

**JEB Stuart Park Public Comment Meeting Summary
Baileys Elementary School
April 2, 2009**

Officials and Staff Attendance:

Penny Gross, Mason District Representative, Board of Supervisors
Frank Vajda, Mason District Representative, Park Authority Board
Winifred Shapiro, Braddock District Representative, Park Authority Board
Kaye Kory, Mason District Representative, Fairfax County School Board
Judy Pedersen, Public Information Officer, FCPA
Matthew Kaiser, Deputy Public Information Officer, FCPA
Diana Fuentes, Public Information staff, FCPA
David Bowden, Director, Planning & Development Division, FCPA
Sandy Stallman, Manager, Park Planning Branch, FCPA
John Lehman, Manager, Project Management Branch, FCPA
Andrea Dorlester, Senior Planner, Park Planning Branch, FCPA
Andy Galusha, Project Manager, Park Planning Branch, FCPA
Eric Brunner, Section Manager, Athletic Field Development, FCPA
Jill Latham, Administrative Assistant, Planning & Development Division, FCPA
Andrew Buffington, Department of Community & Recreation Services
Steven Groff, Department of Community & Recreation Services
E.W. Nolan, Student Activities Director, JEB Stuart High School

Also in attendance were JEB Stuart High School staff and students and JEB Stuart Park Neighbors

Handouts available at the meeting: Title IX FAQ, Agenda and park map.

The JEB Stuart Public Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

County Speakers:

Judy Pedersen welcomed the meeting attendees and presented the agenda.

Kaye Kory from Fairfax County Public Schools gave a brief history of Title IX and how Title IX money was available to install lights on the softball field at JEB Stuart Park.

Frank Vajda spoke about the Master Plan Amendment, improvements in lighting technology and what the Park Authority staff would talk about. He emphasized that he was there to listen to the public input. Mr. Vajda mentioned the lighting demonstration that was planned for April 9 at Nottoway Park.

Judy Pedersen advised that this meeting was to solicit comments. Also, meeting information was available to the public online as well as notices were mailed out. Ms. Pedersen introduced David Bowden, John Lehman, and Andy Galusha.

Andy Galusha spoke about Title IX and why the Park Authority initiated the Master Plan Amendment process. He talked about the history of the park and explained the Master Plan process.

David Bowden gave a brief history of field lighting technology before and after 1990.

John Lehman gave an overview of field lighting technology and what is considered obtrusive light. He differentiated between the effects of old and new lighting techniques. The new technology includes shielded fixtures, downward aiming fixtures (angle), more efficient fixtures, and satellite control. Mr. Lehman advised that lighting standards have become more stringent and mentioned the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance.

Judy Pedersen detailed the next steps in the process:

- 4/9/09 – Lighting Demonstration
- 5/4/09 – Public Comment Ends
- May – Revise Draft
- June – Park Authority Board Decision

Comments from JEB Park Neighbors:

1. Ginger Moench – opposes amendment
She has a signed petition of 27 people who oppose the lights.
Issues:
 - Maintenance and litter
 - Reforestation
 - Concerned home will be devalued
 - Concerned about more traffic
 - Exposure to large crowds
 - Possible little league games
 - Noise
 - Bathroom problems
 - Interrupt wildlife
 - Acknowledged need for recreation facilities
 - Told lights would not be installed when field was rebuilt

2. E.W. Nolan, Student Activities Director, JEB Stuart High School – supports amendment
Issues:
 - Has been at JEB Stuart HS for five years
 - Great pride in JEB Stuart HS
 - Asking for support
 - School deserves to have facilities that all other schools have
 - Concern we are not supporting Title IX
 - Girls teams cannot be competitive without proper facilities
 - Need to finish the batting cage and lights
 - Assured park neighbors that high school will be a “good neighbor”
 - The teams have 50 games scheduled per year
 - 15 of the 50 are home games with both teams playing on the same night
 - 8 nights a year
 - Start time would move from 4 to 6 PM.

