

**City of Fairfax
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB)**

**Meeting Minutes
Dec 9, 2010, 7:00 p.m.
Fairfax City Police Station, Community Room**

PRAB Members Present

Jane Albro
Joe Harmon
Paul Cunningham
Brian Knapp
Don Lederer
Esther Nasjleti
James Ogletree
Zinta Rodgers-Rickert
Mike Slawski
Toby Sorensen
Harry Wilbur
Mike McCarty, Director, Parks and Recreation Department

Members Absent

Mace Carpenter
Gary Sidor

Guests Present

Janice Miller, Chair, Fairfax City School Board
Amy Craig, FCPS Community Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

3. Tour of the Sherwood Community Center

All present left the police station building to tour the Sherwood Community Center, whose interior is close to completion. Mike McCarty pointed out where the new Civic Green will be at the front of the building. The following spaces were visited: the gallery, the performance space (which will also be able to seat 360 for dinner), the art room, the kitchen, the basement storage/utility area, the dance/rehearsal room, the activity room, and the office. The interior is expected to be finished by Christmas.

The group returned to the police station to continue the regular meeting.

4. Discussion of Community Use Fees

Janice Miller and Amy Craig attended the meeting to explain the new community use fee structure to PRAB members. Janice described the relation between the city and county governments and school systems, including the four-party contract (known as the School Services Agreement) regarding the operation of our schools and their building use. She discussed the history of this agreement and noted that it was last revised in 1977. As a result of the contract, City Schools must adhere to all the policies of Fairfax County Public Schools, including those regarding building use.

Amy then explained how, due to the budget crisis, her department was required to raise \$300,000 more than the previous year, which represents an increase of 20%. This had to be accomplished primarily through an increase in rental fees. She attempted to spread the costs out so that no one sector would take the brunt of the increases. She predicted that the new fees will be in place until there is an economic turnaround.

There then was a question and answer period.

5. The Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the November meeting were approved.

6. Matters of the Officers

Harmon discussed the table that PRAB members are getting for the Mayor's Ball.

7. Business

a. CIP Review.

Most of the CIP submitted by the Parks and Recreation Department was approved by the City Manager. In presenting the CIP to the City Council there should be an emphasis on safety-related items

b. Park Steward Report.

The following is a report on Thais Park submitted on-line by Mace Carpenter, who is out of the country:

Park Entry

Entry into Thais Park is easy from South Pickett Road. From the south it is a simple right turn. From the north there is a turn-in lane. Exit from Thais Park is more problematic as vehicles accelerate down the hill from the south often exceeding the 35 mph speed limit. Many tanker trucks travel past the park and those passing from the south would have a harder time stopping if a vehicle pulled out of the park in front of them.

Parking

The parking lot is in good condition. The asphalt is only 2 years old and markings are in good condition. The wood posts that line the parking area are in need of wood preservative. During the day the lot is used for city worker and car pooling parking. During Saturdays and evenings between 1 April through 30 June and 1 September through 31 October there is inadequate parking to support Fairfax Little League baseball

play. Vehicles often park where there are no designated slots, making parking very tight with many children walking through the area. When the lot is full, parents normally park across the street in the city works yard or at the New School. People parking at the city works yard often cross the street directly to Thaiss Park without going to the corner where there is a pedestrian cross walk (intersection of Pickett and Old Pickett). The tunnel that connects the city works yard to Thaiss Park is permanently closed. Parents are encouraged to park at the New School so they do not have to negotiate crossing Pickett Road. The New School has donated parking to the city and Fairfax Little League as a courtesy.

Common Area

The building trim requires painting. The crushed stone surrounding the area around the building is eroding and in need of additional stone. The building drainage pipes have been exposed as the stone has been eroded and the pipes have been destroyed in some places. The pavilion shingles require some repair—they are missing in some places. The roof was re-shingled 4 years ago and otherwise is in good repair. It would be optimal to replace crushed stone with another more permanent material. There is unused outdoor carpet and tarp that litter the area on the east side of the building. These materials should be disposed of or stored properly. The gate leading into the common area should be normally locked—it was open at the time of the inspection. The children's' play area is in good condition but might use some additional wood chips in the base.

General

The Park is in reasonable condition and is heavily used. The grass in most areas could use additional attention—fertilizer, weeding, and seeding. The Little League Sign in the front of the part is badly faded and requires removal or replacement. The park is generally clean and the soil bin in good condition.

Waste Removal

The Little League provides some of its own barrels. With them, there are sufficient waste barrels to accommodate trash as long as there are pick-ups on the weekends. Otherwise trash overflows the barrels. There are no recycle barrels or dumpsters on the property.

