

**SALONA PARK TASK FORCE
MEETING MINUTES
October 8, 2013**

Chair Margaret Malone called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m.

Members Present: Richard Bliss, Sybil Caldwell, Dan DuVal, Ed Pickens, Joel Stillman, Mark Turner, and Margaret Malone. Guests included Peggy Stevens from the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust. Also present, Andrew Galusha representing the Fairfax County Park Authority and Jane Edmondson representing Supervisor John Foust.

Announcements:

- Margaret reminded everyone about the public meeting to be held on October 17, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at Franklin Sherman Elementary School on the Langley Fork Master Plan.
- Dan DuVal reported that the consultant to the Park Authority should begin the field work associated with the next phase of the archeological survey on October 10. It is expected to take 3-4 weeks. A management summary will be given to the Task Force members.
- Dan Schwartz, NoVA Soil and Water Conservation District, is going to be doing additional soil testing. His analysis should be available in early November.
- Future Meeting Dates: **October 30, November 12 and 19.** Margaret will send an email requesting people's availability in December.

Approval of Minutes: A Task Force member asked that the minutes be amended. He distributed his response to the report that Joe Caldwell had presented on behalf of Sybil Caldwell at the October 1 meeting, and asked that the response be attached to the minutes. Sybil asked if she could present a rebuttal. It was agreed that the report and rebuttal would be discussed at the October 30 meeting. Language to amend the October 1 meeting was agreed upon, and the minutes as amended of the October 1 meeting were approved unanimously.

Issues for Consideration: The Task Force then discussed the items that Margaret included in her Issues for Consideration document distributed to Task Force members prior to the meeting.

- **As a result of our studies over the last two years, have your thoughts about how Salona should be developed changed in any way? If so, how?**
 - Learned that there is a group of people interested in farming/gardening.
 - Did not realize the importance of the meadow and how unique the land is in Fairfax County. Made the neighbors hold on to their initial position even more strongly.
 - Surprised at the passion of the community on both sides regarding the property. Has come to realize that something very special could be done at the site.
 - Surprised that thoughts about active recreation have changed. Maintenance of the property is very important; active recreation is viewed now as something that would degrade the historic property.
- **What do you think should be the three major priorities in planning Salona? Why?**
 - We can't do everything; we have to set priorities.

- We should be good stewards of the property but it should also be useful to current and future generations.
 - Emphasis should be placed on: preservation, history, tool for education, and public access.
 - Salona is a very unique property. What the Task Force recommends should reflect the uniqueness of the property, such as its history.
 - Came into the Task Force thinking that a middle ground could be found; no longer believes that to be possible because the proponents of active recreation have adopted an all or nothing position.
 - Disagree with that characterization. The proponents of fields have talked about compromise. The MYA proposal calls for multiple uses. Athletic fields would not be incompatible with the historical value of Salona.
 - Two rectangular fields would not leave much room to do anything else.
 - There is a big difference between one field and two fields because of parking requirements.
 - Three priorities: active recreation, farming, and a learning center.
 - Function of the Task Force is to communicate to the Park Authority, Supervisor Foust and the community what the community wants. Perhaps the Task Force should lay out all the options and let the Park Authority decide the best use for the property.
 - Another Task Force member disagreed, stating that the Task Force needs to provide a framework or it isn't really saying anything.
 - The major issues are how we want the property to be used and preserved. The Task Force needs to weigh the options and make a recommendation.
- **Is there any additional information that you think you should have before we issue our report?**
 - Archaeological report.
 - More information about soil conditions.
 - Review the Langley Fork Master Plan to see if what the Park Authority is proposing will have any impact on the Task Force deliberations.
 - More fields are needed even with additional fields at Langley Fork. At one time there were 29 fields. Now there are just 20.
 - In response to a question about surveys of what people wanted in their parks, it was stated that the Park Authority conducted a study a year or two ago which indicated that more of everything was needed.
 - The easement language contemplates active recreation.
 - Is the permitted use (active recreation) so compelling that it trumps the primary value of the property?
 - A Task Force member who was involved in the discussions with the Park Authority about the easement said that while active recreation was permitted, there was to be community input; there was no definitive conclusion that fields would be built at Salona.

- **Are there any additional parks that we should visit?**
 - Members of the Task Force may be interested in visiting Mt. Cuba outside of Wilmington, DE. It is an outstanding park dedicated to plants native to the Piedmont area. Run by a private foundation.
 - Would be good if we could obtain consensus on a number of items.
 - Margaret stated that she hopes the report of the Task Force will be embraced by the community.
 - It will only be embraced if the report reflects what the community wants.

- **Are there any additional persons you would like to meet with before we make decisions?**
 - None.

- **What are your major concerns regarding proposals that have been made/**
 - Parking
 - Safety of people using the property.
 - How will the widening of Rt. 123 impact the property?
 - The impacts of widening of Rt. 123 are in the Park Authority's bailiwick.
 - The Park Authority did take Rt. 123 widening into account when it presented the draft of the Salona Master Plan.
 - There are many areas on which the Task Force members agree.
 - Should there be an up or down vote on athletic fields?
 - Chair Malone stated that the Task Force needs to vote.
 - The report could be written another way; namely state that the community wants several things on the property.

- **What are the major questions/issues that you think warrant further discussion before we begin to make our decisions?**
 - Task Force members felt that the issues had been exhausted in the above discussions.

Draft Report: Chair Malone stated that she will prepare a first draft of the Task Force report and circulate it to members for their consideration prior to the next meeting. It will be subject to amendment.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Wednesday, October 30, at 7:30 p.m. at Supervisor Foust's office.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 p.m.