3. Jennifer Beausoliel, Fairfax Athletic Council Representative – supports amendment
Issues:
 - Title IX issues and equity
 - Lights will not have glow or bounce
 - Pine Ridge MP – revisited with no light issues
 - Important to teams because there are not enough fields
 - Daughter is on JEB Stuart Team

4. Susan Smits – opposes amendment
Issue:
 - Cost of lights for eight games while school funding is cut
 - Noise
 - Trash

5. Lisa Headley – opposes amendment
Issues:
 - Slides shown indicate heavy woods that is not there
 - Support Title IX, but against lights

- Currently trash and rodents in the park
 - Need more police
 - Concerned home will be devalued
 - Sound intrusion
6. Malin Moench – opposes amendment
Issues:
- Daughter on softball team and doesn't want her having late games
 - House is close to field on south side
 - Doesn't want poles in his view
 - Marginal benefit versus the cost of lights
7. George Waters – supports amendment
Issues:
- Served for six years on HOA
 - Has daughter on softball team
 - Not supporting Title IX relegates girls to second class
 - Kids don't have practice field
 - Belvedere ES field is full of rocks
 - The girls can't compete equally because they don't have facilities
 - Parents aren't able to watch games because they start too early
 - Arguments of neighbors against lights are selfish
 - A lot of their concerns are due to the baseball field with old lights, neighbors haven't even seen the modern lights in operation
 - Wants Park Authority to do something to shield lights from homes on Mansfield
 - Suggest planting cypress trees
 - Need more police, the county should look into it
 - If there are more lights, people will be less likely to do undesirable activity where they can be seen.
 - Don't discriminate against women athletes
8. Kelly Aylward – neutral
Issues:
- Property abuts fields on Mansfield Drive
 - Good Park Authority information but missing information and wants more answers:
 - ◆ How many lights?
 - ◆ Pole height?
 - ◆ Pole locations?
 - ◆ Frequency of use and how many nights?
 - ◆ Start and end times?
 - ◆ What months will field be used?
 - ◆ Limited to varsity games?
 - ◆ How many games per week?
 - ◆ Who will have access to the field?
 - ◆ Is there a profit to Park Authority?
 - ◆ What are the current park hours?
 - ◆ Will there be a change in park hours?
 - ◆ Will there be more tennis and basketball games due to the lights nearby?
 - ◆ Will there be additional police patrols?
 - ◆ What is the text in the amendment process?
 - ◆ Would like to see more natural barriers installed that could shield light.
9. Joan Sellers – opposes amendment
Issues:
- Feels Title IX should not override property rights

- Lights should not be installed for eight games
 - Concerned more lights will be installed
 - Who will have control of the lights?
 - Park was well maintained until last few years - recent FCPA staff cuts?
 - Concerned about trees falling in park
 - Doesn't want lights in backyard
10. Cindy Waters – supports amendment
Issues:
- Parent of softball player
 - PTA President
 - Supports Title IX
 - JEB Stuart HS has only team without Title IX support
 - Payment already set aside by Title IX money
 - PTA will sign resolution advocating Park Authority install lights
11. Kristen West – supports amendment
Issues:
- Lives near JEB Stuart baseball field
 - Lights now installed do not cause a problem
 - Supports Title IX
 - Wants security and community
 - Wants Park Authority to install visual barriers to lights
 - Feels kids should be educated to clean up
12. Sasha Robinson – supports amendment
Issues:
- Student at JEB Stuart High School
 - Plays on team
 - Parents cannot come to games
 - Parents at games would bring more support and pride
 - Have to cancel games when dark
 - Practice with varsity only two hours and team needs more time
 - Feels looked down on, and unfair boys can play longer
13. Joann Flores – supports amendment
Issues:
- Student at JEB Stuart High School
 - Plays on team
 - Team needs the lights to practice their games
 - Parents can't watch games because they start too early
 - Parents' attendance will improve performance
 - It is better to practice on an actual field
 - There is new lighting technology
 - We can be good neighbors
 - Offered to help plant trees
14. Andrew Buffington – CRS – supports amendment
- Youth groups are only scheduled until 9 PM including youth softball, baseball
15. John Ikel – opposes amendment
Issues:
- President of Ravenwood Park COA
 - Concern about upkeep of park
 - Neighbors now organize group clean ups with JEB Stuart students
 - What effect will lights have on crime?

