



Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks Meeting

Wednesday, September 8, 2021, 2021 ❖ 7:00 P.M.

DRAFT MINUTES

Virtual Meeting: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YTBiOWMyMTctYWRiYi00MDczLTgzMmYtOTdhZTk5NTg0YTM4%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22id%22%3a%2273ba5b04-4ace-4ae3-a6b2-65cbc403418b%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%2288dcaad5-f9e7-4ed3-b8c9-1d3cd1ec8369%22%7d

NOTICE: This virtual meeting of the Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks was held pursuant to and in compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Section 2.2-3708.2 and state and local legislation adopted to allow for continued government operation during the COVID-19 declared emergency.

All participating members of the Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks were present at this meeting through electronic means. All members of the public may view this video of this meeting on the City's website at [Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting \(Virtual Meeting\) \(granicus.com\)](#)

PLEASE NOTE: This meeting will be conducted using Microsoft Teams. Don't have the Teams app? You can still join a Teams meeting. **See the instructions attached to this meeting agenda.** Please email jhilgendorf@fallschurchva.gov if you need assistance with installation. During the meeting, staff will likely not be available to assist with installation.

1. Call to Order

Charley O'Hara called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Members present Charley O'Hara, Chair, Leslie Rye, Vice Chair, School Board member Laura Downs, Jenna Schroeder, Liz Weatherly and Melissa Teates. Student Representative Nate Kusic was also present. Staff members present were Danny Schlitt, Director Recreation & Parks, and Jessica Hilgendorf, Senior Administrative Assistant Recreation & Parks.

2. Reading of Virtual Meeting Notice

3. Directors Report

Facilities:

- Clean Week was held late August to deep clean the building.
- Annual painting, floors including gymnasium floor refinished to prepare for Fall 2021.

- RecTrac software upgrade and credit card machines were updated
- Comment - Inquiry into any needed maintenance to the Community Center that is not met due to costs or manpower.
 - Partitions in bathrooms, bleachers in gym are on the unmet needs list to be addressed at some point in the future. We will reach out to the Board if we find something that needs to be addressed.
- Tennis and basketball courts have been or are currently being resurfaced.

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- Cavalier Trail tennis and basketball courts, Madison Park basketball court and Lincoln Park basketball are completed.
- Cherry Street and Community Center were delayed and should be started by the week of 9/13.
- Community Center will have one pickleball court, other courts have four.
 - Comment - Backboard at Cavalier Trail is a nice addition for those who want to play by themselves.
 - Comment suggests the recommendation for CIP funds to be used to purchase a shade to cover a portion court.

Summer Programs and Camps:

- Summer Camps were very successful.
- 180 different camp offerings with 2482 registrations; below past enrollment rates but camps were very well received.
- 80,000 total participation hours.
- Ryan Amato, Taylor Ford and Corey Jannicelli were very involved in Camp programming
- Schools were very accommodating to programs held on their premises.
- Contract work will begin to get ready for Summer 2022 with a schedule to be drafted by November 2021 for approval by schools.
- Temporary MOU with local schools are moving toward finalization.

- Early Release Wednesday program, which has been requested by schools, is running this fall. This fills a programming gap as schools are unable to run certain programs due to COVID-19.
 - Overall hiring part time, hourly staff is difficult which resulted in a limited capacity for certain programs.

Cherry Hill Farmhouse:

- Reopened for Saturday morning tours at the end of June 2021 with weekend tours throughout the summer.
- Hosted 4 weeks of Blast into the Past program over the summer.
- Hosted 3 weddings throughout the summer as well as Northern Virginia Regional Council activity.

Fall Classes:

- Fall 2021 Hobby Classes have enrolled 975 participants which is about 300 less than 2 years ago but a bit more than 4 years ago.
- Outdoor classes currently have stronger enrollment. Any classes that can be moved outdoors have been and will remain outside until the weather is inhospitable.
- Adult fitness classes have been the slowest to come back despite virtual offerings.

- After-School ARC Program:
 - Slow enrollment but hope to see increased participation.
 - Open Gym access exclusively for high school students during ARC programming.
 - Midnight Madness returns on Friday, September 10, 2021.

Youth & Adult Sports:

- Fall Youth Soccer has 743 enrollments; Soccer clinics have 242 enrolled.

