

MOUNT VERNON WOODS PARK

MASTER PLAN REVISION

PUBLIC EVENT & COMMENT MEETING, JUNE 22, 2015

MOUNT VERNON WOODS PARK & ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A community event, “Picnic, Play & Plan” was held at Mount Vernon Woods Park and Elementary School on the evening of June 22, 2015. Beginning at 5:30 p.m., the community was invited to enjoy grilled hot dogs, play games and learn more about the draft master plan revision for Mount Vernon Woods Park. Attendees had the opportunity to view conceptual design maps and talk to park planners, fill out comment cards, post ideas on sticky notes to a poster board, and draw their own park designs.

At 7:00 p.m. a Public Comment Meeting was held in the Mount Vernon Woods Elementary School cafeteria to present the draft master plan revision for Mount Vernon Woods Park to the community. The public was then invited to speak and share their comments on the proposed park plan.

INTRODUCTIONS AND OPENING REMARKS

Jeff McKay	Lee District Supervisor
Ed Batten	Park Authority Board, Lee District
Aimee Long Vosper	Park Authority Deputy Director
Judy Pedersen	Public Information Officer
David Bowden	Director, Park Planning & Development Division
Andi Dorlester	Project Manager, Park Planning Branch
Phil Hager	Manager, Park Authority Area 3 Management
Karen Lindquist	Historic Preservation Program Coordinator
Lloyd Tucker	Manager, Region 1, Neighborhood & Community Services

STAFF PRESENTATION

Overview

Judy Pedersen provided an outline of the evening’s agenda as well as an overview of the Fairfax County Park Authority and the park system.

Background and Conceptual Development Plan

Andi Dorlester provided an overview of the Park Master Plan process and background on Mount Vernon Woods Park and presented the elements of the draft master plan.

COMMENTS

Speaker 1

- We are missing the laughter of the children in the park

Speaker 2

- Keeping the stream clean; funding - who will pay the bill?
- Why does the Park Authority pay a contractor to mow the grass?

Speaker 3 - Ed Batten

Fairfax County Park Authority Board

Lee District Representative

- Young people want and need a skate park
- I encourage people here tonight to speak out
- The Park Board is listening

Speaker 4

- I would like to keep the neighborhood quiet; don't want noise from a skate park

Speaker 5 - Cathy Ledec

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

- Has a love of natural spaces; this is an opportunity to connect children to the outdoors
- Active facilities in the plan are good, but happy that the trees will be saved
- Restore the stream that is in a concrete channel
- Children are the future environmental stewards

Speaker 6

- Homeowner in Sequoyah who believes in community
- Children only get one childhood and children should enjoy the outdoors

Speaker 7

- Parent ambassador at MVW elementary school
- Kids need a place to play; they need a skate park
- Outdoor fitness would be convenient for adults who don't drive

Speaker 8

- Has lived here 35 years and has seen the park trashed
- Pavilion could be fixed up but people will vandalize; it takes a long time to put a park up but a minute to tear it down and vandalize with graffiti
- Horseback riding and stables would be a good idea
- Mini golf - charge fees and have onsite staff to keep an eye on the park

Speaker 9

- 8 years in neighborhood; PTO VP at MVW Elementary School
- Pavilion is useful on family night
- Would like to show movies and have cultural education
- Kids could play soccer in the field

Speaker 10

- Has a young daughter
- Teenagers have nowhere to go, and they all pile up in the back by the pavilion, where homeless people live or they skateboard in the Sequoyah garages
- The park has a homeless problem, lighting is needed, and there are not enough trash cans
- The park needs bathrooms and patrols to prevent vandalism

Speaker 11

- The ballfield and tennis courts were taken away; it is a shame there's nowhere for kids to play anymore
- The fireplace in the pavilion was cinder-blocked so we can't cook out
- Police can't keep up with patrolling the area and the park has gone down the toilet

Speaker 12

- Sequoyah homeowner
- We need to move toward the positive for children's sake; not focus on the negative
- The park should be a place to congregate with children and meet neighbors, get people/kids outside
- Will there be time limits on use of facilities so everyone has a chance to use them?

