



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



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SUMMARY
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING
Monticello Park Master Plan
April 4, 2011, 7:00 P.M.
Bonnie Brae Elementary School

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| Introductions | Sandy Stallman, Manager, Park Planning Branch, FCPA |
| Remarks | Supervisor John C. Cook, Braddock District Tony Vellucci, Braddock District Representative Russ Rosen – Braddock Dogs |
| Presentation | Sandy Stallman, Manager, Park Planning Branch Andy Galusha, Planner, Park Planning Branch |
| Discussion Session | Moderated by Sandy Stallman |

Staff [presentations](#) included background about the off leash dog area proposal by Braddock Dogs, the park master plan process and information about the site conditions, location and context.

The discussion session that followed the presentation allowed citizens to provide comments and ask questions. A summary of the questions and comments are arranged by topic below.

PROCESS FOR PROPOSING AN OFF LEASH DOG AREA AT MONTICELLO PARK:

- How was it determined to propose an Off Leash Dog Area (OLDA) at Monticello Park?
- Why is a group from a different neighborhood proposing this use at Monticello?
- Why didn't we hear about this until now?
- Who will represent our neighborhood that is not represented by an HOA/CA?
- Please post to the website the information on sites that were evaluated when determining where to locate an OLDA in this area.

RESPONSE: Although the need was first raised by the Kings Park West Civic Association, the dog park addresses a need for the broader Braddock District. We are in the primary visioning phase of the project; however, the Park Authority tries to be reasoned and balanced in its planning approach. The Park Authority was involved in a detailed review and rating of over 20 park sites based on the criteria for establishing an Off Leash Dog Area (OLDA) on County parkland. A brief explanation was given as to how the guidelines had been established through meetings with a dog park task force

and examination of other dog park models. Standards were adopted in 2000 and require a sponsor group that funds the development and monitors and operates the park. (For more information, please visit the OLDA development webpage at: http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/OLDA_development.htm). Russ Rosen presented to the Braddock District Council several times, HOA's should have passed on the information to their community members. The main purpose of the public information meeting is to initiate an open process to inform as well as receive input from the public, including the individuals who are not represented by a HOA. Sandy reminded the audience that an OLDA is just one element being considered, and asked what other uses the community would like to see in Monticello Park? What issues and concerns should we consider?

OFF LEASH DOG AREA (OLDA) CONCERNS:

- What size is the proposed OLDA?
- Why is the OLDA proposed on top of the park in the flat area?
- What are the official hours of the park?
- Can dogs be allowed off leash at Lake Royal or other areas not designated as an OLDA?
- Many people walk dogs at Royal Lake and don't pickup the waste.
- Dog owners need to pickup after their dogs and be good neighbors.
- The sponsoring group will need to be responsible for educating OLDA users of the impacts and appropriate dog park etiquette.
- Neighbors are concerned about strange dogs (unknown to neighbors) using the OLDA.
- If dogs got loose there would be liability concerns, especially near children.
- What happens when one dog attacks another?
- Would the dog park need a septic system like one reported in Arlington, and will it attract rats?
- How often will trash be collected and feces cleaned up?
- The park will need bags for trash collection.
- How many OLDAs are in neighborhoods with houses nearby?
- Are other OLDAs surrounded by trees between the OLDA and neighbors?
- Will more parking be provided?

RESPONSE: The minimum size for an OLDA is half an acre, preferred size is about one to one and a half acres. The OLDA does not need to be in the location shown in the presentation. This is just a graphic representation of relative size compared to the park. Park operating hours are established from dawn to dusk and posted in the park. County ordinance requires that all dogs be leashed unless in a designated off leash area. Violation of this ordinance carries a fine. The Park Authority has gained a lot of experience from the 8 different OLDAs it has established over the last 10 years. Fairfax County Park Authority OLDAs are operated as a partnership with the OLDA sponsor groups who monitor the dog area, provide bags for waste collection, post and enforce the rules, as well as report any concerns to the area manager to address. Trash is collected twice a week. For more information, please visit the OLDA Sponsor group page at: http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/OLDA_development.htm. The official OLDA rules state "Dogs must be removed from the off-leash dog area at the first sign of

aggression. Handlers are responsible for any injuries caused by the dog(s) under their control.” Please visit the OLDA rules, posted online at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rules/dogpark.htm>.