- Fall Flag Football saw a drop in enrollment with only 170 registrants.
- House League Basketball registration opens on September 27.
- Men's Basketball League and Fall Volleyball will run.

Senior Center:

- Programs are being offered in person and virtually.
- Offerings include: indoor and outdoor Pickleball, Armchair Fitness, Armchair Travel, Golden Age Bingo, Military History, Wednesday Bingo, Kitting and Crochet, Watercolor and Oil and Acrylic Art Classes, Lunch Bunch Club, Walking Club, Armchair Travel, Guest Speaker – Fall Prevention Program, Virtual Language Conversation Groups, Modified Yoga and Marymount Programs will begin in October.
- Senior Olympics to be held Saturday, September 18 - September 30.

Arts and Humanities:

- Creative Cauldron used the open space near the tennis courts throughout the summer to run programming that they were unable to run in their facility.
 - Comment recommends finding a way to expand the program or offer other arts groups to participate.

Special Events:

- Independence Day Celebration was smaller this year. The event featured a band in the park as well as the Declaration Celebration Scavenger Hunt which had 364.
- Tinner Hill Music Festival was held in late August
- 45th Annual Falls Church Festival will be held on September 11, 2021
 - Stephen Holl, first responder at the Pentagon on 9/11/01, will speak regarding his experience.
 - Remembrance Wall will encourage patrons to leave notes regarding their experience, whereabouts or to reflect on the events of 9/11/01.
 - The Festival will feature food vendors, civic merchants, sponsors, crafters, restaurants and breweries. There are 9 sponsors, 42 civic, merchant, artist/crafter vendors, 9 restaurants and 3 breweries.
 - Restaurant participation is down from prior years and we are told it is largely due to a staffing shortage.
 - Discussions are being had to potentially move the event to a Sunday next year. This may alleviate the strain placed on restaurants as Saturdays are a difficult day to staff an event. Most restaurants are staffed into the late hours of Friday or very early Saturday morning, staff are then required to participate in an early event and then work a Saturday shift.
 - Encouraged participation by waiving entry fee and sharing a portion of the ticket sales to offset restaurant costs.
 - Volunteer Fire Department will receive the after cost proceeds from the Biergarten.
 - Children's Tent has been eliminate this year due to COVID-19 concerns.
 - Children's stage area will be by the barn.
- Sunset Cinema begins on September 17, 2021 and runs on Fridays through October 1, 2021.
- Holiday Gift & Craft Show will be held on December 4 and 5, 2021.

4. Election of Officers

Election of Chair:

- Nomination of Charley O'Hara
 - Approved 5-0; 1 abstention

Election of Vice-Chair:

- Nomination of Leslie Rye
 - Approved 5-0; 1 abstention

5. Receipt of Public Petitions and Board Member Petitions

- No Public Petitions and Board Member Petitions

6. Minutes for Approval

- Motion to approve by Leslie Rye, seconded by Liz Weatherly
 - [June 2, 2021](#)
 - Approved 5-0; 1 abstention

7. Old Business

A. Park Projects

1. Fellows Property

a. Review and Comments on [Fellows Property Master Plan Draft](#)

- Comment that this is the first review of the Fellows Property Master Plan Draft. Any comments or changes made tonight will be incorporated to the Fellows Property Master Plan Draft. A second version of this document will be ready for review at the November 3, 2021 meeting of the Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks.
- Two public meetings will be held to collect further comments on the Fellows Property Master Plan Draft.
- When a more finalized version of the Fellows Property Mast Plan Draft is created will be brought to the required Boards and Commissions.
- Would like to work toward adoption by Summer of 2022 which will bring us to the architecture and engineering phase.
- Recommendation to provide newer Board members with a prior approved park Master Plan for their reference and guidance going forward.
 - Recommendation of Big Chimneys Park as it is the most recent completed and adopted.

Review of the Fellows Property Master Plan Draft:

- Introduction and Background
 - Recommendation to strike bullet point noting when the first draft of the Master Plan was presented to the Advisory Board.
 - Comment that the only notes needed pertain to when the plan was sent to Council and formally adopted.
 - Recommendation to provide a more descriptive outline of future steps (i.e. tentative timeline with corresponding actions or outputs) as an outcome of this meeting.

