

Planning Commission Meeting  
October 27, 2011  
Verbatim Excerpt

2232-M11-13 – FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

After the Close of the Public Hearing

Chairman Murphy: Public hearing is closed; recognize Mr. Hart.

Commissioner Hart: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pinch hitting for Commissioner Hall tonight and I appreciate the opportunity to work on this interesting case. First let me thank the speakers for coming out this evening. I would also like to thank staff, particularly Richard Lambert and Chris Caperton from the Department of Planning and Zoning, and Gayle Hooper from the Park Authority also, for their fine work on this case. The subject property is very unusual. It is six contiguous acres essentially undeveloped in Mason District near the Arlington line surrounded by a densely populated area which has a deficit of park facilities now. The acquisition of the Hogge Park property was a tremendous benefit for the Park Authority and Mason District residents. After extensive community input, the Park Authority has completed its Master Planning process for the park, which incorporates several needed features including an open play area, picnic pavilion, fitness facilities, trails, and community gardens in proximity to numerous apartments and residences. The proposal has satisfactorily addressed the constraints of the site and the potential for shared access from Saint Katherine's Church to the west. Staff has concluded that the application meets the applicable 2232 criteria of general location, character, and extent, and I would adopt the rationale in the staff report. Although we cannot impose development conditions on a 2232 case, I would like to express a couple thoughts on a historic preservation issue. This property may not be the most significant site in the County, but it may be the last of this size in this part of the County. For that reason alone, we may want to be very thorough in analyzing its significance. The park is approximately one half mile from two historic Civil War sites. According to Mr. Dennis Hogge, who is not only a Civil War historian and author, but also a former resident of the property, this area may have been in the middle of the action during a good part of 1861. Mr. Hogge has suggested that a Phase I Archaeological Study should be conducted to determine what may be on-site because the site has not been relic hunted to his knowledge, but there may have been hut sites and fire pits from large encampments in the area which may be deeper than levels of cultivation, as well as skirmishes between these sites, and there might still be artifacts which could help determine which military units were camped there. The Park Authority has indicated that although they are not recommending a Phase I Study, and their funding resources are limited, that the Cultural Resource Management Team will be involved with the process at the time the park is developed, that they often do a reconnaissance-level survey before planned park development and will monitor construction to do data recovery should the site warrant it. The Park Authority also may install signage or utilize other means of communication to interpret the historic significance of the area. I would suggest that even in the absence of an express development condition that the Park Authority be encouraged as the stewards of this property to continue to investigate the potential for historic resources on this site, especially in light of these circumstances, and that they be encouraged to take every reasonable precaution prior to and during site disturbance. The site has lasted in a

relatively undeveloped condition for 150 years after the Civil War activity in the neighborhood without parking lots and apartment buildings going in. A little extra time with this unique site may be valuable for future generations. I believe staff has satisfactorily anticipated and addressed the other objections to the park project. And I would also note that, although I think Commissioner Lawrence's question regarding the gardens and how the space would be allotted is important, I don't believe it would hold up the approval tonight, and I would hope that that requested information could be provided off-line so that we would understand that. We may be seeing community garden facilities on other applications, and I think we'd like to understand that – those procedures. I believe that, based on the record before us, the application meets the applicable 2232 criteria of location, character, and extent, and merits our approval. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I concur with staff's conclusion that the proposal by the Fairfax County Park Authority to develop Boyd A. and Charlotte M. Hogge Park, located at 3139 Glen Carlynn Road, Falls Church, Virginia, 22041, satisfies the criteria of location, character, and extent, as specified in *Virginia Code* Section 15.2-2232, as amended. And therefore, Mr. Chairman, I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION FIND THE SUBJECT APPLICATION 2232-M11-13, AS AMENDED, SUBSTANTIALLY IN ACCORD WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

Commissioners Flanagan and de la Fe: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Flanagan and Mr. de la Fe. Is there a discussion of the motion? All those in favor of the motion to approve 2232-M11-13, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

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(The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Alcorn and Hall absent from the meeting.)

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