- Concerns over parking on Peace Valley Lane
 - Missing signs and some are damaged/coordinate with VDOT
16. Captain Thompson of JV Softball Team – supports amendment
- Parents cannot come to games
 - Not enough practice time
 - Need more time for basic skills building
 - Feels other schools are thought of as “better” because they have lights

Index cards were passed around for meeting attendees to write out questions. Meeting attendees were told that any questions that could not be answered at the meeting would be answered through emails or on the Web.

Card Questions:

Q What can be done about the parking and maintenance issues for street near JEB Stuart and Beech Street?

A Penny Gross explained that the street is owned by the school system. It is not a state owned street, although the state may maintain the street and signs.

Park Authority will look into parking issues.

Q How many lights will be installed?

A John Lehman responded that this would be a 4 to 6 pole light system with 70’ tall poles.

David Bowden further explained that our experience shows that lights and more park use will reduce crime and that lights have come a long way in 20 years. The Park Authority staff does look at aesthetics when designing light systems.

Q How much will the lights cost?

A John Lehman said that a 4-pole light system would cost approximately \$150,000.

Q Do parks with lights get more attention from Park Maintenance, etc?

A David Bowden answered that the Park Authority has an “Adopt a Park” program wherein citizens help to keep parks clean and maintained. In addition, fields that have lights give people more opportunities to use the field, so the fields are better maintained.

Q Will there be portable toilets?

A CRS has funding and Park Authority will look into the option.

Q Will the field be locked?

A No.

Q Will trees be planted as a buffer?

A The Park Authority will look into providing trees.

Q Who will look into use of field?

- A CRS has guidelines for use of fields, etc.
- Q. Will more land be purchased?
- A Mason District is fully developed so acquiring more parkland would be difficult.
- Q How many nights will the field be used?
- A Approximately eight nights for the JEB Stuart softball teams. Little league teams will use the field mostly on weekends during the spring and weekdays throughout the summer, without the lights.
- Q What would be involved to shield lights on JEB Stuart High school baseball field?
- A Park staff do not know what generation or type of light systems were used at the high school, but since old fixtures cannot be retrofitted with shields, the light fixtures would need to be replaced with modern ones if the school were to improve the lights.
- Q When will lights be installed?
- A Park Authority must complete the master plan process and if the master plan amendment is approved, obtain a public use permit (2232 Determination). These processes will last through the summer followed by a light system design. The projected time for light installation is late fall 2009 or early spring 2010.
- Q What happened to the chain and lock on Peace Valley Road at Camden Way?
- A Staff was not sure, but possibly, there was not enough staff to lock and unlock each day, so it was removed.
- Q A large path is being used by vehicles – what can be done?
- A Park Operations staff could install removable and lockable steel bollards that will prevent driving on the trail. Staff will look into replacing bollards to prevent driving into park.
- Q Why can't the girls' team use the existing, lighted boys' field? Why is it a Title IX issue?
- A The girls teams play softball, which requires a different field size than baseball. Also, if the girls played on the boys' field all four teams would have less playing time. It is a Title IX issue because unequal facilities are provided to boys' and girls' teams.
- Q In 1986 lights were proposed for the tennis courts, but not added, what happened and what about the field?
- A This proposal was left out of the master plan because the neighbors opposed the addition of lights at that time.

Closing Remarks:

David Bowden reviewed the recent light changes and how they are operated by satellite. If a park neighbor calls to advise lights are on, but there is no one playing, the controller can cancel the lights by computer.

Sandy Stallman spoke to the meeting attendees about the 1986 Master Plan that consists of only a graphic. We can research previous community comments from that process.

Penny Gross stated that she realizes that some park neighbors are against the lights and she has been against installing lights for years, but as a realist knows that under Title IX, the field needs lights. This is a community field and we need to address Federal law and yet try to meet the concerns of the community. She doubts that lights will be installed on the tennis courts.

David Bowden stated again that there would virtually be no spill light on neighbors' homes.

Judy Pedersen adjourned the public meeting at 8:40 p.m. She thanked everyone for coming and reiterated that the information will be on the County website and hoped to see folks at the lighting demonstration.