

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING: Kings Park Park Master Plan Revision

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Kings Park Elementary School
5400 Harrow Way, Springfield VA 22151

MEETING SUMMARY

Elected Officials and Staff Attendance:

FAIRFAX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Sharon Bulova, Braddock District Supervisor

FCPA BOARD MEMBERS: Winnie Shapiro, Braddock Representative

FCPA STAFF: John W. Dargle, Jr., Park Authority Director; Judy Pedersen, Public Information Officer; Mathew Kaiser, Assistant Public Information Officer; David Bowden, Director of Park Planning and Development; Sandy Stallman, Manager of Park Planning; Andi Dorlester, Senior Park Planner; Andy Galusha, Project Manager; Mark Rogers, Park Operations Manager; Bob Stevenson, Park Operations

CITIZENS: Approximately 32 citizens

The meeting started at 8:00 p.m. and was facilitated by Judy Pedersen. Following introductions of Park Authority Board Member, Winnie Shapiro, Ms. Pedersen explained the purpose for the meeting and introduced Andy Galusha to present the Master Plan Revision that will update the Plan approved in 1967. After the presentation, Ms. Pedersen introduced Supervisor Bulova. After a few words from Supervisor Bulova, Ms. Pedersen explained the process for public comment and then the floor was opened to citizens to speak.

SPEAKERS:

Todd Olson –

- **COMMENT:** I am the president of the KPCA Infrastructure and Beautification Committee.
- Generally enthused, a couple of areas of concern.
- Pool site condition – how will it settle? Take steps to prepare site.
- Enthused about play area – how do pieces relate to each other?
- Concerned about sight lines between pavilion and play equipment and the field.
- Supportive of longer trail.
- Clarify that new play area is ready to build on.
- Sequence of moving equipment?
- Would like cohesive new play area soon.

Kathryn Hollingsworth –

- **COMMENT:** I am the ANSLL Director of league operations.
- Children use the diamond for practice. It is very nice with the play area nearby for siblings.
- We appreciate efforts of Park Authority to keep field and play area.

John Cook –

- **COMMENT:** I am the KPCA President.
- The former Royal Pool started the process for the Master Plan Revision.
- Thanks to Sharon and Winnie.
- Sight lines are a concern. People should be able to see from Family Area to ball field and tennis. No tall bushes. Keep the canopy, but clear out the underbrush to keep sight lines and safety.

Steve Araps –

- **COMMENT:** The ballfield is the key feature of this park.
- Left field area sometimes gets swampy; there is a need to improve drainage there.
- The area for the new play area has a steep gradient not as desirable as a level play area.
- I do not understand the benefits of moving play area.
- Hopefully the walking path will be paved all the way around.

Tom Kennedy –

- **COMMENT:** I agree in general with the good layout and comments made so far.
- General Master Plan Revision does not detail the implementation, or what specifically will go into the playground.
- I hope the Kings Park community will help define what equipment goes into the new play area.

Alice Barney –

- **COMMENT:** Early in the process, the possibility of getting a Dog Park in Kings Park was discussed. I hope the county will continue to explore having more dog parks.

George Bliss –

- **COMMENT:** I am a former Engineer.
- I have been watching the filled-in area where the pool was.
- It is sad that highpoint (in the park) is marshland. A contractor could re-grade the slope to drain properly. Right now, it is a birdbath, mosquito-breeding area that needs fine grading.

Beth Owens –

- **COMMENT:** Parents like old pool site because it is sunny. The current play area is dark and cold. Can we open up tree canopy in new play area?
- I am also concerned about the steep grade in the proposed play area.

After the last comment, Judy called Park Authority staff up to the microphone to answer questions.

Q- What is the plan for specific pieces in the new playground area, how soon will it be available, and will it appeal to older kids?

A- The plan is to put in new play equipment and specifically school age play equipment for older kids. As shown in our presentation there are different types of climbing equipment being considered that appeal to older kids. That is the priority first. The equipment that is in the park now is relatively new and should be good for another ten years or so, which is geared to the younger kids. Any new equipment coming in anytime soon would be geared toward the older kids. The voters of Fairfax County have approved the park bond last fall and there is some money specified in that for this park, and I believe it is around 95,000 dollars. So, whenever we are able to spend that money, we will be able to get underway with reviving the park.

Q- When would that be?

A- We are going to the Board with our 5-year Capital Improvement Plan in February and that will begin the work plan process, which includes all the funding in the bond, next month. So where it sits on the work plan we can't tell you right this minute, but we will get back to you when we know.

Q- I don't understand what the thinking would be to remove all the old equipment without having new equipment ready to go in. But that's what was done and I just would like it a priority to get the play equipment in there. And I hope you would do that and do it as promptly as possible.

A- We remove equipment if it is a hazard. That is generally what drives removal of equipment.

Q- In the Royal Pool area there were some sinkholes. I think it ties into some of the comments that were made already in terms of that area regarding drainage. But I did not hear anything that said that was going to be addressed. Because the pool was just filled back in, it is settling, now there are some holes there. I'd like an answer on that. Overall in the process and going to the light subject, in terms of how people may go to the park or not because of the light in the current area. I know the tree canopy is very sensitive. Is there going to be some thinning out so that more sunlight can come into the existing park in the next ten years? This could also help with the water situation. What is the thought in terms of the trail? Would it be paved, would it be rock, would it be a combination? Also, would it go around the Royal Pool site?

A- To answer the first part about the settling (in the filled area), it is a park operations issue because they are the ones who take care of the park and are watching the situation. A sinkhole had developed and they filled it in recently and they will be continually watching the site. But, if you see anything happening in the meantime, you can call or email them and they will respond. As far as the trail, we are debating the options, whether it would be stone for drainage issues or paved. As far as the light,

when the work is done (the family area is cleared), it will probably bring more light to the site.

Q- So there is not a current plan to thin out the existing park on the south to get more sunlight in?

A- We have park operations folks here tonight who are hearing your comments and will take them into consideration as they manage the park.

A- (Winnie) I would like to say that when we get the bond money scheduled, I plan to talk to the civic association about what their priorities are because we do not have enough money to cover everything. Therefore, as we talk through what to spend the money on and what to get done first, we will come up with a plan of action for what will be done in the park and we get people in there working, I think at that time we will also address some of these current issues. As you heard, Park Operations does look after the settling issue. However, when you see things tell us.

Q- Is there a process by which you will get the civic association involved in the details of the playground similar to what you have done with getting the civic association involved with the master plan? So it is not simply the Park Authority going off and choosing the equipment without input from the community?

A- (Winnie) that would be my job. I will do that. In addition, I am fully confident that John (Cook) will keep a clear channel of communications. I think at this point we cannot know exactly when that will be or when we will have the money though. However, we will keep you involved.

Q- Is it correct that the new Family Area Playground site is not part of the archaeological protected area so that we don't have to worry about those issues so we are clear to move forward and build there?

A- Yes, that site was approved for development because there are no archaeological resources there. The natural features there are not particularly unique or special. In fact there are some invasive plant species there and that area is not part of where the pool was removed. So that ground is stable and you could grade it and build structures on it.

After the last question, Judy explained again about the public comment process and gave the addresses for written comment to be submitted reminding them that the public comment period is going to remain open until February 16. She then thanked all who came and closed the meeting.

After the meeting closed, some citizens provided the following comments:

- Desire for play equipment that is designed for older kids
- Concerns about sinkholes in former pool area
- Suggestion to thin out the tree canopy in existing play area
- Concerns about the drainage in left field