PARK FACILITY PREFERENCES:

- I love the idea of garden plots.
- Is a garden plot compatible with a dog park? Maybe garden plot group could sponsor together for a greater benefit?
- Suggested that the OLDA have both a large and small dog areas to keep dogs separate.
- I live on Bronte and would like to have a dog park.
- I live on New Lake Point; a dog park is a fantastic use of the site since it is road fill.
- People often let dogs off leash near Target (at Guinea & Zion) in grassy area, so I like the idea of a designated OLDA near by, I think it is a positive move.
- The engineered dog park will reduce runoff to neighbors, since 4” of stone dust (used in Park Authority OLDA) will absorb and filter dog urine and prevent runoff.
- Lots of parks in the area, this is the only one that is really suited for a dog park.
- Garden plots could be a concern due to topsoil and fertilizer runoff, which could be worse than a dog poop.
- Could you put the OLDA closer to Guinea Road further down toward Burke Road, more or less in the middle of the park? (Several people liked this suggestion).
- Playgrounds get really hot in summer, especially slides, so suggestion was made to include a covered playground, much like exists at South Run Park. There should be trees for shade and to block view from neighbors. Playgrounds are compatible with OLDAs since many people who have kids, have dogs. Both need open space to run.
- I drive by Monticello at least 4 times per day and often see people who bring their dogs to Monticello already anyway. I would prefer that they be fenced in.

RESPONSE: The Park Authority has been able to find workable solutions to include both garden plots and OLDAs in the same park. We will consider how best to fit in the suggested features with an OLDA.

FUNDING:

- Park neighbor concerned by the costs of proposals that are being placed on the FCPA.
- All of the county taxpayers will shoulder the financial responsibilities with the FCPA.
- How much of a commitment financially comes from the OLDA sponsor group and how much from the taxpayers through the FCPA for implementing the OLDA?

RESPONSE: It was clarified that the sponsoring group is responsible for raising the funds to construct the park and to see to its ongoing management. The need for a partnership with a sponsoring group was emphasized as the primary funding mechanism for the OLDA proposal. Park Board member Tony Velluchi explained that

the Park Authority and libraries combined only receive 1.4% of the general tax fund. Capital improvements are generally funded through general obligation bonds that are voter approved. While there may be a park bond in 2012, the reality is that there are no funds to support this kind of park development. If people want this sort of project to happen, it will need citizens to step forward to make it happen.

TRAFFIC CONCERNS AND SITE ACCESS:

- The existing parking is very limited. Will the parking area be enlarged?
- Neighbors are concerned that people may park on their streets, or at the community pool, walk through yards, and climbing the hill to get to the park.
- Neighbors also concerned that traffic could increase, including U-turns and congestion at the intersection with Bronte and Guinea Road.
- Could the parking lot entrance be moved to the intersection of Guinea and Burke Roads?
- A fence around the park would help to keep people from parking on side streets to access the park.
- Another stated that there is a fence between the park and the neighbors' yards. However, this fence is damaged in many places all along park boundary. If the fence was repaired, it would prevent people from cutting across yards.
- I live near Royal Lake Park which has a soccer field. People park on our street during games and we accept it for the 2 hours because many are neighbors.
- I use other OLDA's and since I don't know the neighborhoods, I follow the directions posted online and park in the park parking lot.
- To improve pedestrian safety, especially for those who must cross Guinea Road to get to the park, crosswalks, sidewalks on the Monticello side, and restricting the speed along Guinea Road should be considered.
- There should be a crosswalk on Guinea at Bronte, which might need a traffic light for people to cross.