- A. Park Purpose
 - B. Desired Future Visitor Experience
 - Point 1:
 - Recommendation to include a description of activities since Point 2 references passive recreation activities. Ensures equal treatment for both types of activities.
 - Recommendation that specificity will discourage the idea of sports fields on the property.
 - Points 3 & 4:
 - Recommendation to avoid sign pollution and leave the setting natural.
 - Recommendation to explore the possibility of ground plaques instead of signs.
 - Recommendation to place a QR Code on the main park name sign. The QR Code could connect to educational information available on the Recreation and Parks webpage.
 - Recommendation use natural materials, neutral tones, and position any signs closer to the ground. This will allow access to educational information without increasing sign pollution.
 - Recommendation to explore how to balance the need for educational information while not overloading the park with sign pollution.
 - Recommendation to address the question – “How much is too much signage?”
 - Comment that Urban Agriculture would want signage to reflect what is happening within the park and one sign for historical information.
 - Recommendation to model any sign after the sign at Big Chimneys which incorporates the history on the sign which also doubles as an art piece.
 - Recommendation to put all information within a kiosk that visitors can reference.
 - Recommendation to have 3 or 4 signs to break down information into manageable pieces for Oak Street students.
 - Recommendation to answer the question of how environmental education is going to be prioritized or what aspect of environmental education will be prioritized in order to inform and limit sign use.
 - Request for innovative, low impact, low visual impact signage ideas to convey environmental information.
 - Recommendation to consider a carving similar to the one at Big Chimneys Park.
 - Recommendation to limit signage to 3-4 signs.
- D. Property Description
 - Recommendation to clarify what pieces of the existing storm water structures we intend to maintain and/or not maintain.
 - Recommendation for clarification if the intent is to keep all three storm water structures mentioned – the foundation of the home, the well and an existing storm water structure.
 - Recommendation to clarify if this is a current description of the property prior to any construction as later notes can mentioned what has changed.
- E. Park Designation
 - Request to review Community and Neighborhood Park designations.

- II. Description of the Conceptual Development Plan Elements

- A. New Plan Elements

- 1. Park Access:

- Recommendation to allow for access from all 3 sides of the park.
- Recommendation for ADA accessible curb cuts at Fellows Court and Parker Ave. to allow ADA access into the property.
- Recommendation for main access from Oak Street to be accessible to vehicles. This access should be an ecologically sound vehicle access point, no asphalt but rather grasscrete pavers.
- Recommendation to consider parking surrounding Oak Street Elementary. Comment that parking is already difficult along Parker Ave., if a curb cut restricts parking by even one or two spots it could be difficult for school staff.
- Recommendation for consideration of only having ADA accesses from Oak Street and the uphill cul-de-sac.
 - Comment in response to this recommendation that this really depends on the desired use and what we are trying to accomplish with the park.

- 4. Benches and Picnic Tables:

- Comment that this is a preference over item 5. Picnic Shelter.
- Recommendation to combine 3. Benches, 4. Benches and Picnic Tables and 5. Picnic Shelter.

- 5. Picnic Shelter:

- Recommendation to strike.
- Comment that having a venue to hold large, potentially loud, gatherings goes against the general desired feel of the park and doesn't closely align with the park purpose.
- Comment that both Crossman and Cavalier, somewhat more natural parks, do not have shelters.
- Comment that parking will be difficult and therefore Fellows Property may not be suited for a shelter. Reference to difficulty parking at Roberts Park for a shelter rental.

- 6. Pathways:

- Recommendation to state that pathways should be natural pathways of stone dust, dirt or something fitting to the area and natural park.
- Recommendation to consolidate pathway items into one category
- Recommendation to combine items 13 – Nature Trail, 14- Bike Path and 6 - Pathways
- Recommendation to combine 1. Park Access, 6. Pathways and 10. Equity and Accessibility.
 - Recommendation that these combined points can state that access should be from all 3 sides with at least 1 access point to be ADA accessible to reach the middle of the park.

