
Franconia Master Plan Revision

PUBLIC COMMENT MEETING

July 16, 2013, 7:00 P.M. At Key Middle School

Meeting Summary:

A Public Information Meeting was held on the evening of July 16, 2013 to kick off the public master plan process for Franconia Park Master Plan revision. Public commentary was accepted on the parks existing conditions and thoughts for future improvements to incorporate into a new master plan. Approximately 35 attendees signed in at the meeting.

The meeting began with introductions by Sandy Stallman, Manager Park Planning, Fairfax County Park Authority

Opening remarks were provided by Marcus Wadsworth, Staff Assistant, Lee District Supervisor's Office

Other Officials and Staff in Attendance:

Sara Baldwin, Chief Operations Officer, Fairfax County Park Authority

Sandy Stallman, Manager Park Planning Branch, Fairfax County Park Authority

Andy Galusha, Landscape Architect/Planner and Project Manager, Fairfax County Park Authority

Phil Hager, Athletic Field Manager, Area 3, Park Operations, Fairfax County Park Authority

Patricia Dietly, Garden Plot Coordinator, Fairfax County Park Authority

Staff Presentation

Sandy Stallman provided a brief background of the Park Authority including Park Authority mission, quick park facts, board of directors. There was also a presentation on the master plan process and the project timeline.

Andy Galusha, project manager for the Franconia Park Master Plan revision, provided a brief history of the site, site conditions, surrounding context, and overview of the 1974 master plan.

Discussion Session:

Following the presentation, Sandy Stallman moderated an open public comment period so those in attendance could share their impressions of the park and input on its future. The following is a summary of each speaker's comments expressed during this session, after which, the meeting adjourned.

Speaker Number 01

- * Lights are on late at night sometimes to midnight. Does that mean that when the park closes at dark it doesn't include useage for the lighted field? If so it excludes other tax payers from using the park to walk through the lit area. Fairfax County Police told me that the park is open when the lights are on. Lights are also on when the weather is not permittable for use which is a waste of money. What is the timing for the lights, there doesn't seem to be a set timing. A lot of people who don't live in the neighborhood are coming into the neighborhood and staying until late at night.

Speaker Number 02

- * What you call trails are actually sidewalks and the woods that you say are developed are not. If you don't play soccer, baseball or softball, there is nothing for any children in that park. The kids that live there can't go there because there are so many people from other areas that don't live in the neighborhood, they have no place to play except the cul-de-sac, streets or their yards. I understand there is supposed to be a concession stand built which is great but there are only two port-a-potties for the whole park. The people who come to watch their children play soccer have started bringing in covers & coolers and food which I'm not sure is legal. I would like to know why there is no constable or ambulance at any of the games. Parking gets filled up, if you're a resident there you cannot park because it is filled up. Would like to know what the buffer is between the park and the residents. I've had soccer balls bounce off of my fence. I've had track teams within ten yards of my fence.

Speaker Number 03

* Drive to park and come every day to walk dog. The park is a great treasure. One thing I noticed that has changed over the years is the amount of trash in the park. Appreciate that the Park has added trash cans & recycle bins. Recommend that the receptacles be labeled bilingually. Observation is that the soccer games are the source of the garbage. These things happen without any self policing. If there could be public enforcement and fines for these clubs. Field 5 has only one recycle barrel no other barrels for trash, more need to be added there. The lack of bathrooms causes kids to go into the woods. It would be nice to have a perimeter trail that could be walked without getting wet.

Speaker Number 04

* I had a garden plot over at Beulah Road, we were moved out of there when they built the school, came over and started from scratch. I want to know before I put additional money into a garden plot in this year that it will be in the same spot next year. Some of the retired folks with time would like more than one plot and there is a waiting list and yet there are some plots that are a mess.

Speaker Number 05

* Walked along the trail and saw a broken beer bottle and do cut his paw. Would like to know what is planned for parcel 81-3, 141. It would be great for the people who come to the park to have a doggie park in that area. Like the recommendation about the recycle bin that was said earlier. Also about the light issue, several people are still on the field and a neighbor with a pool has found trash in their yard.

Speaker Number 06

* have a nursery adjacent to garden plots. Have been in business for ten years and have invested a lot of money in that. Are you trying to bring more people to use the park and in what way, as that affects us. Don't understand the goal of the plan.

Speaker Number 07

* Is there a way for the Park Authority to do a survey or monitor that the users are in that 3-6 mile radius? The neighborhood feels that the use is much larger and they are the ones picking up the trash. The people who have no connection to the park are the ones leaving the trash. That is where the conflicts come from. The lighting brings people from other adult groups and it is no longer just the Springfield Youth Clubs.

