

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
PARKS COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 13, 2005**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

John R. Byers, Mount Vernon District  
Frank de la Fe, Hunter Mill District Commissioner  
Ronald W. Koch, Sully District  
Rodney L. Lusk, Lee District  
Laurie F. Wilson, At-Large

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Staff  
Sara Robin Hardy, Assistant Director, PC Staff  
Norma J. Duncan, Associate Clerk, PC Staff  
Harrison A. Glasgow, Fairfax County Park Authority Board (FCPAB), At-Large  
Kirk Holley, Manager, Park Planning Branch, Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA)  
David B. Marshall, Assistant Director, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)  
Sandra Stallman, Long Range Planner, FCPA  
Lynn Tadlock, Director, Planning and Development Division (PDD), FCPA

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Walter L. Alcorn, At-Large  
James R. Hart, At-Large  
Nancy Hopkins, Dranesville District  
Kenneth A. Lawrence, Providence District  
Peter F. Murphy, Jr., Springfield District

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Chairman Frank de la Fe convened the meeting at 7:31 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Conference Room, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA.

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Chairman de la Fe expressed his hope that the committee could complete discussions before the scheduled Planning Commission public hearing on proposed revisions to the Parks and Recreation elements of the Comprehensive Plan. (*Editor's Note: The Planning Commission public hearing on S01-CW-15CP is scheduled on February 24, 2005.*) He said that the draft revisions had been approved by the stakeholders group for submission to the Park Authority Board. Chairman de la Fe explained that the two handouts (copies in committee date file) were marked up and clean copies of the draft and then asked for a quick update from staff on the revisions.

Lynn Tadlock, Director, Planning and Development Division, FCPA, stated that Sandra Stallman, Long Range Planner, would review the documents.

Ms. Stallman noted that the Introduction set the framework for the objectives and policies of the integrated park system. She said the first policy objective set the purpose of the park system, established the park classification system, and provided for a balance between active and passive uses and between recreation and the preservation of natural and cultural resources. Policy objective 2, she continued, addressed the Park Authority's role in protecting and preserving natural resources.

Ms. Stallman noted that policy objective 3, which covered cultural resources was a new addition. She said that the Park Authority was taking a larger lead in preserving and protecting those resources than it had in 1990 when there was no policy objective listed. She explained that policy objectives 4 and 5 dealt with providing park and recreation needs while developing new and existing sites, using the park facilities optimally, and ensuring that park resources were long-term and sustainable. Ms. Stallman said the language in policy objective 6 had been strengthened and would best serve adverse development impacts on park and recreation facilities. She noted that Appendix 1 was the Park Classification System and Appendix 2 was Standards and Criteria for establishment of Parks and Recreation Facilities that were adopted as part of the needs assessment. The needs assessment, Ms. Stallman explained, was one of the drivers in changing the Park Classification System appendix from the nine current classifications to the following four classifications: local, district, County-wide, and resource-based parks. Ms. Stallman referred to a chart (included in the date file) that represented the selected classifications based on the primary purpose, the location, access, size, service area, typical facilities, intensity of park development and user experience.

Ms. Stallman explained that Appendix 2 incorporated the park acreage and facilities standards adopted during the needs assessment, which would be used to determine future development of the park system and service level impacts from additional residents and future growth in the County. She mentioned the Park Authority's policy on park land acquisition had been added to Appendix 2 as a result of a prior issue concerning appropriate park land and to make that policy more transparent for citizens and decision-makers.

Chairman de la Fe commented that the document had been viewed by a diverse group for clarity. He noted that the proposal clarified the difference between neighborhood and community parks. He indicated that one of the major reasons why the 1996 language had failed was that it had proposed a specific list of items for parks for each of the different classifications which some mistakenly believed was a vehicle for the Park Authority to develop a park without any further input.

Referencing the document entitled, "2004 Draft Markup", Commissioner Byers pointed out text on page 4, policy i, which stated, "(EQC) segments needed to connect and complete the public stream valley network". Then he referenced page 8, policy e, which stated "seek dedication of appropriate lands to the Fairfax County Park Authority that meet the criteria for RPAs and parkland adjacent to stream valleys." He asked whether there was inappropriate land next to stream valleys, what appropriate meant in that context, how many segments were appropriate or inappropriate, and how many were still needed.

Ms. Tadlock explained that the intent was to obtain land adjacent to stream valley protection areas that would offer inherent environmental benefits and would provide some protective mechanisms for the RPA areas. She said that some land belonging to homeowners associations did not connect to park land and would, therefore, be more appropriately used by an association rather than the Park Authority. Chairman de la Fe noted that land acquired by the Park Authority had to be open to the public but there might be land that, for a variety of reasons, was not usable.

Kirk Holley, Manager, Park Planning Branch, FCPA, stated that “appropriate” could be defined by land acquisition criteria, such as contiguity and accessibility to the public or a public right-of-way. He said that lands serving six or eight of those criteria would be the definition of “appropriate.”

Commissioner Byers asked whether the Park Authority meant to acquire all the segments needed to complete the stream valley network based on their statement “to connect and complete the stream valley network”. Harrison Glasgow, Fairfax County Park Authority Board, interjected that only those pieces of the RPA that would complete the trail system were needed. Chairman de la Fe noted that what was missing were links in the official maps, stream valleys and trail systems. After Commissioner Byers asked how many segments were needed, Ms. Tadlock responded that she had no specific number but could show green coloring where contiguous spaces were needed. Chairman de la Fe suggested that the stream valley protection study maps could be a source of identifying missing connections.

Commissioner Wilson asked whether there were stream valleys not designated on the Trails Plan. Ms. Tadlock confirmed that some stream valleys did not and would not have trails and that there were stream valleys that were not in the Trails Plan. She said there were circumstances where humans should not be allowed to walk in a habitat area. Commissioner Wilson asked if there were any segments the Trails Committee had missed that were needed to complete the public stream valley network. After discussion, it was concluded that all the trails had been identified on the Trails Plan, that no designations were missing on the map, that there was still land to be acquired, and that the parcels that were missing would make a contiguous trail network via public routes.

In answer to a question from Commissioner Byers, Ms. Tadlock noted that the phrase “protect park lands from encroachments” did not refer to monopolies. She said there was a specific monopoly policy by which applications were evaluated and that they had to meet the criteria to have a legal right to be located on park land. By definition, she said, encroachments were those things having no legal reason to be located on park land.

In response to a question from Commissioner Wilson, Ms. Stallman said that monopolies were addressed on page 7 of the document. Mr. Holley added that an example of encroachment would be to use park land as an unauthorized extension of someone’s back yard. Chairman de la Fe suggested that staff include a definition of encroachment in the glossary.

Commissioner Wilson noted that pocket parks did not seem to fall under the criteria for local

parks even though it was listed under classifications. Ms. Stallman replied that there was more detail in the actual description for urban parks. Commissioner Wilson argued that the policy seemed to suggest that a local park would mean active recreation. Ms. Stallman replied that local, district, and countywide parks were really recreation primary purpose parks but natural or cultural resource areas were not precluded within those parks. She stated that urban parks were part of local parks because they served a local constituency. She said that urban parks were envisioned to be incorporated and integrated within a mixed use type development or a large employment center, and indicated that there were certain elements that distinguished them from a neighborhood or community style park.

Commissioner Wilson commented that there was always a question asked during the APR process as to whether someone could amend a particular amendment to have a park option. In task force meetings, she said the staff expressed no interest in anything under two acres and maintained that with space being at a premium, it would be nice to have low maintenance pocket parks even if totally passive with only a bench and a shade tree. She gave an example of a pocket park in the Lee District known as the Calamo Park that was maintained by the business owners in downtown Springfield. In response to a question from Commissioner Lawrence, Mr. Holley said that the County owned that park.

Commissioner Wilson stated a desire to promote pocket parks under the local park classification. Commissioner Lawrence suggested that size, accessibility, and cost might be useful criteria to investigate. Chairman de la Fe referred to text on pages 15 and 16 of the 2004 Draft Markup on the character of parks, and pointed out that this language included pocket parks. He noted that the Park Authority wanted to emphasize urban parks because they were small and that pocket parks were a new concept under the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Wilson then asked about the adopt-a-park program and what restrictions applied. Ms. Tadlock replied that there were no restrictions on who could adopt a park but that there were responsibility criteria. Chairman de la Fe said the vehicle was in place if a neighborhood wanted to adopt a small park.

Chairman de la Fe requested that staff prepare and make available at the public hearing, a formula for residential standards similar to that used by the school system for service levels of students. He also said there were specific references and questions regarding the use of school facilities and he did not know if the school system would object.

Ms. Stallman stated that staff used certain standards to create maps for the different facilities and noted that the map displayed local and neighborhood community parks using the standard of one acre per 200 people. She pointed out that the areas in green were neighborhood and community parks which were considered local parks, the outline around the circle represented the current service level, and the inner circle represented 2013 projections. She advised that as population growth and projections increased, the service area would shrink because existing local parks were serving the current and projected population. She said the areas outside those bubbles were areas of deficiency where service was targeted.

To answer a question from Commissioner Alcorn concerning the possibility of an overlay on the parks maps, Ms. Stallman noted that areas like Reston, Burke, and Kingstowne had that information available but that information about homeowner association parks was not as accessible.

Ms. Stallman acknowledged to Commissioner Lawrence that the circles on the map represented service to other jurisdictions such as the Town of Vienna, Town of Herndon, City of Fairfax but did not include the City of Falls Church.

Mr. Holley emphasized that the map was only representative of a particular facility and there were similar maps for large-based parks and facilities. He said it was a more useful tool in an overlay situation to make comparisons and see deficiencies in areas not served by a local park but served by regional parks. He added that staff was currently using the dynamic GIS-based tool for viewing projections at the local level for the master plan, impact analysis, and for development of layers.

Commissioner Wilson brought attention to environmental issues under the section: "Using Best Management Practices", asserting that there was no policy to minimize use of pesticides and chemicals on park land. She stated that there should be a County policy to prevent encroachment from leaching chemicals onto natural resources just as there was on encroachment from adjacent lands onto park lands. She suggested that some golf courses were currently using the pest management programs.

Chairman de la Fe cited page 5, objective 2 as the policy she asked for which described minimizing adverse impacts to air quality and water. He said his view was that specific items, such as DDT, should not be listed. Commissioner Alcorn suggested Commissioner Wilson was searching for the term "Integrated Pest Management," which she acknowledged.

Commissioner Alcorn suggested inserting a concept of protective services provided by those natural areas. He added that the idea was not to protect the natural areas for the sake of it but to provide ecological services and habitat to filter the stormwater run-off. He said there were references to protecting the habitat in the EQC policy.

Chairman de la Fe encouraged the committee members to contact Ms. Stallman with any other ideas or to inform him and he would relay them. He commented on an item that he thought had been removed at the top of page 17, which referred to the secondary function for protection of natural resources. Ms. Tadlock agreed that those phrases should have been deleted.

Commissioner Wilson inquired as to the next step and whether the committee would take any action. Chairman de la Fe responded that there would be a Planning Commission public hearing on February 24<sup>th</sup> after which they would make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. Commissioner Alcorn noted that there were times when the committee did not take a prior position.

Ms. Stallman answered an inquiry from Commissioner Alcorn about the staff report by stating that it would be published at the beginning of the month.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.  
Frank de la Fe, Chairman

An audio recording of this meeting is available at the Planning Commission Office, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 330, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

Minutes by: Norma Duncan

Approved: April 28, 2004

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Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk  
Fairfax County Planning Commission