

Salona Park Task Force

MEETING MINUTES

December 14, 2011

The meeting convened at 7:35 PM.

Members attending meeting: Margaret Malone, Beth Chung, Ed Pickens, Sybil Caldwell, Carole Herrick, Whit Field, Joel Stillman, Dan DuVal, and Mark Turner. County support staff attending meeting: Cheryl Patten, representing Supervisor Foust and Andy Galusha, representing the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA). Also present: Aimee Wells, archaeologist with FCPA and Bill Gray, McLean Youth Soccer.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of November 17, 2011. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Joel Stillman distributed a handout that addressed questions from the November 17 meeting regarding McLean youth sports. Included in the packet were: letter from Sandy Stallman, Manager Park Planning and Development Division [FCPS]; letter from David Bowden, Director Park Planning and Development; VDOT Traffic Signal Warrant Analysis Summary; letter from Maureen Dalbec, President, MYS; MYS 2011 field inventory analysis; youth sports proposed use of Salona Park fields.

There was discussion about the utilization of existing grass and synthetic turf (turf) fields and the possible development of new lighted, turf fields at nearby Langley Fork. A member of the Task Force requested that MYA provide actual use data for fields, in addition to booking information. It was agreed that all development ideas for Salona Park must receive input from the community and would need to be assessed for potential impacts.

Several task force members visited Fairfax County Park Authority Green Spring Gardens on November 12. Ed Pickens made a presentation and distributed a handout about the design and use of the grounds at Green Spring. Mr. Pickens explained that Green Spring currently consists of 28 acres and is utilized as a unique horticultural and nature center. It has ponds, walking trails, meeting and activity rooms. Approximately 1,400 Fairfax County students visit the Gardens annually.

Andy Galusha (FCPA) mentioned that the county budget drives the park process and that parks increasingly must be sustainable. Mr. Galusha was asked to get information on the operating budget for the Gardens indicating the source of revenue; county contributions, friends, gift shop, etc. General discussion followed about parking space requirements for various park activities: ball fields = 50 cars per field; Green Spring = 1 space per 2.5 visitors based on building usage and 5 bus spaces. A question was raised about the potential combination of a Green Spring concept and another kind of facility/activity concurrently. Mr. Galusha stated that multi-use brings in more people and gave various examples of combined activities.

The task force chairperson distributed a handout "Looking Ahead" which itemized possible topics for future meetings and four specific areas for which more detailed information is required: VDOT traffic analysis, archaeological survey, RPA (Resource Protection Area) and drainage analysis, and sports field resources in McLean. The members generally agreed on the need for this information and have requested

assistance from appropriate county staff in acquiring it. Mr. Galusha explained that archaeological and RPA studies are normally not done until a site plan is submitted for a park.

Aimee Wells (FCPA archaeologist) said that she thinks the geophysical study can begin this winter. This will entail ground penetrating radar and metal detection. These technologies are used to recognize potentially important sites, including grave sites, and assist with artifact reclamation. If done in house the cost for the archaeological survey is approximately \$175K, if an outside contractor is used the cost is nearly double. Ms. Wells is currently on another major dig and suggested that September 2012 would likely be the best time to start at Salona. The survey would likely last a year with six months in the field and six months in the lab analyzing the results. Interim reports would be produced as the survey was conducted.

Concerns were raised about the potential that the RPA has expanded since its original delimitation a decade ago. Significant residential and commercial development in areas nearby to Salona may have caused changes to the amount of stormwater and drainage within the property. FCPA was questioned as to why there had not been an assessment of the RPA as yet and Mr. Galusha explained that the site plan is normally the trigger for such a study. It was stated that a full field study of the area should be conducted. It was acknowledged that a change in the RPA delineation could affect many of the development plans currently under discussion by the task force.

It was also agreed that beginning in February 2012 the task force will meet twice a month in order to accelerate information gathering, and to prepare for a potential public meeting in May 2012. It was agreed that the twice a month meeting schedule will only be for the next four to six months. A theme was assigned for each meeting and relevant community members and/or county staff will be invited to discuss their ideas regarding the development plans for Salona Park. January was designated for trails and seniors. Suggestions were made regarding potential presenters. February will focus on use of the site by educational entities. Representatives of K through university will be invited to speak. Suggestions were made regarding individuals and institutions that may be invited to make presentations. The March meetings will focus on green building (options, costs, potential sources of funding), and discussions with "friends" of parks organizations. It was also suggested that the McLean Community Center be contacted through their new "listening sessions" which are designed to elicit suggestions and interests from McLean residents.

The following dates were agreed to as potential meeting dates: January 10, February 15, February 28, March 13, March 27, April 10, April 24, May 8, and May 22.

The last item of discussion for the evening was the format for the potential public meeting in May. Some of the ideas offered included either a general discussion headed by a single facilitator or more directed break-out sessions. One break-out model suggested was that used for the discussion of the McLean Revitalization proposals for which those attending sat at group tables headed by a facilitator and as a group discussed and ranked all the development proposals. The rankings were presented to the entire assembly and a lead facilitator tabulated all the development plans into a final ranking. Task force members agreed that a lead facilitator would be needed for any public meeting and a suggestion was made that the task force apply for a Transurban/HOT lanes grant to cover the cost.

The task force agreed that they will make more visits to parks as part of the information gathering process. Eleanor Lawrence, Colvin Run Mill, Turner Farm and Green Spring were mentioned as potential sites to visit. It was suggested that a visit to Hidden Oaks or Hidden Pond Nature Center coincide with a visit by a school group that is there to participate in an educational program.

To provide information to the public regarding Salona and the work of the task force, it is planned that the task force will prepare and distribute a brief background paper describing the task force (its mission, composition, procedures), the Salona easement, Cultural Landscape Report, FCPA draft plan, and summary of proposals that have been suggested. Sybil Caldwell will organize all previous minutes for posting on the FCPA website and future minutes will also be posted.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 PM.