Speaker Number 08

* Have rented a Garden Plot since they opened at Franconia. Lot of seniors in the garden plots. I use my garden plot to supplement income. If you are going to build more soccer fields or tennis court and not add more parking, don't see how that will work. It would be nice to put more trees in. As far as plastic bottles, what will teach these children to love the land and police the area after every game? The teams that play should be responsible for cleaning up.

Speaker Number 09

* How much money are you planning to spend in the next 5 years? I know it costs a million dollars to build a field.

Speaker Number 10

* Security - what responsibility does the Park have when there are large groups out in the park? Trash is being thrown into yard during large activities.

Speaker Number 11

* Monitors have no power to do anything at the time.

Speaker Number 12

* See traffic that goes by. Have a safety concern, there should be some speed bumps. Need to slow down the drivers that either run the stop sign or tap and go before a kid gets hit. Love the idea of a dog park. Important to do an analysis of how the park is being used now. Question wisdom of having lights until 11pm at night. Recommend a 9 or 10pm cut off time. Baseball fields look great but second one doesn't get used. Two more baseball fields seems a waste, playgrounds would be an important thing.

Speaker Number 13

* Staying with daughter who has a garden plot that she loves. Maybe you can address what you will put in the area that was suppose to be shuffleboard and archery. Appalled that there are not more bathroom facilities. Is that something that will be proposed?

Speaker Number 14

- * I would like to know if there are published rules that say how to get a permit? When someone gets a permit there must be some provisions that state you should leave the park in the condition you found it.

Speaker Number 15

- * County makes a lot of money on the assessments from our neighborhood. Reason for market value being so high was that we could boast that we back up to park land. Want clarity that we can rest assured that we will continue to have our homes be up against trees and beautiful parkland. That contributed heavily to the market value of our homes.

Speaker Number 16

- * The two ballfields are fenced, you can't do anything there except the one corner near Fitzgerald Street you might add a parking lot to make field more accessible. You can put a trail from there to Trailside. Big brown patch don't know if you plan to put ballfields there. Do you want the park to be used as a real park? There is no water there. Do you want more use in the park, are you going to put water in there? The port-a-potties are necessary but are you going to put facilities in? There certainly is not enough parking. If you are increasing the use of the area you need to increase the parking. Need commitment that there is a Master Plan and that something is actually going to be done. Are you going to do something to tie the nearby parks together? Would like to see lights on the ballfields so they get more use.

Speaker Number 17

- * If the park is closed at dark...it should be CLOSED at dark. Don't think the lights should be on and people there until 11pm. In regard to garden, it is important to keep the gardens. They get another element of the community in the park. Would like to see improvement of the water system for the gardens.

Speaker Number 18

- * In regard to the gardens, I put a small fence in but that doesn't work because the deer come in and eat everything. I put landscaping lumber and a fence which cost a lot of money. If the garden is relocated it will cost probably \$500 to reinvest in another fence.

Speaker Number 19

- * Recommend more port-a-potties near parking. Trash cans don't have any liners in them. There are lots of people drinking in the park.

Speaker Number 20

- * Love the park. Had lots of animals, feel like we are losing our neighborhood. Don't see kids playing there anymore. There isn't any play equipment for them, only soccer fields.

Speaker Number 21

- * Concerned about dedicating entire area of park to activities, would like to save some green area for people to walk around and do things like walk their dogs.

Speaker Number 22

- * Don't need asphalt trails. Can make more natural trails like crushed stone or mulch.

Speaker Number 23

- * I would like to see the dog park, trails and sounds like folks want the gardens to stay. If you fenced in the fields you would probably save money and preserve the field. It was a nice until it stopped being mowed.

Speaker Number 24

- * Our organization mows the 90' diamond and we do police it. Problems that we have is the "pick up" sports that go on around the field. Agree there needs to be a dog park so that the dogs are not walking on the ballfields. Need water to maintain a skinned field.

Speaker Number 25

- * Most parks have signs that say you need to pick up after your dog, people do not do that.

Speaker Number written comment

- * As president of CSLL, I respectfully request the following be included in the Master Plan: 1) Keep park functional for running, walking, dog walking, and the garden plots 2) Increase number of parking spaces 3) perhaps add a small parking lot off Northanna Dr. 4) Install sanitation facilities (toilets) 5) Install lights for the 90' field 6) improve the entryway from Bowie Dr. (too narrow) 7) Expand CSLL's permitted usage of the back baseball field, which we can utilize for the new 50-70 Intermediate Little League Division 8) Add bullpens to the 90' field 9) Rebuild the batting cage.

* If sign says closed at 8:30 - then everything should shut down at 8:30 (lights off/activities cease and everyone out!) Too much traffic at times and lots of disregard regarding safe speed! Recommend a "few" tennis courts. 3-6 mile concept is great but lots of groups (mainly soccer) are coming from all over the place. Needs a child playground area. Needs tables/grills for picnic activities. Needs a walking area - and not necessarily for dog walking. Needs more trees/shrubbery - surely don't reuse current trees.
