

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
PARKS COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2007**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Frank de la Fe, Hunter Mill District
Earl L. Flanagan, Mount Vernon District
James R. Hart, At-Large
Rodney L. Lusk, Lee District

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Suzanne F. Harsel, Braddock District
Ronald W. Koch, Sully District

OTHER COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Walter L. Alcorn, At-Large
Peter F. Murphy, Jr., Springfield District
Timothy J. Sargeant, At-Large

PARK AUTHORITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Harrison A. Glasgow, At-Large
Winifred S. Shapiro, Braddock District
Edward Batten, Lee District
Frank S. Vajda, Mason District

STAFF PRESENT:

Timothy White, Deputy Director, FCPA
Sandra Stallman, Park Planning Branch, FCPA
Scott Sizer, Park Planner, FCPA
Andrea Dorlester, Park Planner, FCPA
James Zook, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)
Eileen McLane, Zoning Administration Division, DPZ
David Marshall, Planning Division, DPZ
Barbara J. Lipka, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office
Sara Robin Hardy, Assistant Director, PC Staff
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk, Planning Commission

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Planning Commission Vice-Chairman Walter L. Alcorn constituted the meeting at 7:31 p.m., pursuant to Section 4-102 of the Commission's *Bylaws & Procedures*, in the Board of Supervisors' Conference Room, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035, and indicated that the first order of business was to elect a committee chairman.

Commissioner Hart MOVED TO NOMINATE FRANK A. DE LA FE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE 2007 PARKS COMMITTEE.

Commissioner Flanagan seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

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Vice Chairman Alcorn turned the gavel over to Chairman de la Fe who said the first order of business was approval of minutes.

Commissioner Hart MOVED THAT THE PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 26, 2006 BE APPROVED.

Commissioner Flanagan seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

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Chairman de la Fe noted that the purpose of tonight's meeting was to discuss the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment regarding an increase in park fees. (A copy of the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment is in the date file.)

Sandra Stallman, Park Planning Branch, Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), said that on Monday, March 12, 2007 the Board of Supervisors had authorized a public hearing for a proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment that would increase the park amenity proffer in P-Districts from \$955 per unit to \$1,500 per unit. She said that the Planning Commission public hearing would be held on April 19 and the Board of Supervisors' public hearing on May 7, 2007.

In response to a comment by Chairman de la Fe, Ms. Stallman said that the County Attorney had issued an opinion that an escalation clause could not be put into the Ordinance but that the fee could be reviewed on a more regular basis than it had been in the past to determine if an increase was warranted.

Commissioner Murphy pointed out that increasing the fee would in turn increase the cost of housing at a time when the County was making a concerted effort to provide workforce and affordable housing. He said that money was received for parks through bond referenda and since out-sourcing was becoming more common, he asked why an increase was needed. Ms. Stallman replied that P-District funds were usually used for on-site recreational amenities, but if not, they were contributed to the Park Authority. James Zook, Director, DPZ, pointed out that revenue to the Park Authority from this source was insignificant.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Alcorn, Andrea Dorlester, Park Planner, said of the \$955 per unit contribution since the year 2000, \$16 million had been spent on-site and \$1 million had gone to the Park Authority.

Winnie Shapiro explained that the cost for park capital facilities over the next few years would be over \$400 million dollars and that bond referenda would not provide that amount; therefore, alternative financing sources were needed. She pointed out that proffered funds were a source of

revenue albeit not a large source. She said that public-private partnerships would not provide the amount of money needed either.

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Chairman de la Fe said the next agenda item was a discussion about the proffer formula for park contributions. (A Park Proffer Update Summary is in the date file dated March 15, 2007 is in the date file.)

Ms. Stallman explained that in March 2006 the Board of Supervisors had issued a directive to determine if an adjustment to the park proffer provisions would be appropriate. She said the review had resulted in the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment for P-District contributions and consideration of requesting proffered funds for the Park Authority for each new development. She said the current formula produced a per capita contribution of \$265 per person for each resident generated by a new development. She noted that the formula did not include trails, one of the most used facilities, or land, which was becoming increasingly expensive. Ms. Stallman explained that staff had come up with three alternatives:

1. Update the current formula with more recent construction costs and levels of service, adding the cost of trails and land resulting in a fee of \$2,360 per person.
2. Devise a formula modeled after Prince William and Fauquier Counties calculating per capita cost per acre based on total assets in the park system resulting in a fee of \$1,160 per person.
3. Devise a formula modeled after the Fairfax County Public Schools based on the cost to develop a typical local-serving park resulting in a fee of \$1,549 per person.

