

# **SALONA PARK TASK FORCE**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**November 13, 2012**

The meeting convened at 7:35 pm. Members present: Whit Field, Ed Pickens, Sybil Caldwell, Mark Turner, Dan DuVal, Margaret Malone, and Joel Stillman. Also present: Cheryl Patten representing Supervisor John Foust and Andrew Galusha representing the Fairfax County Park Authority.

There was discussion regarding how the task force will proceed to develop and write its final recommendations to be presented to John Foust, Kevin Fay, and the Park Authority. It was suggested that each task force member read all related major documents including: the draft Master Plan for Salona, the conservation easement, the cultural landscape report, the public meeting comment sheets and task force presentations. All task force members will then write a draft report that lays out their recommendations. These individual reports can be in a format determined by each task force member. Ms. Malone will review the reports and write a draft that reflects the view(s) of the task force. That draft will be subject to amendment after review by the task force. It was agreed that a copy of the site plan for Salona Park, without any uses indicated, would be emailed to each task force member so that it might be used to assist with their deliberations.

It was acknowledged that the recommendations of the task force are advisory only, and that the final decision for the development of Salona Park rests with the Board of Supervisors and the Park Authority and its Board.

There was discussion regarding the work of the task force during its tenure. It was stated that it is important for task force members to share views and to work together to produce a final report.

It was observed that athletic field advocates represent about 15% of the community and that they are well organized in their support of athletic fields at Salona Park, turning out in significant numbers for the public meeting. Others in the community with other interests are not similarly organized.

There was discussion regarding how the task force should develop its recommendations: whether the recommendations should be based on a totality of the research it has done or based only on comments that it has been provided.

There was discussion of language in the Salona Park conservation easement. It was noted that conservation easements are living documents and are written to evolve, meaning that expectations for uses of the land can change. The language in the easement includes athletic fields as an allowable use. However, the Salona Cultural Landscape Report, written subsequently, emphasizes the historical and cultural uniqueness of the Salona property.

There was discussion regarding a potential compromise approach wherein athletic fields, natural resources and the historical/cultural aspects of the property would all be included on the site.

There was also discussion regarding the dangerous nature of the intersection of Buchanan and Rt. 123. It was observed that the surrounding neighborhoods would experience a significant increase in traffic on their streets should athletic fields be installed.

The size of potential athletic fields and their parking requirements were discussed. Each field requires parking for 50 vehicles. The observation was made that a small sized field for younger children would likely generate fewer cars because the families would potentially use car pools. Full sized fields would be for older players or split to allow for groups of younger players. A request was made of the Park Authority to provide the task force with information providing specifics on the sizes of allowable fields used by younger children. It was observed that McLean Youth Athletics member sports have offered to fully fund the construction of acceptable athletic fields at Salona Park.

The conservation easement allows up to 10 acres for active recreation. It was asked whether active recreation was limited to an organized sport group activity. Currently the Fairfax County Park Authority defines active recreation as being organized sports activity but that definition may come under review shortly. It was noted that the language of the easement in section 3.9 specifically states that active and passive recreation is allowable as to what “can” be done on the site. An extension of the Resource Protection Area (RPA) at Salona will affect what can be done on the property. Allowed constructions within the RPA are trails, walkways, and bridges.

VDOT has stated that parking for Salona Park must be off of Buchanan St. and the park entrance on Gilliams Rd. A nature center or other facility built at Salona must be of a size and attract patrons to make the construction of a parking lot worthwhile. It was observed that more than one acre is required to build 100 parking spaces.

Concern was expressed about planning for the park when two of the significant studies, the RPA and archaeology, have not been done yet. The Park Authority process is to move ahead with the planning which will in turn trigger the required studies. If the

studies indicate that athletic fields or other facilities should not be built, then the plan would be revised at that time.

It was observed that many ideas have been offered about possible uses for the land and there may or may not be an opportunity for compromise. A task force member expressed the view that the job of the task force is to take the public input and to combine that with what the task force has learned through its research.

#### NEW BUSINESS

All task force members Were asked to get the drafts of their recommendations to Margaret Malone no later than Wednesday, December 5, 2012

The next meeting will be at the office of Supervisor Foust on **Tuesday, December 11 at 7 pm. Please note the change in time.**