RESPONSE: Parking will be proposed that is appropriate to whatever uses are ultimately planned for the park. Part of the planning process will include conversations with VDOT to assess appropriate and safe site access. For more information of VDOT regulations please visit: <http://www.virginiadot.org/business/trafficeng-default.asp>.

DRAINAGE:

- There are steep slopes all around the park perimeter.
- After looking at the South Run OLDA, I am concerned that the surface of the dog park will be all dirt which could pose a drainage problem when it rains. Why is all the grass removed from the OLDA enclosure?
- Several adjacent property owners mentioned concern about existing issues with water draining down from the park. Could these drainage issues be exacerbated by any proposed park development?
- Will there be impacts to downhill properties from run off related to dog urine and feces?
- Will development of park facilities bring more erosion when it rains?

RESPONSE: The Park Authority has learned more with each new OLDA installed in the county. The current model for dog parks provides a crushed stone surface rather than a dirt surface. This type of surface prevents runoff from the OLDA. Engineering at the time of development will address necessary drainage requirements. Additionally, the official OLDA rules state "Handlers must "scoop the poop" and fill any holes dug by dogs under their control." Please visit the OLDA rules, posted online at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rules/dogpark.htm>.

VISUAL IMPACT:

- I live on Greenough Place where we can see through the trees to the park from our neighborhood from fall through spring, in particular one of the potential locations for the OLDA.
- Also concerned that OLDA would impact the kids' ability to sled on the hill.

RESPONSE: Further discussion suggested that the OLDA might be placed closer to Guinea Road to minimize impact to adjacent properties. As the OLDA will be fenced, closer proximity to the road does not imply any greater risk to park patrons or their dogs. Generally, facilities are not proposed for steep slopes, so it is unlikely that the use for sledding will be affected.

SECURITY:

- What about lighting and cameras for security?
- May need to ticket offenders?

RESPONSE: The Fairfax County Police enforce park regulations on parkland. Any concerns about unlawful behavior in parks should be reported to the police. The OLDA Sponsor Group acts as a liaison between the Police and the Park Authority for security and maintenance issues. One of the benefits of Monticello Park is that the open nature of the park is highly visible from the intersection of Guinea and Burke Roads, which can deter unwanted activity. Increased activity in the park also creates a deterrent.

SITE HISTORY:

- Area has Civil War history, noting that the Connecticut and New York Volunteer Cavalry had camped through this area.
- Stated that a Confederate soldier was buried nearby.
- When Guinea Road was widened in the 1990's, numerous artifacts were found.
- This area was also the location of the Burke flat track for horse racing, of which the stables still exist.
- The area should be treated with sensitivity, and needs a historic marker.

RESPONSE: Site history will be considered and investigated during the park master planning process.

OTHER CONCERNS:

- There is lots of wildlife in the park such as deer.
- Kids also play in the park as it is.

- Concerned that park development will impact the wildlife and ability for open play.
- People use the level grassy strip of land as is for many different spontaneous activities such as practicing golf, flying kites, flying model airplanes, and jogging.
- There is benefit to keeping it green, as it is, with no additional development. Consider the human uses first.
- Use of the park is currently random and undisciplined.
- It is a dangerous place to play ball since the ball could easily roll down the hill into the road.
- Also dangerous place to practice golf since a golf ball could go through a car or house windows.
- It would be better to have a planned use that serves more people for the greater good.
- Another meeting attendee stated that although there is some occasional use of the park today by a few people, development with a dog park would make the park available and useful to a larger group.
- Are people resistant to the dog park, or is it just change they are resistant to?
- One person commented that they have seen a helicopter land on the park property in the past. A fellow meeting attendee reported that it is a police helicopter.

RESPONSE: The Park Authority tries to be reasoned and balanced in its planning approach. We are currently in the primary visioning phase of the project and will look closely at these concerns throughout our planning efforts. The OLDA is just one element being considered. Staff would like to hear what other uses the community would like to see in Monticello Park as well as issues and concerns. The project webpage will be updated as new information becomes available, so we encourage everyone to visit it at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/monticello.htm>

Comments will be accepted 24-7 by email to: parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov
