

# **SALONA PARK TASK FORCE**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**December 11, 2012**

The meeting convened at 7:15 pm. Members present: Joel Stillman, Ed Pickens, Beth Chung, Carole Herrick, Margaret Malone, Mark Turner, and Sybil Caldwell. Dan DuVal joined the meeting subsequently. Also present: Cheryl Patten representing Supervisor John Foust and Andrew Galusha representing the Fairfax County Park Authority. Guests/presenters present: Dori Burner and Murad Pandit, Battlefield Polo Club; Lou Lopez, UVA coach.

Ms. Burner and Mr. Pandit made a presentation to the task force advocating the creation of a polo field at the park which would host spectator polo weekend, seasonal matches. They explained that the matches would be held on Saturdays only and the field would be available to the community for other agreed upon uses during the week. The history of horses at Salona was cited as making polo a continuing use of the property. The polo club would lease the field from the county and assume all maintenance responsibility for the playing area which would be supported by spectator entry fees. The presenters spoke to the low impact and seasonal use of the land and observed that the matches would present an opportunity for the community to come together.

A task force member referred to the concern of the neighborhood about the safety of vehicle ingress and egress to the park area. It was mentioned that a polo match could potentially generate 300 visitors to the park on match day and that the lack of pedestrian access would necessitate a large number of vehicles. Although there is no final decision from VDOT regarding the possibility of installing a traffic signal at the intersection of Buchanan St and Rt. 123/Dolley Madison Blvd., a presenter noted the possibility that the polo club could hire a traffic officer to assist with vehicle movement.

### Minutes of November 13, 2012:

A task force member asked that it be noted that in the minutes of November 13, 2012 the comment that “field advocates represent about 15% of the community” is not verifiable and that it be regarded as an opinion. The minutes were subsequently approved as written.

Discussion began regarding the time line for the task force for delivering its report. It was stated that Fairfax County is making a strong effort to verify the RPA (Resource Protection Area) and until that determination is made a firm date for completion of the task force report would be difficult.

The determination for the boundaries of the RPA will be made by staff from Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES). It was explained that once the determination is made the results must be go to the Board of Supervisors and a public meeting must be held. The chair stated that Supervisor Foust agrees that the task force should have the information about the RPA assessment in order to prepare its recommendations. It was suggested by a member that the task force postpone any further meetings until the information about the RPA is available to the task force.

The chair noted that not all task force members have turned in the requested draft reports of their recommendations for land use in the park. Once all the draft reports have been received, a working draft report incorporating all the responses will be prepared by the chair for use as a spring board for discussion by the entire task force. One member proposed that instead of a full blown report each member write a brief statement of what they would like to see in the park and that those statements be sent to all task force members. He further stated that he has advocated a specific proposal for land use and that no other task force member has done so. He proposed that all members submit a one page report that would be used as a basis for discussion among task force members. The member requested that it be noted that in his opinion the submission of individual reports to the chair which would be incorporated into a single draft report without everyone else's input is a benevolent dictatorship and that the report would not completely express all task force members opinions. There was disagreement to this idea and another member expressed that she had spent an entire week preparing her report. It was noted that the reports are indeed hard work but that all members of the task force had previously agreed to the process. Another task force member expressed the view that the reports were useful in helping to get one's thoughts together. It was then proposed that once all reports have been turned in to the chair, task force members may share their reports with other members of the task force.

A motion was made:

*Every task force member will be required to share in writing with each other their recommendations for what should be in the final report to the Park Authority.*

The motion failed for lack of a second.

A new motion was made:

*Task force members will get their reports to the chair by January 4, 2013 at which time the chair will review the reports and organize discussion for the task force based on the reports prior to the preparation of the final report.*

The motion was seconded and carried.

It was noted that until the RPA assessment is reviewed by the task force any recommendations would be provisional. Reports prepared by task force members will be considered draft reports pending a presentation to the task force about the RPA boundaries. That presentation should occur in mid-late January 2013.

The chair reported that she had received a report from David Gustie regarding his earlier presentation about potentially using some of the Salona land as a community farm. The report will be available to task force members at a later date.

It was noted that the Conservation Easement specifically prohibits the cutting down of any live tree with a circumference nine inches or larger. As such, polo play would not be possible in the area identified by the Battlefield Polo Club organization without an exception.

#### **SPECIAL NOTICE**

Task force member Dan DuVal asked that an email titled *Salona Park Investigative Report*, dated November 26, 2012 and distributed by task force member Joel Stillman on behalf of "McLean Youth Athletics, Inc. be entered into the record of the December 11, 2012 minutes of the task force." Mr. DuVal stated for the record that the e-mail states that the "current statements by the grantor/seller ... is absolutely not true." (See the highlighted sentence in the attachment to these minutes). Mr. DuVal stated that he does "not know what the statement in the e-mail is referring to."

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be at the office of Supervisor Foust on **Tuesday, January 29, 2013 at 7:30 pm.**

#### **ATTACHMENT**

**From:** "McLean Youth Athletics, Inc." <[Notification@LeagueAthletics.com](mailto:Notification@LeagueAthletics.com)>  
**Date:** November 26, 2012, 5:20:12 PM EST  
**To:** [Redacted]>  
**Subject:** Salona Park Investigative Report  
**Reply-To:** "[jstillman@capfin.net](mailto:jstillman@capfin.net)" <[jstillman@capfin.net](mailto:jstillman@capfin.net)>

To All McLean Youth Athletics Families:

On Thursday November 16 NBC News Channel 4 aired a special I-Team report on Salona Park providing insight into its history and potential development. The investigative report included interviews with Joel Stillman, President of MYA and a Salona Park Task Force member; Dan Duval, the grantor/seller of the easement on Salona Park; John Foust, our Dranesville Supervisor; and Kevin Faye, our Dranesville District representative to the Fairfax County Park Authority.

The entire 3 ½ minute broadcast can be viewed by clicking on the link below. Of particular importance, however, was Mr Faye's remarks wherein he stated, "I was in the room. It was stated by the county executive that this deal [payment of \$16 million for the easement] would not happen unless there were athletic fields as part of the arrangement."

<http://www.nbcwashington.com/investigations/Turf-War-McLean-expensive-land-deal-easement-athletic-fields-179602181.html>

We are encouraged that the position that we have maintained from the beginning, that it was always intended that athletic fields be included in the multi-use development of Salona Park, is now publically confirmed. Further, the current statements by the grantor/seller of the \$16 million easement, that athletic fields were never intended to be in Salona Park, is absolutely not true. We will continue to push for the sorely needed athletic fields at Salona Park along with other educational and historical uses in our MYA proposal, a proposal that is similar to the Salona Park Draft Master Plan. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Joel Stillman, President  
McLean Youth Athletics, Inc.