Addressing the first alternative, Chairman de la Fe pointed out that if a trail was on the Trails Plan Map it was requested and usually provided. He said land was also requested, noting that the order of preference was land first, second facilities, and money last. He suggested that this be kept in mind when the final proposal was made to avoid unintended consequences.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Alcorn, Ms. Stallman said that in-kind contributions had been quantified. Commissioner Alcorn cautioned against inadvertently capping the contribution.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hart, Ms. Stallman said that in 2002 when the Park Authority had considered a cash proffer system, the amount calculated by the study consultant had been very high. She explained that since land and facilities were obtained in many cases, the Board of Supervisors had decided at that time against a cash proffer system.

After review of the second and third alternatives, Commissioner Alcorn pointed out that in Prince William County, proffered funds went into a County-wide pot and were redistributed making it difficult to offset localized impacts.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Lusk, Ms. Shapiro said that a Park Authority Board committee had indicated a preference for the first alternative, noting that she was referring to the committee only, not the whole Board. She said since the County was almost built-out, there would be fewer contributions of buildable land making it more advantageous to have a formula that included all facilities. She remarked that while she liked the idea of including trails and land, she understood the drawbacks to the first alternative.

In response to a question from Chairman de la Fe, Ms. Stallman said the proposals only included capital costs, not replacement or maintenance costs.

Mr. Zook indicated that DPZ needed more time to review the proposals and his view at the moment was that there needed to be another alternative because a seven to nine-fold increase, depending upon the formula used, was unrealistic. He pointed out that DPZ also had to negotiate with developers for workforce housing and public facilities. He said the unintended consequences needed to be considered and overall needs balanced. He noted that Fairfax County had a much older park system than Loudoun and Prince William Counties, a larger population, and higher land costs.

Mr. Zook also expressed concern about treating school and park facilities the same because most of the future development in the County was going to be high density, mixed-use development which would not generate a significant number of school children but would not necessarily reduce the need for parks since adults also used recreational facilities. Therefore, he said he was not sure if having a flat fee based upon the number of persons per dwelling unit would be appropriate. He said since land was so expensive another, more fair, alternative was needed to mitigate the impact on new residents versus the present population.

Chairman de la Fe pointed out that one of the major reasons people voted for park bonds was to acquire land and said if the formula added in the cost of trails and land it could unintentionally raise the question of why both bond referenda and increased fees were needed for land.

Commissioner Alcorn commented that the Residential Development Criteria, developed to offset the impact of residential development on the public facility system, was not intended to treat all facilities equal. He said the park contribution should not equal the school contribution, especially for development types that generated a low number of students. He suggested that the average cost per unit for a high rise condominium be compared to the amount per unit for the school system. Chairman de la Fe agreed that more thought needed to be given to this issue.

Chairman de la Fe noted that a new issue to be considered was contributions to the Park Authority from commercial and office development. He said he did not think it would be unreasonable to request such contributions since people working in those types of development used park facilities.

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Chairman de la Fe noted that the next agenda item was discussion of proposed Park Area Plan Amendments.

Ms. Stallman noted that the Parks portion of the Area Plans was out-of-date and had been on the work plan for some time. She said staff was developing a process to create district park plans that would look at the park system for each Planning district starting with an existing conditions report of all parks within that district, how they related to each other; served the public, aligned with the needs assessment; connected with environmental and cultural resources; and then begin to identify issues.

Ms. Stallman also noted that the park classifications needed to be updated so that they aligned with the Policy Plan adopted last year. She said this was intended to be a Park Authority process which would begin with public outreach in the fall of 2008, after which the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors would hold public hearings.

In response to a question from Chairman de la Fe, Ms. Stallman said that the Area Plans included an inventory of parks in each district with implementation recommendations which became out-of-date very quickly. She said Area Plans referred to the Park Plan for site level recommendations and it was hoped that District plans would contain recommendations for each district.

Chairman de la Fe said he liked the idea of having the Park Authority review and update the District plans and to coordinate them with Area Plans instead of a massive Out-of-Turn Plan Amendment to update the Master Plan.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Flanagan, Ms. Stallman said that the cross county trail served as a spine for other trail connections and as part of this review process, staff would look at where connections could be created and expanded.

Ms. Stallman said the map distributed tonight was an example of how Planning District maps would appear using new technology and tools, a copy of which is in the date file. Chairman de la Fe said that since the maps would delineate Planning Districts, he would like an overlay map to identify the supervisory districts.

Mr. Zook suggested that this process be moved along as fast as possible noting that the Park Authority Board would need to review the proposal before it was presented to the committee. He said his staff needed time to determine what would be reasonable and fair to expect of developers and to also determine if there were other alternatives that could also be considered.

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Chairman de la Fe noted that the next meeting of the committee was scheduled for May 30, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Conference Room.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.
Frank de la Fe, Chairman

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

Minutes by: Linda B. Rodeffer

Approved: May 30, 2007

Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission