (or 60%) of respondents voiced a preference for more shade trees. He said the plan to improve plantings along Royal St. is positive. Regarding installing a backboard at tennis court for solo play, Drury said the phrasing of the question was confusing. He asked that staff review the open-ended comments. Playground - He does not support moving the playground closer to Royal St. for safety reasons including speeding cars. He said the survey shows 43% don't support the move and that 26% favored renovating the playground, but not moving it. He said staff's discussion with St. Anthony's School should not be the sole basis for moving the playground because there are other stakeholders. He said the adjacent neighbors are signing a petition opposing moving the playground closer to Royal St.

Commission Discussion and Questions to Staff:

A discussion was held about various aspects of the park plans: Ewald Park lights; Powhatan Park raising proposed fence height and height of trees, adding lights for multi-purpose court; Montgomery Park concerns about shifting the playground towards Royal St. and location of new trees, and including Mount Jefferson Park in the overall draft neighborhood park plans, even though it is being done separately.

Montgomery Park:

Wedeles said staff met with parents and the Director of St. Anthony's School, who originally expressed concern about shifting the playground towards Royal St., and explained that the playground will not be made smaller. She said new trees have been added to the plan in the center to help create a community gathering space and shade. In response to a question about entrances in proximity to St. Anthony's School, Wedeles said the plan is at the concept stage, and staff will bring the design back to the community during the design phase.

Beggs asked Drury to email any additional comments to Wedeles, Park Planner for further community discussion. **Cromley** said although there are many stakeholders, all City parks are for the whole community's use. He suggested the trees be pulled back from the center circle to help open up the space. He also said the trees be more like the ones on the right hand side of the plan, i.e. to create a tree border, to help create the great lawn affect desired by staff.

Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, said staff will capture information for Mount Jefferson Park in the overall neighborhood parks plan, and bring the plan back to the P&RC next month. (See Update "III.C" below.) She said planning for Beverley Park is further out and requires finalization.

Brune said that Wedeles did an excellent job on the park plans, including incorporating changes requested from the community. He said he appreciates the process, and fully supports the plans. **Coleman** said she agrees and appreciates Wedeles' work on the plans, although there are still a few items that have to be worked out with the community. **Baum** asked what is needed from the P&RC, and if the plan needs to go to City Council.

Wedeles said staff is seeking a letter of endorsement from the P&RC on the Final Draft of the Neighborhood Park Plans, including any proposed plan revisions per community comments. The next step would be to take the Plans to City Council in January 2016.

Motion: **Baum** moved that the P&RC endorse the Neighborhood Park Improvement Plans with the following caveats: going back to the community for further comment on the Montgomery Park Plan, including adding Mount Jefferson Park Plan to the overall Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan, and possibly including synthetic turf and lights in Ewald Park. **Brune** seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

III. Presentations:

A. **Update on Potomac Yard Metro Station Program:** Bethany Znidersic, Landscape Architect and Park Planner, RPCA, and Jason Kacamburas, Potomac Yard Metro Coordinator, DPI gave a brief presentation on the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station project. To view presentation go to <http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCMetro15Oct2015.pdf>

On May 20, 2015 City Council selected Alternative B as the locally preferred alternative, with construction access Option 2 (no access from the George Washington Memorial Parkway). The project is currently moving forward into concept design with the community. It will impact Potomac Greens Park and Potomac Yard Park where the Metrorail station and bridges are located, and will require amendments to the Development Special Use Permits on each of the parks.

The Potomac Yards Metrorail Implementation Work Group (PYMIG), will be the primary forum for community input. The group was modified by City Council on September 20, 2015 and will include one member from the P&RC. Their next meeting is October 28, 2015.

Znidersic said staff will return to the P&RC in November with the Concept Designs for Potomac Greens Park, and in January for Potomac Yards Park.

B. **Final Update Eisenhower West Small Area Plan:**

Radhika Mohan, Project Manager, Planning and Zoning, gave a brief update on the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan (SAP). To view presentation go to: <http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCEWUpdate10152015.pdf>

Mohan said the SAP is almost complete, and is expected to be adopted next month, and will become

part of the Landmark/Van Dorn plan area. The E.W. Steering Committee endorsed the plan on October 14, 2015.

Mohan said a key concept for parks and open space will be the Backlick Run Revitalization, more green connections introduced, and some new parks, i.e. Bush Hill Park, and improved accessibility/public open space. The plan also discusses potential recreation sites in the West End, including co-location at a possible school site, and open space fund contributions. Mohan said the plan will involve rezoning, and the last time zoning was done for this area was in 1992.

Next Steps: Planning Commission November 5th and City Council November 14th.

C. Update Site-Plan for Mount Jefferson Park: Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, RPCA, gave update. The presentation is posted at:
[http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/20151015PRCMountJefferson\(1\).pdf](http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/20151015PRCMountJefferson(1).pdf)

Durham said staff is working in conjunction with the Oakville Triangle/Route 1 Corridor planning process to develop a site plan for Mount Jefferson Park & Greenway, the section between Raymond Ave. and Route 1. She said planning for Mt. Jefferson Park is being done concurrently, but separately from the citywide Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan (See Item II). The Mount Jefferson Park Plan will be added to the Neighborhood Park Improvement Plans.

The P&RC had endorsed the Concept Plan at its public hearing on May 21, 2015, and had also asked RPCA staff to consider several items during the site plan development process (See presentation pg. 3). Durham said staff is in the process of developing a site-plan that would need to go to a Planning Commission public hearing.

Next Steps: 1. Community Meeting, November 2, 2015, Mt. Vernon Recreation Center. 2. Staff to finalize site plan conditions and staff report, 3. Tentative Planning Commission public hearing, December 2, 2015.

Durham asked that additional comments be forwarded to her. She said site plan documents are available online at. <http://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=83168>

D. Alexandria Waterfront Small Area Plan: Common Elements: Tony Gammon, Acting Deputy Director, Department Project Implementation (DPI) introduced the presentation on common design elements that will be incorporated into public and private Waterfront spaces. The presentation is posted at:
<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/CommonElementsParksRec20151015Final.pdf>

Gammon explained how the Common Elements for public and private Waterfront spaces fit into implementing the Waterfront Small Area Plan (Waterfront SAP). He noted the P&RC was briefed on Waterfront Phasing and Funding Priorities on January 15, 2015 (City Council approved January 27, 2015). Flood mitigation has since been identified as the priority for implementation of the Waterfront SAP, and funding has been included in the CIP. A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been completed to hire an engineering design firm.

Gammon said private Waterfront redevelopment work is underway or about to begin on Carr's Hotel Indigo, Robinson Terminal South (RTS), and the Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC) site. He said the City tasked the Olin Studio, the landscape architecture firm that developed the City's Waterfront redesign, to start work on details for Common Elements because work on private Waterfront projects is scheduled much earlier than the City's schedule for public space improvements. Gammon said this briefing is the first one of a number planned for the updated Civic Engagement Process (see presentation).

Skip Graffam, Olin Studio, said the Scope of Work involves two parts: developing Common Elements that are directly related to or adjacent to the four private development sites and, coordinating with the private development projects. He said that Common Elements are unique site features or materials that will help unify the public promenade and provide a unique experience as people walk along the waterfront. Graffam said that the Streets, Promenade and Waterfront Rooms will drive the design plan. He reviewed the main Common Elements: *Paving & Materials, Lighting, Site Furnishings, Art and History.*

Commissioner Comments:

Lighting: Baum said she would like to see something other than industrial designs chosen; she prefers Alt. 1 or Alt. 3. Beggs asked if the idea would be to have consistent lighting. Poulin she would prefer light directed to the path, rather than flood type lights. Beggs said it would be good to activate the areas safely for a certain number of hours and make the lights usable for people with low vision. Cromley favors a light fixture style that uses solid high quality materials that are timeless, such as the period/historic option (Alt. 1), similar to New York's Battery Park and Brooklyn Height neighborhoods.