Erosion

Thaiss Park suffers from significant erosion. During a hard rain, water cascades down the hill in the south and across the entire park. Although there is adequate south to north drainage on the western side of the park for most of the water, there is no drainage at the base of the hill to move the water there. As a result, water erodes the baseball fields and the common area which is largely comprised of crushed stone. This erosion eventually makes its way into the Chesapeake estuary.

Field 5

This is the only field with a sign to mark it—no other field has numbers and this is often confusing to parents new to the league or visitors. The infield field grass is on clumps and makes for bad hops during games. These bad hops can result in injury. The dirt portion of the infield has erosion problems and requires fill. The area behind home plate

requires grass planting where old bleachers were positioned. Both dugouts require painting and wood treatment to include the benches. The warning track of crushed stone requires additional stone and weeding. The aluminum bleachers on both sides are in good shape at meet safety standards. A bike stand behind the backstop is in an unserviceable position needs to be placed to a more useful spot. The gates next to both dugouts require adjustment. The bat holder in the first base dugout requires repair—it has broken loose from the mounting.

Field 4

Both of the dugouts require painting and wood treatment. The fence in the left field corner is broken and the gate in the same area needs repair. Most of the chain link fence around the field is badly rusted and in need of replacement or painting. The infield is all soil (no grass) and is badly in need for additional fill. It needs to be slightly crowned to allow for water runoff. This field typically requires 3 times longer to dry out after a rain because of the standing water that pools there. Both gates require adjustment. The right field fence along the first base line is broken. The homerun fence in right field needs repair.

Field 3

The dugouts require shingles and some wood replacement on the roofs. The dugouts also require paint and wood treatment. Areas of the outfield require fertilizer, weeding and seeding. There is a dirt hole in right field. Runoff water from the hill results in erosion to the infield area. The chain link in the backstop is rusted. The outfield gates require adjustment and a bottom post holder should be built between the gates to keep them secure. Wood on the third base bench needs replacing.

Field 2

The outfield fence gates need readjusting and a bottom post holder should be built. Erosion is occurring on the infield from water runoff from the hill. Both gates near the dugouts require some adjustment and both dugouts could use painting and wood treatment. The outfield requires some seeding. The bleachers behind the third base line partially block the path and should be located on the first base line. This may require some level of the base of the hill. The bleachers do not meet current safety standards—i.e. no back stop. The area between field 2 and field 2 should be leveled and completed with a consistent surface albeit asphalt or crushed stone.

Field 1

Dugout needs painting and wood stain. Both infield and outfield grass needs seeding and weeding. The runoff from the hill is causing significant erosion on dirt portion of infield. The outfield fence requires a ground holder for the fence post as the fences tend to open when not tied or chained.

Practice Area

The wood around the soft toss nets and batting cages requires wood treatment. Joints on the batting cage poles are rusted. The batting cage area requires additional crushed stone.

c. Parks Projects

University Park had its grand opening on November 13. The design work for the School Street Park has not yet begun. The Providence Park tennis courts will be able to be used over then winter, and then closed in the spring for more surface coating and some landscaping. After that is completed, they will be open for year-round use.

8. Parks and Recreation Department Report

Parks and Rec will be able to occupy the Sherwood Community right after Christmas. The grand opening will take place on Feb. 12 with a 1 pm ribbon cutting followed by entertainment. In the morning there will be a brunch for stakeholders.

The lights lent by the Northern VA Regional Park Authority to the Kitty Pozer Park for the Festival of Lights look wonderful. Mike McCarty is working on an operations budget for the community center and is in the process of hiring two people, a community program coordinator (at 40 hours per week) and an operations manager (at 30 hours per week). Mike also presented a flow chart of the positions in the Parks and Recreation Department.

9. Matters of the Members

Harry Wilbur reported that the Commission on the Arts is having a preview of the Sherwood Center to interest possible users of the facility. The public art committee is looking for art for green spaces. There will be an art show for the opening of the center.

Brian Knapp talked about the Northern VA Park Authority's desire to create a plan for the property near the Occaquan River. He recommended that all go see the holiday light show at Bull Run Park.

Paul Cunningham spoke about his concern about the City's budget.

Jane Albro said that the Senior Center website had 1500 hits in one month and 1000 participants in programs and activities. Forty people attended the fourth annual Thanksgiving Dinner at the Center.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

The next PRAB meeting will take place Thursday, January 13, 7:00 pm, at the Green Acres Center.

Minutes prepared by Toby Sorensen.