

# **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board**

## **City of Fairfax**

### **Meeting Minutes for January 8, 2009**

#### **Location: City Hall**

Members in Attendance: Brian Knapp (Chair), Joe Harmon (Vice-Chair), Arthur Little, Donald Lederer, Zinta Rodgers-Rickert, Esther Nasjleti, Harry Wilbur, James Ogletree, Paul Cunningham, Elisa Lueck, Gary Sidor

Absent: David Bauer, Donald Johns

Staff in Attendance: Michael McCarty, Karen Bixler

1. Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM.
2. Minutes for December 2008 monthly meeting approved
  - Motion: Arthur Little
  - Second: Donald Lederer
3. Old Business
  - a) Draper Drive Park lights update: Director McCarty reported that the delay in adding lights to the new turf fields is attributed to problems in obtaining the necessary easement. The City is moving forward via the last resort condemnation process.
  - b) Stafford Park: was opened for play on December 24. Remaining punch-list items to be completed include the re-milling and re-paving of the parking lot and other small cosmetic things. Volume of use for this time of year has been healthy so far. Response to Elisa's question about an earlier vandalism incident included a report of an arrest and that the City was only responsible for \$5,000 to repair the fire damage (the remaining \$20,000 was covered by the City's insurance policy for the field). High-tech security/surveillance cameras will be installed soon. No date set for the official park dedication – possibly to take place in March. Brian Knapp expressed the need for more and more useful signs.
  - c) Providence Elementary School: rough grading and earthwork inspections are proceeding. An easement issue (storm water management) has been resolved by reallocating contingency fund monies.
  - d) Discussion related to the budget was moved further along the evening's agenda (see below).
  - e) Update on the Parks Assessment project: brief team updates were given – Team 3 will present at the February meeting, and Team 2 will present at the March meeting.

Brian Knapp presented an assessment of Van Dyck Park:

- a. The need to collaborate with the Planning Commission was encouraged (a master or comprehensive plan for the park is needed).
- b. Universal opinion that this park is “special” and the crown jewel in the City’s park system.
- c. Van Dyck facility/amenity orientation is not ideal.
- d. Playing fields are in bad shape from overuse.
- e. Complaints from the St. Leo the Great church community (particularly, parking use and lack of respect of facilities – especially bathrooms).

Joe Harmon requested all Parks Assessment teams share electronic presentations with the entire Board. Paul Cunningham recommended that the Board stay positive in this project and in other work/recommendations/publications/requests and that we highlight our current inventory and amenities – rather than focus on what we are lacking. Don Lederer concurred that we need a master plan first – that we cannot keep adding things and making alterations a la carte without an over-arching vision. Zinta Rodgers-Rickert expressed that the need for a dog park area be included in future deliberations.

#### 4. New Business

##### a) FY09 Budget Reductions

- f. 7% total reduction of original adopted budget, to be achieved through two phases
- g. \$310,000 in reductions
- h. Bertha McClung-Mosely is no longer with staff
  - Vacant Recreation Manager position is frozen
  - Savings:
    - \$41,290 in salary over 6 months
    - \$15,000 in benefits
- i. Tough times call for citizens to pitch in. Be patient, suck it up, and do not complain – paraphrased from comments by Harry Wilbur and Zinta Rodgers-Rickert.
- j. Gary Sidor stated that staff loses will hopefully not negatively affect preparation, logistics, and enrollment of summer camps.

b) Parks Foundation Steering Group: the group met in early January to discuss key issues. Joe Harmon and Zinta Rodgers-Rickert are co-chairs.

c) Trails Day: celebration will be on Saturday June 6, 2009. Assuming no public funding available, we have to press on with the assumption all financial support would be raised or donated. Arthur Little suggested that local banks might be a good group to target for invitations to participate. The See Mommy Run group is interested in continuing with the 5K race on Trails Day. Joe, Esther, and James plan to meet with this group on February 12.

d) Community Center: technical designs for the interior are being completed.

e) Green Acres: earth from the George Mason University construction is expected to be moved in the next week. Improvements are expected to be completed in March.

- f) Senior Center: Karen Bixler delivered the senior report: Thanksgiving day meal/activities were attended by 70+ people and Christmas day meal/activities were attended by 40+ people. Arthur Little asked if the Senior Center began charging for daily activities. Karen Bixler responded that there are no fees or charges for drop-in activities, only for higher-cost classes or trips.
  - g) First Fairfax: the inaugural race was successful. Attendance at indoor venues was sparse after 9:00 PM due to the extremely cold and windy weather. Universal praise went to Joanna Ormesher, who put together the event in just three months.
5. Members Time (including only those that had comments or questions):
- a) Donald Lederer: awareness of the Community Appearance Award – the Fairfax County municipal Herrity Building has a “green” roof.
  - b) Esther Nasjleti: reminder about the upcoming Chocolate Lover’s Festival in February.
  - c) Joe Harmon: expressed that he would like to see some First Night activity continue, even if it its size and expense are reduced.
  - d) Brian Knapp: February PRAB meeting will take place in Old Town Hall (to highlight the facilities). The March 12 PRAB meeting will be a joint meeting with representatives from the Senior Center. The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority plans to recognize participation and support from all member jurisdictions – the City will be recognize at an upcoming City Council meeting.
6. Meeting brought to a close at 8:36 PM.\*

\* (Though official records are not kept, this is thought to be the earliest closing time for a monthly meeting – at least during the Knapp administration.)