Speaker 13

- Bathrooms are needed in the park

Speaker 14 - Yesenia Vilalta**Fairfax County Community Services Board**

- An open play field could also be used as a "screen on the green"
- People who are connected to the park will value and maintain the park more
- The fitness area can just be a stretching area
- If there's no bathroom, doggie waste bags would be a good idea for pet waste and children's diapers

Speaker 15

- The plan shows fitness for adults, but the focus for the park should be on children first
- The skate park is a great idea; the rest of the park should be fun for all kids, including the ones who don't skate
- Areas for older and younger kids should be separated

Speaker 16 - Nora Watts

VOICE

- Looked at the park previously with her group
- The bottom line is that kids and parents need to take ownership of the park; if parents come to the park with kids, and things are organized for the kids, they won't be so destructive
- Kids really need somewhere to go

Speaker 17

- Has lived in Sequoyah 20+ years
- Not doing anything to the park means we'll be stuck with what we have
- Develop the park and the community will receive more benefits than negative

WRITTEN COMMENTS

FROM BOTH THE PICNIC AND PUBLIC MEETING

Comment Cards

1. We need more lights, water sources, soccer field, tables, games for children, maintenance of the grass, basketball court, and make a gymnasium
2. Water fountains, bike trails
3. We need tables and benches, no smoking because it is dangerous for our children, bathrooms and water fountains
4. Water park
5. Bathrooms, water fountains, bike trail, lights, playground
6. Sidewalks from park to front of school, ADA, strollers, etc.
7. Lighting, playground for kids, tables, grills, bathrooms, trash cans, picnic area, basketball court, football field, pool
8. Park area fenced off to provide safety for children to play
9. Bathrooms, water fountains, benches, running track
10. Want a river, a basketball court, and "mostly" a skate spot
11. Running track, bathrooms, soccer field, water fountains
12. Soccer field with lights, skate park, playground, trash cans, pool, picnic table and grills
13. Porta potties, lights, police presence, benches, basketball, jogging track around field, trash cans maintained by county, garden plot
14. Nice soccer field for kids
15. The proposed layout is great. Bathrooms are something to consider-- there's a park under the Wilson Bridge in Alexandria that has nice bathrooms
16. More for children to play on, more bathrooms
17. The new ideas for the park are great, definitely like the fitness area for adults and the fact that is not so far in the rear
18. Want a police post, and more security

Sticky Notes

My dream for this park is...

family movie night
basketball court
a skate park!
bathroom!
bike racks
bike trail in the woods
pool, a pavilion, baseball, soccer, movie nights
show movies!
crosswalk
NO dog park
bathrooms
something similar to screen on the green outside
outdoor movie theater w/ AC or fans
gardens!
bathrooms
walking trails!
a safe place
TREES!
roller skate park
bathrooms!
water fountains!
make a new jogging road
stretching/workout stations
playground
a beautiful pool
go kart track
a library, bowling alley, movie theater
no bullies allowed sign
more swings/playground
running track
umbrella over the fitness

Additional Public Comments Received through July 22, 2015

- I would like a synthetic turf field to be on Mount Vernon Park located on Fielding street right in front of Mount Vernon Woods Elementary school. I believe there should be a healthy clean area on the park, a synthetic turf field with goals and nets would be wonderful.
- This park backs up on Huntley Meadows. There are currently no nearby access trails to Huntley Park and this park would be a perfect entry point.
- The Meadow and Wooded area will be a wonderful opportunity for the park to introduce nature to the community.

- I am excited to see the skate park as I feel that this will draw the youth to the park. Today's youth NEED to get out of the house, engage in sports, and experience the outside. Also, once at the park perhaps they will engage in the interpretive trails in the meadow and wooded area introducing them to the wonders and importance of nature.
- I live right next to the park. No skate boarding wanted by us. A small area fenced off for off leash dogs way in the back next to the woods would be nice.
- The park needs water fountains, restrooms, lighting, skate park, trails, trash cans (general and for dogs).
- The draft plan notes a lack of younger trees or seedlings. We must plan for the future tree cover for this wooded area of the park. In order to do this seedlings and younger trees must be present. 20 + years from now the mature tree cover may begin toppling over as these trees might reach the end of their natural lives. We need to have young seedling trees to take their place planted now so that we don't fall behind on the succession of tree cover.
- This Park serves as an opportunity to display best practices for stormwater management to include rain gardens and stream restoration that should be shown to the community.
- Parking along Fielding Street is problematic. This street is too narrow for parking on both sides of the street and 2-way traffic to pass. Please consider recommending changes to the on-street parking such that it is only on 1 side of the street in the vicinity of Mt. Vernon Woods Park and Mt. Vernon Woods Elementary School. Parking only on 1 side of the street will keep our children safer due to better visibility for drivers to see Park patrons moving across the street and along the street. Right now, with cars parked on both sides of the street, 2-way traffic cannot pass.
- There are no bathroom facilities within a mile or two of the park. As such park patrons use the wooded area as a bathroom. This negatively impacts water quality and simply stated, is stinky in the summer time. We must address this issue and perhaps a port-a-john may help resolve this problem. It is the young children who need this the most. Having them relieve themselves in the wooded area of the park is accomplishing very little in the way of teaching the next generation of adults in our community about appropriate places to use for this bodily function.