Site Furnishings:

Graffam said most site furnishings, are Waterfront Room specific. He noted that handrails are coming up for discussion in the private development sites, and these will be considered along with the lighting.

Graffam asked that additional comments be sent to Tony Gammon. Gammon said they plan to visit other Commissions and Civic Association, and there will also be an on-line link for feedback.

IV. Items for Information:

A. Public Comments (Non-agenda Items):

1. Elizabeth Wright, 113 S. Ingram St., spoke about her concerns with public safety and crime in the Holmes Run and Wakefield Tarleton areas, and the need for improved communication between the Alexandria Police Department (APD), and neighboring civic associations when incidents occur.

2. Margaret Townsend, 300 Montgomery St., president, Old Town North Community Partnership (OTNCP), said they have a standing Memorandum of Understand (MOU) with the City for Montgomery Park. They have been working with Jack Browand and Director Spengler to make the area more vibrant and establish a Farmers Market on Thursdays and to help activate the park. She asked staff to let her know of other ways OTNCA can work with the City.

B. West End Transitway Update Memorandum (T&ES): Coleman asked members to review the report included with meeting materials.
<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCOCTOBER152015COMBINEDREPORTSFINAL.pdf>

V. Items for Action:

A. Approval of Minutes: September 17, 2015. Deferred to November.

VI. RPCA Staff Updates:

A. Director's Report: FY17 Budget. See Attachment: The memorandum lists FY17 budget public meetings. Spengler encouraged Commissioners to participate.

B. Division Updates: To view staff reports go to:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCOCTOBER152015COMBINEDREPORTSFINAL.pdf>

1. Recreation Services: William Chesley, Deputy Director - See Staff Report.
2. Park Operations: James Nichols, Division Chief - See Staff Report.
3. Public Information, Special Events, Waterfront Operations: Jack Browand, Division Chief - See Staff Report.
4. Park Planning, Design and Capital Projects: Ron Kagawa, Division Chief - See Staff Report.

VII. Commission Business and Reports from Commissioners by District (verbal updates):

A. **Civic Awards Sub-Committee Update**: Brune said the sub-committee submitted final nomination criteria to Browand. Browand said the sub-committee recommended that proclamations to recipients be presented at a City Council meeting (tentative date is February 2016). Requests for nominations for calendar year 2015 will go out in November and remain open until the end of the year.

B. **NOVA Parks**: Deferred.

C. **Chinquapin 50 Meter Pool Proposal**: Deferred.

D. **Renewal of Appointment of Baum to the Waterfront Commission**: Baum said she needs to submit her renewal application to the Waterfront Commission by October 26, 2015. There were no other interested nominees. Action: Coleman moved to approve Baum's reappointment to the Waterfront Commission, Brune seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

VIII. Next Meeting: Agenda items and location for November 19, 2015. Tentative location in the City's West End.

XI. Adjourned: 9:47 p.m.

See Attachments: Public Comments on Draft Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan



NorthEast Citizens' Association

Richard T. Cooper
President
1219 Powhatan St.
Alexandria, VA 22314

Mary Jane Kramer
Vice President
1219 Powhatan Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Sylvia Sibrover
Treasurer

Board of Directors

Marianne Anderson
Barbara Magid
Pat Phibbs Rizzuto
Pattie Ryan
Michael A. Tilghman
Theresa Tidwell
Steven Troxel

October 15, 2015

Dear Park and Recreation Commission:

I am writing to you today to express the general support of the membership of the NorthEast Citizens' Association for the Powhatan Park Draft Improvement Plan. We are appreciative of the fact that on three separate occasions Park Planner Dana Wedeles presented draft plans and answered questions from our membership plus solicited suggestions and comments of NorthEast residents into each draft plan. The final draft presented to NECA on September 16th, 2015, incorporates many of the ideas and suggestions submitted by the membership, and at the end of the meeting there was a general consensus among the members present to wholeheartedly support the plan.

However, as discussed with Dana at the meeting, the membership strongly suggests that as a part of implementation of the Improvement Plan every effort be made to incorporate into the park a water source with access for hoses as well as a drinking fountain. In addition, NECA requests that the City provide support for NECA fundraising activities aimed at developing additional funding to be used in implementation of the plan. Such support would include: providing information, education, and ongoing support regarding how to conduct fundraising efforts, connecting us with other organizations that may help promote our fundraising events, assisting us with carrying out fundraising events, and other "PARKnership" ideas.

Thank you for considering the views of the NorthEast Citizens Association.

Rick Cooper
NECA President

October 16, 2015

Dear Dana, and the members of the Park and Recreation Commission,

A paragraph (below in red) was inadvertently left out of my submission to the Commission yesterday evening. Here is the corrected version. Please substitute the corrected version for the original. Trying to edit a document on my micro smart phone on the fly, in between appointments and in a crowded airport just did not work!

Thanks so much and my apologies,

Marla

Dear Dana, and the members of the Park and Recreation Commission, (by copy of this email to Jennifer and Steve, I am requesting that they share it with their fellow Park and Recreation Commission members. Thanks so much.)

Unfortunately I am out of town for several weeks attending to family matters and cannot attend the meeting today.

I took a look at the plan. Having read it, I would just like to point out a couple of possible mistakes regarding Hooff's Run, and make a request.

The first potential mistake I would like to mention is that the plan stated that parks are not banned in areas zoned residential. This is correct, but seems quite beside the point. There are specific zoning code and city code protections afforded residents living adjacent to public open space - as I understand it, parks being banned or not banned in residential areas is irrelevant to the need to follow the protections for residents specified in the zoning code and the city code.

I refer to such code requirements as a 20 foot (or 30 foot, depending on the circumstance) buffer between POS zones and residential property, no use of amplified sound if it is close enough to residential areas as to cause a disturbance, closure of parks at dark, no increase in use intensity or expansion of park boundaries beyond what existed in 1989, no parking in required yards in the POS zone, etc. I hope that these protections, required by the code, will be extended to Hooff's Run and East Rosemont Avenue.

The second possible mistake I would like to raise is that the plan says the parking area between East Rosemont and East Linden has "time restrictions" but was always parking for the park. That is not the case - the time restrictions are as follows: NO parking between 8 am and 3 pm - prime park use hours. Clearly that space was never parking for the park. It was, in fact, restricted exactly to protect the neighborhood from suffering the effects of non-residents parking there for the park and the metro. That little gravel area between East Linden and East Rosemont was being used for overflow parking by residents from the neighborhood, and the city kindly restricted the hours to prevent it from being used by metro commuters or park attendees, in order to protect the neighborhood from the influx of commuters and park users.

These types of protections have always been things the city happily did to minimize the impact of the expected influx of commuters and park goers in areas such as East Rosemont. **Examples of current solutions the city could implement to address the huge increase in commuters and park-goers on East Rosemont Avenue, due to the opening of the new entrance to the King Street Metro, and the increasing popularity of Hooff's Run Park, (in part due to social media,) might be, for example, recommending to Council that they offer residential only parking during the day on adjacent streets. Residential parking is available in Alexandria parking District 12, and Arlington makes a practice of offering it around any metro station or shopping area. Reinstating the 15 People Rule for**

people wishing to have private parties on city property - that would actually make the city money. (I can provide copies of that if you need them.) Or perhaps directing the park and Metro path entrance to the main thoroughfare, Commonwealth Avenue, and off the narrow little dead end side street of East Rosemont Avenue.

