

County of Fairfax, Virginia
Planning Commission Meeting
January 30, 2019
Verbatim Excerpt

PA 2018-IV-BK1 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT (HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK PATH FROM TELEPATH ROAD TO HARRISON LANE) – The proposed amendment concerns the shared use path planned between Telegraph Road and Harrison Lane in Huntley Meadows Park (Tax Maps 92 1, 92 3, and 92 4) in the Lee Supervisor District. The amendment will consider removal of this shared use path from the Countywide Bicycle Master Plan, a component of the Comprehensive Plan. (Lee District)

PA 2018-IV-TR1 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT (HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK PATH FROM TELEGRAPH ROAD TO LOCKHEED BOULEVARD) – The proposed amendment concerns the minor paved trail planned between Telegraph Road and Lockheed Boulevard in Huntley Meadows Park and along Hayfield Road (Tax Maps 91 4, 92 3, 92 4, 100 2, 101 1, and 101 2) in the Lee Supervisor District. The amendment will consider removal of this minor paved trail from the Countywide Trails Plan, a component of the Comprehensive Plan, and related Area Plan guidance. (Lee District)

Decision Only During Commission Matters
(Public Hearing on January 16, 2019)

Commissioner Migliaccio: Second item is a decision only and it was for the Huntley Meadows Park plan amendments and we have a few staff members who just settled in and I don't know if any fellow Commissioners have questions to staff before I move into my motion. If they do, now is the time.

Chairman Murphy: Are there any questions? Mr. Niedzielski-Eichner.

Commissioner Niedzielski-Eichner: I don't have any questions per se but I do –

Chairman Murphy: Is your mic on?

Commissioner Niedzielski-Eichner: I just want to state that - Mr. Chairman - that I'm going to support this motion. I believe, with the assurances that Supervisor McKay's commitment has reflected in his December 18th, 2018 letter to the Trails and Sidewalks Committee will be memorialized in a follow-on motion by Commissioner Migliaccio recommending that staff be directed to begin immediately identifying connectivity alternatives in advance of the Countywide Trails and Bicycle Master Plan update. I would note, in this regard, staff indicated the public hearing that the Trails and the Bicycle Master Plan update is not yet a funded activity. My hope is that by approving Supervisor McKay's motion, the Board of Supervisors and the Park Authority Board, would also see to it that the master plan update is funded. Thank you.

Commissioner Migliaccio: I will give you my motion now.

Chairman Murphy: Mr. Migliaccio.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On January 16th, we held a public hearing on the issue of whether to remove two conceptual bike trails from the Comprehensive Plan for Huntley Meadows Park. I would like to thank the citizens who spoke

that evening and all the people who took the time to send in written comments. I know that the comments have been distributed to all Planning Commissioners and entered - entered into the official record for these two plan amendments. To those who do not think that this process is the preferred way to amend the Comprehensive Plan, I tend to agree. It is almost always better for us to look at items in a holistic manner, but that is not what we are presented with today. The Board of Supervisors has charged the Planning Commission to look at the two plan amendments and to make a recommendation. While this process is not perfect, it has allowed a spirited debate on this topic. Multiple public hearings were held and no less than 80 individual comments were received by the Planning Commission and that's not to mention the hundreds upon hundreds of petitions both for and against removal of the trails. Groups such as the Audubon Society, FABB, the Park Authority, the Trails Committee, the Virginia Native Plant Society, and Friends of Huntley Meadows Park all gave their opinions. We even heard from one state senator and two state delegates. I do not think that anyone can state that this issue flew under the radar. Just the opposite. In fact, I think that if this was attached to amending the 120-page Master Bike Plan, it may not have received as much attention and as many public hearings on this, or public meetings. After reading all the information found in the public comments and staff report, I am convinced that even if we had the money and capacity to build these trails as they are depicted today – excuse me, today it would not be the correct choice. The damage done to Huntley Meadows Park, a regional gem, would outweigh any benefits. The original master park plan that placed the trails on the map was done prior to any true knowledge of what existed in the park. We have since discovered rare flora and fauna that needs protection and the wetlands have been more fully mapped. Because of this, I will be making a motion to support the staff's recommendation to remove the trails from the Comprehensive Plan. That being said, I do agree with FABB that the process could be better and my follow-on motion addresses that issue. It captures what Commissioner Niedzielski-Eichner had mentioned, that Supervisor McKay had committed to the community, to FABB, and to the Trails Committee, that they will start to immediately look for alternative routes. I deferred my decision until tonight to allow time to review the information heard at the public hearing and to allow the Lee District Land Use Committee to have a chance to vote on this item. That vote took place on Monday night after hearing from staff and hearing from the opponents and proponents of staff's recommendation, the Land Use Committee voted 15-0-2 to support staff's position. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPT THE STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR PLAN AMENDMENTS 2018-IV-BK1 AND 2018-IV-TR1 FOUND ON PAGE 18 OF THE STAFF REPORT DATED NOVEMBER 29TH, 2018.

Commissioners Ulfelder, Sargeant, and Strandlie: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Ulfelder, Mr. Sargeant, and Mrs. Strandlie. All those in favor of the motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that it adopt PA 2018-IV-BK1 and PA 2018-IV- TR1, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Migliaccio: And the follow-on motion that everyone wants. I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

DIRECT STAFF TO IMMEDIATELY BEGIN BRINGING IMPACTED STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER AND IDENTIFYING CONNECTIVITY ALTERNATIVES TO THE SUBJECT TRAILS FOUND IN THESE TWO PLAN AMENDMENTS IN ADVANCE OF THE COUNTYWIDE TRAILS AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE.

Commissioners Strandlie, Cortina, Tanner, and Clark: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mrs. Strandlie, Ms. Cortina, and Mr. Tanner. And Mr. Clark. Why don't you just say everybody seconded the motion? Okay. Is there a discussion? All those in favor of the motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Each motion carried by a vote of 12-0.

KAS

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Comprehensive Plan be modified as shown below. Text proposed to be added is shown as underlined and text proposed to be deleted is shown with a ~~strikethrough~~. Text shown to be replaced is noted as such.

DELETE: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition, Area IV, Rose Hill Planning District, as amended through March 20, 2018, RH7-Huntley Meadows Community Planning Sector, Parks and Recreation, Recommendations, page 95:

~~“Due to ecological and engineering constraints including flooding and unconsolidated soils, development of the proposed perimeter trail on the western and southern boundaries of Huntley Meadows Park would not be prudent. This portion of the trail should either be relocated or deleted from the countywide trail system.”~~

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN MAP:

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map will not change.

COUNTYWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN MAP:

The Countywide Transportation Plan Map will not change.

BICYCLE MASTER PLAN MAP:

Delete the Shared Use Path in Huntley Meadows Park from the Bicycle Master Plan Map.

COUNTYWIDE TRAILS PLAN MAP:

Delete the minor paved trail segments near the southern and eastern edges of Huntley Meadows Park and along Hayfield Road from its intersection with Lockheed Boulevard to its intersection with Telegraph Road.