

SALONA PARK TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES September 10, 2013

Chair Margaret Malone called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

Members Present: Sybil Caldwell, Dan DuVal, Carole Herrick, Ed Pickens, Joel Stillman, Mark Turner and Margaret Malone. Guests included: Peggy Stevens from the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust. Also present, Andrew Galusha representing the Fairfax County Park Authority and Jane Edmondson representing Supervisor John Foust.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the August 28th meeting were approved.

Chairman's Remarks:

- The chair has been informed that bids will be taken on the archaeological survey work on September 11th.
- The previously scheduled meeting for September 24th needs to be canceled. The chair will send an email to Task Force members asking for meeting dates in October and November.

Presentations

- **Beth Chung** gave a presentation outlining her recommendations vision for Salona. She distributed a handout entitled: Salona: Growing a Sense of Place and Community in McLean. Key features of the presentation were:
 - Salona can be used to increase awareness of the area's history.
 - The goal of the Park Authority's draft management plan is: To conserve and manage the natural and historic resources of Salona, while providing environmentally focused, sustainable access to these resources for the enjoyment and benefit of McLean area residents over the long term.
 - The Task Force "should not gloss over the inherent tension between the two aspects of the Goal: preserve recreational values and forever maintain and preserve."
 - The easement language makes clear that use is subservient to conservation at Salona.
 - The land should guide the property. "Sound management starts with a solid foundation of ecological knowledge..."
 - Policy framework challenges include:
 - Lack of some essential scientific information
 - Need for biological testing
 - Complete inventory of stream water resources and soils is lacking.
 - Conservation easement is not well understood by the community at large.
 - Development at Salona should follow the cultural landscape report.
 - The Task Force should follow the Park Authority's archaeologist's recommendation that the "site be considered as an historic and ecological whole.

- Potential uses for Salona could include:
 - Horticultural
 - Viticultural
 - Forestation-possible chestnut reforestation project
 - Agricultural-problematic because of fertilizer and drainage issues
 - Walking Trails-but they should be connected to adjacent neighborhoods and other trails in the network. Topography is important.
 - Fitness Trail
 - Historical Interpretation
 - Equestrian Use- not suitable
 - Dogs-Consider in-ground dog waste composters
 - Athletic field-one field might be viable if placed in the NW corner but with parking, the use would eliminate other uses. Conversion of native landscape to turf results in ecosystem-level changes regardless of how it is managed.
 - Nature Center-appropriate use for a significant conservation area. Proper siting/"floating" construction would have lowest visual impact. Net zero nature center would probably require an amendment to the easement, and would have visitation patterns during daytime hours that would minimize traffic impact.
- Establish a conservation core zone comprised of the two hedgerows, the present and future RPA, the central meadow and the hydric soils beneath.
- Provide a one-way car parking circulation, entering from Buchanan Street and exiting to the right on to Rt. 123.

General Discussion Following the Presentation

- A Task Force member stated that any plan for Salona has to take into account the water flowing onto the site from across Rt. 123.
- The same Task Force member stated that there needs to be a discussion of what would happen if the bank property were acquired.
- Andy stated that VDOT's plan for Rt. 123, available for viewing on the VDOT website, would eliminate the bank lot. He added that the Park Authority did take account of the widening of Rt. 123 in the first draft of the master plan for Salona.
- Another Task Force member asked about Beth's statement regarding conservation is predominant. She responded that in any document, there has to be one controlling feature.
- The same Task Force member asked if regular grass would hurt the land.
- Beth replied that it does because of a number of factors, including the need to use fertilizer.
- In response to a question about mowing of the meadows and whether mowing disturbs the "natural" look of the site, Beth responded that mowing is good for the health of the grasses.
- Another Task Force member asked about Beth's recommendation that the Task Force "Vote up or down on specific uses". Beth responded that she would like a much broader discussion, perhaps with a facilitator, of the proposed uses.

- In response to the discussion about soil testing, one Task Force member stated that the Park Authority probably would not want to spend money on it before developing a plan. Beth feels it would be useful to have the analysis before the Master Plan is drafted.

Other:

- It was agreed to reschedule the presentation by Sybil Caldwell to the October 1st meeting.
- Andy stated that the Park Authority would hold a public meeting on Oct. 17th to discuss the master plan for Langley Fork. Jane mentioned that there were a number of other public meetings on the calendar, and at Margaret's request, agreed to send a list of them to all Task Force members.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting is Tuesday, October 1, 7:30 p.m. at Supervisor Foust's office.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.