Which leads me to my request. I have been given to understand that you primarily look at the needs of commuters and park users, and not adjacent property owners to POS. But I think it is very possible, and supports the cause of pedestrians and public transportation, as well as maintaining the integrity of the neighborhood as a neighborhood, and not just a pass through to the park, the metro, and areas beyond, for the city to take actions to protect the neighborhood from the expected and desired influx of people, while at the same time encouraging commuters and park goers.

I ask you, the Parks department, and the Park Commission, to please recommend actions such as these as part of your plan; actions to address the needs of all the city's residents. Actions to encourage commuters and park visitors, but also to protect the neighborhoods through which they may pass. It does not cost the city anything to do so, and it enormously improves the quality of life of those who live next to Metro stations, heavily used parks, and other POS areas. And, as I pointed out, some such protections are required by the zoning code and the city code.

Back to the East Rosemont/East Linden parking area, I would just like to note that, as recently as 2005, Hooff's Run Park was classified as a pocket park. Pocket parks are intended for use by pedestrians who live or work within 1/10 of a mile. No parking is provided, and that is specifically noted in the city documents defining pocket parks, again, as recently as 2005. (I can provide the documents if you need them.) Even though you are now classifying Hooff's Run as a neighborhood park, the definition is the same, except the intended use area has been broadened to 1/2 a mile.

To me, providing parking for these parks goes against the city's express intent to encourage pedestrians and use of public transportation. Within 1/2 mile, people are supposed to walk to the park. Providing parking for a pocket or neighborhood park where none was provided before increases the use density of the park in a way that is barred by the zoning code, in my opinion. And, of course, the question of the required buffer zone, and the required POS yard space, in which parking is not allowed, arise here.

I understand that if you say that the little gravel lot on which residents have been parking after 3 pm has always been for park parking, and you say that parking there has never been banned between 8-3, then you make an argument that providing parking where it has always been allowed does not increase use density. But the fact is, parking there has always been banned before 3 pm, and allowing there to be parking now for the park prior to 3 pm, in my view, would be an impermissible change in use density. Not to mention that it would completely defeat the intention of Parks to encourage pedestrians.

But as to my request, I would like to end by saying that protecting neighborhoods from the effects of an influx of people coming to use metro stations, neighborhood parks, and other amenities, has always been a goal, and standard practice of not only Alexandria, but surrounding jurisdictions. The city always has, prior to recent developments, taken actions to protect the neighborhoods which are expected to, in the absence of such protections, be radically changed from neighborhoods into simple cut-throughs and thoroughfares through which commuters and users of city amenities may pass. The intent of the city to protect residents while encouraging commuters and park users is so strong that it has been written into both the city code and the zoning code. I ask you to please incorporate such protections into your neighborhood park plan.

Thank you for your time and assistance,

Sincerely yours,

Marla Brin

Hi Dana,

Thanks again for coming by the NECA Meeting a few weeks back to brief us on the revisions to the Powhatan Park Plan.

Can this message serve as my wife and I's full support of the plan? Or do you need me to write something a bit more formal?

Thanks!

Brian

Brian Limperopulos
1104 Colonial Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22314

Thank you, looks good.

Steve Watkins

Dear Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission:

I would like to enthusiastically commend the park planning process run by Dana Wedeles and Laura Durham. It has been the very model of constructive community planning.

I have had many positive experiences with City staff during my time working on behalf of our neighborhood civic association- but I believe that RPCA planning staff could and should teach a course on community engagement and balancing stakeholder interests.

When the initial park plans came out, our community, along with several other constituencies and interest groups, believed that too many healthy, beautiful trees, an amazing quiet recreation space, and important streetscape beautification would be lost due to changes recommended by the Alexandria Police Department for the worthy goal of crime reduction.

RPCA staff, led by Ms. Wedeles and Ms. Durham as well as Park Operations staff members Fred Bell and Dion Bates, worked with our neighborhood, members of the Cameron Station Civic Association, members of the Virginia Native Plant Society, the Alexandria West Rotary, the Gladiators Youth Basketball Team, the Arlington-Alexandria TreeStewards and the Alexandria Police Department to come to an agreement for increased neighborhood participation and ongoing community group involvement, including an adopt-a-park agreement by the Alexandria West Rotary. This is reflected in item number seven on the Ewald Plan.

While I am very supportive of the plan overall as amended, I am writing today to request one additional caveat be added to item number one, "Create a turnaround and landscaped median in the parking lot." I believe it would be appropriate that any expansion of the parking lot footprint at Ewald Park to accommodate additional parking or pick-up drop-off space be considered by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The language in the revised draft is superior to the original plan which specifically called for an expansion of the parking lot. In my view as someone who frequents Ewald Park and walks by it more than once a week, an expansion of the lot to increase parking capacity would be unnecessary as most of its users travel by foot. Furthermore, any reduction in green space in favor of new paved space must be weighed against the City's serious watershed management needs.

The new language for item number one is encouraging, particularly the note that any improvements would be done in a way as to not impact healthy existing trees. The parking lots improvements as shown in the graphic, which I do

understand is not a finalized architectural drawing, does show the lot necessitating the removal of at least one 20 year old London Plane tree, and would certainly impact several others health.

In follow up conversations with Ms. Durham and Ms. Wedeles, I understand that the intention is to "provide the parking lot improvements within the footprint of the existing parking lot," but also that the implementation strategy states: "This recommendation will be considered if there is increased need for drop-off/pick up space after the multi-use courts are installed (recommendation #5)."

The evaluation of that need, in my opinion, is one that should be done squarely in the public view and through a process which involves the appointed officials that oversee our City's parks on behalf of its residents.

While I cannot attend Thursday night's meeting due to a meeting in my own neighborhood about an upcoming sewer relining project, I am available to answer any questions you have about this remaining concern, or about my unqualified praise for the process put together by the staff you oversee.

Thank you for your hard work and service on behalf of the citizens of Alexandria and all those who enjoy her beautiful parks.

With warm regards,

Ali Ahmad
President
Wakefield Tarleton Civic Association
230 South Jenkins St.
703.895.9899

Dear Dana,

I was very please to see how the Draft Neighborhood Parks improvement plan has developed with respect to Montgomery Park. I reside in the Del Ray neighborhood, but my children have gone/go to St Anthony's. My children therefore use the playground daily and every other day we also play in the playground after school in the evenings. I am very supportive of the plan to expand and improve the playground and to have installed a rubber play surface and play equipment that will meet the needs of kids from babies and toddlers to older elementary school. These improvements will greatly enhance my families quality of life.

I urge the city to take very seriously the need of a water feature. Our children are faced with extreme heat 4 months out of the year. Some spray features to cool them down would allow them to make so much better use of the playground/park, stay out longer, get more exercise, and be more healthy. It would be a great gift to the community to install water features as interesting as those at the new potomac yard playground.

We also support plans to maintain a green open space in the center of the park. Montgomery Park is a beautiful and practical urban park space. Thank you for making sure it offers great recreation options for kids.

Ashley Walker
4 W Howell Ave
22301
202 716 0316

Hi Dana,

I'm a mom of two children who attend St. Anthony's Day School. We love Montgomery Park playground and the open grassy area. We use the park weekly. We support enhancement of the park and playground. I would like to see the park keep the existing trees as trees are hard to come by at Parks anymore. A bathroom would be great! One of the things I think children love about this park is that it's not generic or sanitized – there are no silly tic tac toe boards, etc. It seems and feels like a real park. Please keep this more laid back, old school park feel in mind when you are making improvements to it. Thanks so much!

Suzanne

Suzanne E. Duddy

Dear Parks and Recreation Commission:

I am writing to you as both a city resident, St. Anthony's Day School parent and frequent user of Montgomery Park. This park is an incredible asset to the surrounding neighborhood and offers the only playground within nearly a mile radius (if not greater).

It is very important to not only maintain the existing playground but also to enhance and expand it. This playground must serve a range of ages and kids. It offers partial shade and the adjacent lawn space is ideal for informal games for kids and adults. The recommendations to improve the playground and lawn, as well as add walkways and additional seating are great steps for this park. This park is also a great community space where I have met several families and neighbors come to interact.

Please make sure that you support improvements to Montgomery Park for this active play area for children and adults. The dog area has been significantly enhanced; now it is time to do so for the humans.

Sincerely,

Catherine and Nicholas Miliaras
12 W. Spring St

Dear Park and Recreation Commission Members:

I fully support the proposal for Hoofs Run Park and Greenway and the implementation strategies. I am very happy with the updated playground area completed last year.

I agree that the dog exercise area on Commonwealth should have greater separation (fencing and landscaping) as it is challenging to walk on that sidewalk. Additionally, please add signage to the area in front of the tennis court explaining that grassy is NOT the off leash dog exercise area and add enforcement to that effect. I always see dogs off leash in that area instead of crossing the street.

Having a connected path through the green way (including mid-block crosswalks and signage) will be a great opportunity.

Great idea to use the empty parking lot as a riding area for kids.

Thanks,
Catherine and Nicholas Miliaras
12 W Spring Street

Ms. Wedeles:

I wanted to send a quick note expressing my support for enhancements and improvements to the Montgomery Park playground. I'm supportive of the park improvement plan.

Thanks!

Carrie Phillips, Alexandria resident



St. Anthony's Day School

321 First Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (703) 836-9123
Fax: (703) 836-1426

October 14, 2015

Dear Dana,

I have reviewed the plans from Department of Recreation for Montgomery Park. I am very thankful for the department wanting to hear from the community about the best use of the beautiful area that is available to us. We have been blessed with all of the improvements to this area since the school opened in 1998.

The community has grown with a number of young families and it is fabulous to see so many children able to enjoy the outdoor play space. It is exciting to have a voice for all children who will have access to this park.

I strongly support the Montgomery Park Improvement Plan that recognizes the need for multiple uses such as passive relaxation, organized sports, early childhood development, family fun, and individual athletic activities. I believe the community will benefit greatly for many years ahead from the investment in Montgomery Park.

Sincerely,

Janet Cochran

Director

St. Anthony's Day School

Dear Members of the Park & Recreation Commission,

I am sorry not to be able to attend your public hearing on the 15th since I have recently broken my leg. I would ask that you defer any decisions about Hooff's Run Park and Greenway, especially that section on the map between point 6 and 9. The surveys reached out to the Rosemont community but many in the larger community are unaware of the affects on the neighbors abutting this area. This is an area of townhouses with little or no off- street parking.

I believe that for the plan to be successful there has to be a balance between the need for more public park space and the needs of the immediate neighbors. Now that summer vacation is over a meeting of the immediate neighbors with the Park and Recreation Staff is needed to understand the apprehension of the neighbors and to mitigate their concerns over parking, security, noise, sanitation, etc. (You might find sanitation an odd concern, but some neighbors have already complained that some playground users are using neighborhood backyards as toilets.)

On another matter, at your last meeting the dog exercise area at Braddock and Commonwealth was recommended not to be "de-designated" but to be considered in the Hooff's Run Park Plan. Will that also be part of the agenda for the 15th?

On behalf of the Rosemont Citizens Association Board we hope that you defer any decisions on Hooff's Run Park until there has been more discussions with the adjacent neighbors.

Sincerely,

Marguerite L Lang

President, RCA, 703-888-2674

From: "Katie Alarcon" <katiealarcon@comcast.net>

To: "Dana Wedeles" <Dana.Wedeles@alexandriava.gov>

Subject: Angel Park--Sycamores

Good Morning Dana,

I was happy to see the comments regarding the value of the Sycamore trees in Angel Park. I am writing to you to discuss one of those trees in particular. The beautiful one located across from my home. Five years ago, out of concern that the tree was being choked, I contacted the Parks Department and asked them to take a look at the tree and remove the massive vines that were taking over (mostly english ivy).

I was told to contact the City Arborists which I did. I left one detailed phone message and sent one email. After a month of no response, my whole family went across the street with our hand tools and cut the vines but could not remove anything above 5 feet. This took about 4-5 hours. The vines have died off but remain. New vines are now growing up the tree. If the city can clean off this Sycamore completely, our family will return to the tree once a year to make sure new ivy does not grow. The tree is located directly in front of 466 W Taylor Run Parkway. I have attached photos.

Thank you!

Katie Alarcon



Sycamore tree located across from 466 W Taylor Run Pkwy



Old vines still hanging on tree



old vines where we cut 5 years ago (we used a hand saw for the large vine on the right) and the new ivy growing up the tree—it is about 5 feet up the tree already. Thank you for taking such a detailed look at our parks.

KatieAlarcon

From: LINDA [<mailto:lindafwilliams@comcast.net>]
Sent: Friday, October 09, 2015 2:46 PM
To: Dana Wedeles
Cc: James Spengler
Subject: Re: Draft Neighborhoods Parks Improvement Plan

Dana:

Thank you for all that you do and the thoughtful way in which you and your team have guided the various neighborhoods through this process. It isn't easy to gracefully deal with so many opposing views and opinion. At the several meetings I attended, you succeeded in defusing tensions, while still allowing each person's voice to be heard.

Many thanks.

Linda Williams

E Chapman Street

From: Andy Duncan <a_duncan@comcast.net>

Date: October 15, 2015 at 2:13:30 PM EDT

To: dana.wedeles@alexandriava.gov

Subject: Neighborhood Park Planning Commnets - Goat Hill Park

Goat Hill Park

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed planning for Goat Hill Park. I am the past President of the Warwick Village Citizens Association and led the last two rounds of parks assessments in the neighborhood. I am glad to see continued focus on the resources that tie the community together.

I am excited to see retaining the trees and forested area as a priority. It will go a long way towards maintaining the City's tree canopy as other areas develop. I also applaud efforts to eradicate invasive plant species. That has long been a struggle in our parks.

There are a few items in the proposal that did catch my eye and seem inconsistent with the community decisions we have previously made.

I note a request for playground equipment for older children at the Goat Hill tot lot. Over the course of several community discussions prior to the last upgrade to Goat Hill the community chose to have this park focus on serving younger children. During the process, Park Planner Judy Lo, taught us that mingling equipment for older children and younger children can make the park intimidating for younger children. For that reason the existing equipment was expressly chosen to create a space welcoming for smaller children. The rationale at the time was that renovations at Landover Park and Mount Vernon Community School would offer equipment to serve older children. I believe this was the correct choice and the experience of my neighbors has borne out Ms. Lo's advice. On several occasions my neighbors have had to leave the Goat Hill Tot lot because of the rough play of older children. It is intimidating to their daughter, and in the parents' estimation hazardous to daughter. I am not suggesting that the older children were behaving as bullies. Adding equipment for older children would be a fundamental re-programming of this resource and leave an imbalance in the ages served by community parks in Warwick Village.

I also note the recommendation to construct a nature trail. Based on the experience at Hillside Park, I am concerned how the trail would be constructed and maintained. Over the years the community and individual residents have raised concerns about the erosion and deterioration of the timbers used for terracing. We have been advised that replacing the deteriorating infrastructure was cost prohibitive. Before such a trail is included in a long-term plan I would hope the City has a clear plan for avoiding such missteps.

In addition, residents have long complained about nuisance activity in Hillside Park because there are many accessible places to hide out of sight from the street. While nuisance activity has significantly dropped in Goat Hill, it was one of the problems identified in our earlier assessments. Evidence of the nuisance activity was regularly found during park clean ups in pockets of the park not easily visible from the street. The new design eliminated those pockets. It am concerned that adding the trail would create opportunity sites for that activity to return.

Andy Duncan

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