- Recommendation/Request to figure out what type of pathways are wanted, how ADA accessibility and storm water management will impact the location, type and purpose of pathways.
- 7. Urban Agriculture:
 - Recommendation to include urban agriculture to the park.
 - Comment that this would be an educational opportunity for Oak St. students.
- 8. Natural Play Area:
 - Recommendation to include a natural play area citing the popularity of the natural play area in Cherry Hill Park.
- 9. Pond:
 - Recommendation to strike.
 - Comment that an artificial pond does not feel natural.
 - Comment that this a logistical challenge.
 - Comment that this a safety issue and would need to be fenced in.
- 11. Open Space:
 - Recommendation this is not needed as the intention of the park is to keep it as open and natural as possible.
- 12. Resource Education Area:
 - Recommendation to combine 12 – Resource Education Area and 13 – Nature Trail.
 - Recommendation for a natural amphitheater, ring of seats or logs, to allow students to gather for an outdoor class or activity.
 - Recommendation to look into the Master Plan for Howard E. Herman Stream Valley Park for the presence of an outdoor classroom element. If so, this prevents students from having to cross a busy street and could be a better location for a classroom element.
 - Comment that this may not have been put in for budgetary reasons but may be a more viable option. Howard E. Herman is accessible through the pathway adjacent to the playground.
 - Comment that this may not have happened due to adequate space when the purchase of a home to make room for this area did not come fruition. Easement and pathway have been kept.
 - Recommendation to merge this with 17. Performance Area.
- 13. Nature Trail:
 - Comment that the intended pathways are natural and this item could be combined with 6. Pathways.
 - Recommendation to combine 13. Nature Trail, 14. Bike Path and 6. Pathways.
 -
- 14. Bike Path:
 - Recommendation to maintain a hardened trail along the perimeter.

- Recommendation that if the entrance off of Oak Street was wheelchair accessible then there could be hardscape path that goes around the perimeter of what was once the Fellows home. There could also be small garden in the middle of this bike path. This would give young riders a place to ride and wouldn't take up as much of or detract from the natural park.
- 15. Mountain Bike Pump Track:
 - Recommendation to strike.
 - Comment that this a little more active than the intended park use.
 - Comment that this can be very damaging to the park. Reference made to damage caused to trees at Howard Herman when it became a popular mountain biking spot. Habitat Restoration worked on repairing some of the damage.
 - Comment that size of the park cannot accommodate this feature.
- 16. Lighting:
 - Comment that if there is any lighting we should be very cognizant of the neighbors.
 - Recommendation to not have lighting at all as it could promote the use of the park during non-operational hours.
 - Comment that Public safety will look into the Mater Plan and will evaluate the planned lighting as this is a safety concern for first responders.
 - Comment that some form of low lighting to allow for passersby to see activity in the park tends to deter gathering after hours, protect those using the path to travel between neighborhood streets even though the park closes are dark.
 - Comment that groups with likely gather to observe fireflies.
- 17. Performance Area:
 - Recommendation to take the neighbors quality of life into consideration.
 - Recommendation to merge this with 12. Resource Education Area.
 - Recommendation to not have a performance area that is built-up. Any performance area should be intended for a passive use.
 - Comment that the park can support a smaller performance area if it was geared toward supporting a small educational setting and not what is typically considered a performance area.
 - Recommendation to look into the Master Plan for Howard E. Herman Stream Valley Park for the presence of an outdoor classroom element. If so, this prevents students from having to cross a busy street and could be a better location for a classroom element. Howard E. Herman is accessible through the pathway adjacent to the playground at Oak Street Elementary.
 - Comment that this may not have been put in for budgetary reasons but may be a more viable option. Howard E. Herman is accessible through the pathway adjacent to the playground.

- Comment that this may not have happened due to adequate space when the purchase of a home to make room for this area did not come fruition. Easement and pathway have been kept.

- 18. Dog Park:

- Comment that this is no longer really being requested by the community.
- Comment that this park is not large enough to support a dog park.
- Comment that dog parks cannot be in areas where storm water needs to be taken into consideration as pollution becomes a concern.
- Recommendation to strike.

- 19. Athletic Field:

- Comment that this is no longer really being requested by the community.
- Comment that the park is not large enough to support this.
- Recommendation to strike.

- 20. Storm Water:

- Recommendation for the construction of rain gardens
 - Comment with a reference to Lincoln Park wildlife/rain garden area that is very popular with children.
 - Comment that this feature was installed because the area was very wet and the same concept could be applicable to Fellows Property.
 - Comment that rain gardens can be costly; the initial establishment, continued maintenance and improvements over the years should all be taken into consideration.
- Comment that the goal is not to add so many storm water improvements to the property that it creates conflict with existing root structure or trees but instead the recommendation is made to use language that explicitly states that passive above ground systems take preference over any underground system that require cutting down of trees.
- Recommendation for rain gardens, constructed wetlands and low impact storm water management
- Recommendation to create an area for children to play that incorporates educational signs within the area to inform visitors of the hydrology cycle.
- Recommendation to consider slope of property and how storm water can be controlled.

- B. Enhancements

- 1. Trees:

- Comment that City Arborist Charles Prince requests trees be added along Parker Avenue to provide a tree canopy.
- Recommendation to emphasize the increased maintenance cost of this park to the Forestry budget with regards to maintenance of trees and invasive

plants. Comment that this should be emphasized for future budgetary concerns.

- Comment that Habitat Restoration would like to host an upcoming event to remove invasive species at Fellows Property.
 - Habitat Restoration would like to put Fellows Property on the regular rotation of volunteer activities. This can be done in the interim before construction begins.
 - Fellows Property is ideal for volunteer events, especially for family volunteers as the work is kid-friendly.
- Comment that Urban Forestry has undergone changes and currently has no crew members.
 - Volunteer efforts are important right now but Habitat Restoration needs City crew to work with.
- Due to consolidation Charles Prince, City Arborist, is currently handling both development and Urban Forestry.
- C. Open Space
 - Comment that keeping a statement within the document regarding open space is important for public purposes.
 - Comment to be specific with the intent of open space otherwise people will create their own meaning.
 - Comment that this may be more aligned with Park Themes.
 - Comment that we are not creating any additional open space, this is not an enhancement.
 - Comment that this may be an opportunity to include preservation and the value of preservation on the wildlife/environment (i.e. canopy cover helps to control heat in the area, one oak tree can support 300 species of moths).
 - Comment that it may be important to include why we want this open space.

Additional Comments on the Fellows Property Master Plan Draft:

- Recommendation to address the anchor/big picture/big draw of Fellows Property.
 - Comment that this seems to be leaning toward one or many forms of Urban Agriculture.
- Comment - Is there one aspect that is more important? If so, how should it be addressed?
 - Comment that this seems to be Natural Play area combined with Urban Agriculture and an educational setting/resource area/outdoor education area;
 - Comment that 7. Urban Agriculture, 8. Natural Play Area and 12. Resource Education Area should be the guiding principles of the property.
 - Comment that this seems to be what citizens envision for this park – an educational, family oriented park.
- Comment – How can we determine what can be urban agriculture without knowing what is possible due to space constraints?

- Comment that we don't want to set a goal that cannot be met or does not meet expectations.
- Comment - Is there a way to know now what is possible without professionals advising what is possible?
 - Comment that this is an aspirational plan and should be phrased in way that communicates that this what we would like to do.
- Comment that there seem to be two concepts as follows:
 - Concept 1 – A planting area possibly run by group like Grow a Row FC; individual garden plots get messy due to maintenance and have fallen out of favor. Fellows Property may not even have the room to support this.
 - Concept 2 – planting of edible trees/bushes. This can be combined with landscaping and the landscaping choices made and can be melded into the natural landscape of park.
 - Plant varieties that are good for pollinators, provide food sources for wildlife.
 - Allow for park visitors to pick edibles.
 - Organizational run community garden with yield being donated to a food bank.
 - Comment to again emphasize the maintenance cost and time required for future maintenance and a set fund established for future maintenance.
 - Comment that if a community garden is built a partnership will be required to maintain the garden.
- Recommendation to use Jeremy Edwards inventory of Fellows Property which documents which trees were removed under his tenure. Amy Crumpton will able to provide this document.
- Stacey Evers from Grow a Row FC Co-Chair of the Urban Agriculture Workgroup of the Fairfax Food Council would like to be included in further planning.

8. Adjournment

- Melissa Teates motioned to adjourn, Leslie Rye seconded. All approved.

Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks Staff liaison: Jessica Hilgendorf, 703-248-5027 (TTY711), jhilgendorf@fallschurchva.gov

