

SALONA PARK TASK FORCE
MEETING MINUTES
August 28, 2013

Chair Margaret Malone called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Members Present: Richard Bliss, Sybil Caldwell, Dan DuVal, Carole Herrick, Ed Pickens, Joel Stillman and Margaret Malone. Guests included: Rip Sullivan, Dranesville Representative to the Park Authority Board, Matt Richardson from MYA, Dan Schwartz from the NoVA Soil and Water Conservation District. Also present, Andrew Galusha representing the Fairfax County Park Authority and Jane Edmondson representing Supervisor John Foust.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the July 10th meeting were approved.

Presentation on Soils of Salona: Dan Schwartz, a soil scientist from the NoVA Soil and Water Conservation District, provided an overview of soils, in general, and at Salona, in particular. His presentation included a map of the various soil types at the property, identified by a number and letter. Some of his comments and responses to questions include:

- Soil is classified according to CLORPT: climate organisms, relief or topography, parent material and time. Relief and parent material come into play at Salona
- Salona is right on the border of 2 major watersheds: Pimmit and Dead Run.
- Salona has intermittent and perennial streams.
- The limiting factor for most potential uses at Salona is the wetness of the soil.
- Development makes the soil less porous. This applies to fill soil, too. Changes create more runoff. There is less rainwater infiltration due to increased compaction.
- The northwest corner would be good for parking. This was 39 B shown on the map that was presented to the Task Force.
- Trails and farming would be suitable activities anywhere on the site but the wettest area.
- A grass playing field won't affect materially the soil. Ball fields need a dry flat surface such as 39B. One area would probably need drainage or fill (93B). Another area is too wet (49 A&B).
- If there is a visitors center it would be better if it were built on piers or on a slab.
- Rain gardens and pervious parking are ways that can be used to deal with runoff.

Dan DuVal posed the question "What makes Salona unique and how can we develop a vision for leveraging the unique attributes of the property to provide the best resource for the community?" He identified the history and culture represented by the property, the meadows, and the location. He distributed a handout and walked the Task Force members through it.

- Key factors in developing a plan include the site in its current natural setting, traffic considerations, Salona's proximity to the heart of McLean, and the need to take into consideration the facilities at other parks in the area. He noted that of paramount importance is the need for the development plan to recognize the importance of stewardship of this unique resource. At the same time the plan should seek to provide community involvement and enjoyment of the resource.

- Each of the significant attributes of the property – historical, cultural and natural resource values – can be readily incorporated into education and learning opportunities for all community members, including both indoor and outdoor educational programs.
- The property has distinct periods of significance – early settlement to 1717; Lee family ownership (1717-1812); early to mid-19th century (War of 1812 and Madison visit up to the Civil War); and late 19th and early 20th century farming.
- Suggestions included involving the community in archaeological studies; programs to study the attributes of wetlands, hedgerows, and grass or plant types; engaging persons of all ages in horticultural activities; focusing on environmental education; and providing an opportunity for appreciation of birds, wildlife, and relative tranquility in a natural setting. It was noted that the executive chef of Harth Restaurant had expressed a strong interest in Salona as a venue for farm-to-table education programs for local school children.
- To implement these ideas and programs it would be highly desirable to incorporate a visitor and welcome center in the plan to serve as a gathering area for small groups, as a classroom, and a site for interpretive exhibitions.

General Discussion Following the Presentation

- A Task Force member observed that Dan’s recommendations were his opinions and asked if he thought that they reflected the views of the community.
- Dan responded that while the recommendations were his opinions, he thought that they did represent the views of the community. He went on to say that Salona is unique and that if ball fields are put on the property, the historic nature of the property will be lost.
- A Task Force member stated that there would be no goal posts or bleachers with the playing fields. He believed that what Dan proposed could be compatible with fields.
- Another Task Force member expressed concern that MYA has not presented concrete details about what is planned for the fields.
- In response, a Task Force member said that the two fields proposed by MYA would be of the same sizes as proposed in the County’s Draft Plan. He said that the fields would be used every day of the week for 4 months/year after school hours. Mainly 5th and 6th graders and perhaps younger kids would use the fields. One field could accommodate a game with 11x11 participants or the field could be divided and used for multiple games with 4x4 players.
- It was stated that 50 parking spaces are required per field.
- A Task Force member asked where one could see fields of the same size as the ones proposed for Salona. There was some discussion of field sizes.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting is Tuesday, Sept. 10, 7:30 p.m. at Supervisor Foust’s office.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 p.m.