



4MRV Working Group Meeting Notes  
January 18, 2017 (Wednesday)  
7 – 10:00 PM

### **Shirlington Dog Park Sign**

Working Group members discussed a sign posted by an outside party at the Shirlington Dog Park. The sign stated that the January 18<sup>th</sup> meeting would address possible changes to the dog park, and encouraged the public to attend the meeting to voice support for the dog park. The Working Group Chair, Charles Monfort, clarified to the Working group and other attendees that voting related to the dog park was not on the agenda, but rather that the meeting would focus on seven design concepts that depict how park amenities could be allocated within the Park Master Plan boundary. The meeting did not address specific dog park design, but 2 of the 7 concepts that were developed by the consultant team relocated the dog park away from its current location, which is within the Four Mile Run Resource Protection Area (RPA).

### **Memo from the Sports Commission and Voting**

Shirley Brothwell, representative for the Sports and Recreation Commission (SRC), spoke about the SRC memo that expressed concerns over the voting that occurred at the December 21<sup>st</sup> Working Group meeting. There was no recap of the memo, rather a discussion from various Working Group members, with some stating that they were also uncomfortable with the voting and others who thought it was a necessary part of the process.

Ms. Brothwell specifically thought the voting was rushed and the voting language was not clearly crafted. Ms. Brothwell noted that the written voting language posted in the January 18<sup>th</sup> presentation did not reflect the voting language verbally communicated at the December 21<sup>st</sup> Working Group meeting. Ms. Brothwell also stated that the issues being voted upon have not been fully explored by the Working Group and it was premature to direct the consultants to not pursue a Field House or any indoor sports facility within the park area, east of South Nelson Street. Ms. Brothwell then encouraged the group to review the Working Group charge to better understand their role in directing consultants and staff.

The Chair stated that he sent an email to the Working Group indicating that the meeting would provide direction to the consultants and is not sure how to provide direction without voting, but stated that he is open to ideas.

Michael Grace, Park and Recreation Commission representative, spoke in support of Ms. Brothwell's comments and the Sports and Recreation Commission memo. He indicated that there is a need for indoor/interior sports, and to demonstrate that need, Mr. Grace referred to wait lists managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation

(DPR). Mr. Grace also stated that the December Visioning Workshop demonstrated strong public support for what the

Working Group is calling a Field House. Mr. Grace stated that he does not disagree that the Working Group should take votes. However, he thought the Working Group did not have adequate input to take such specific votes and make 'final cuts' at the December 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. Mr. Grace opined that he thinks the group got ahead of public preference as expressed at the public workshops and the group should learn from this to make decisions more carefully.

Edie Wilson, Shirlington Civic Association representative, stated that she is not comfortable with a building that only includes sports and athletic amenities. Ms. Wilson believes that the group should move in the direction of co-location, which fits with the recommendations developed through the Community Facilities Study. She also thinks that the group should spend time exploring what is meant by a Field House and an Arts District.

Carrie Johnson, community representative at-large, stated that the Thomas Jefferson Site Evaluation process did not use voting. Ms. Johnson indicated that the group is voting on issues that we know nothing about and are not vetted. Ms. Johnson asked for statutory language and a briefing on the term Arts District. Ms. Johnson also requested more information on the term 'floodable parks,' and what can or cannot go into an RPA. She also requested additional information on collocating uses with proposed bus storage. Ms. Johnson suggested that the Working Group look at experiences from elsewhere and timelines for implementation. She believes that the group needs to understand what they are talking about when they take these votes. Ms. Johnson would like the group to focus on the best way to get this information and enlist Working Group member to assist in gathering this information. Ms. Johnson also stated that she thinks the Working Group is divided into factions and are not spending enough time talking to each other and is in favor of sub-committees.

Nora Palmatier, Urban Forestry representative, stated that we are all coming from different groups and each representative is strongly convinced that their needs are so paramount. Ms. Palmatier stated that the park plan will need to find a way to serve everyone and not just one group. Ms. Palmatier is personally comfortable with straw votes and does not believe that they are final decisions. Ms. Palmatier stated that the group needs to get back to the Community Facilities Study and phasing the park, and then worry about the buildings.

Mike Katrivanos stated that the parking shortage is a point the entire Working group can agree upon. He suggested that this may be an area where the group can come together and forge a way forward. Mr. Katrivanos suggested that the Working Group can agree on the location of a parking structure and from there, discover what is possible for the rest of the park buildings or amenities. The uses around that parking garage will fall together.

Keith Fred, Shirlington Dog Park representative, wondered why only the Field House and Art Facility were the only big ticket items people were able to vote for at the Visioning Workshop. Mr. Fred stated that the Working Group needs more information and should

come to a general consensus about having any sort of indoor facilities. He believes that the group is getting into the details too early in the process and don't have enough information to begin

voting. Mr. Fred thinks, in general, that the group does not want to lose green space and feels the Field House does not belong in Phase 1 because it would cause a loss in green space. Mr. Fred wanted to make clear that he is not voting against a Field House; he just does not want to lose green space.

Working Group members also stated the following thoughts and concerns:

- It was unsettling that not everyone understood the implications of the vote at the December 21 meeting.
- Planning for arts and recreation to the west of Nelson Street will affect people who have jobs. Let's get people who will be effected involved in the discussion.
- Working Group members also wanted clear voting language and to better understand how the voting directs the consultants and conclusions.
- A preference was expressed for having any type of voting at the end of an arduous "Arlington way" process than at a time when the Working group does not have enough information.

Kathleen McSweeney, Planning Commission representative, thought the vote was to provide guidance and not intended as a firm stand. Ms. McSweeney clarified that she voted against the Field House only because it did not include co-location. Ms. McSweeney also indicated that the group should not feel compelled to vote without complete information.

Robin Stompler, Vice Chair and Nauck resident, stated that she recommended doing the vote. She thought it was a breath of fresh air that the working group finally had an opportunity to discuss these issues. She stated that the intent of the vote was to get a temperature reading, and that is all it was. Ms. Stompler agreed that the group does not have enough to information to make binding decisions. She also stated that some of the comments made on the evening of the January 18, 2017 concerned her because it shows that the Working Group does not have enough information on the timeline of decision making.

### **Conceptual Alternatives for Park Master Plan**

Jim Klein delivered a presentation that reviewed the following:

- Park Master Plan timeline.
- Working themes for the Park Master Plan, which were drawn from previous Working Group meetings, the Visioning Workshop, and other community outreach efforts.
- Fundamental design principles for the Park Master Plan.
- List of desired program elements the staff and consultant team gathered from the Working Group, Visioning Workshop, and other community engagement activities.
- Photo examples of indoor recreation and art spaces, including: Al Glick Field House at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI; Writer's Theater at Glencoe, IL; and Wesley A. Brown Field House, Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD.

- Outdoor recreation facilities with parking underneath, including: Pomona College rectangular field, Pomona, CA; Montgomery Bell Academy, Nashville, TN; and Central Park Tennis Courts, San Mateo, CA.
- Examples of paths and walkway, streets, and stormwater mitigation techniques.

Mr. Klein then presented the seven Conceptual Alternatives for the 4MRV Park Master Plan Area. These alternatives are on the County's 4MRV website for all to review and additional comments are welcome, please direct them to Kathryn Thomas, 703-228-1843, [kjthomas@arlingtonva.us](mailto:kjthomas@arlingtonva.us).

The Working Group made comments concerning the overall arrangement of the park amenities as well as comments specific to each of the alternatives. The staff and consultant team will take these comments into consideration as new concepts are developed.

- WG members want to explore buildings within the Park Master Plan boundary that co-locate multiple uses.
- WG members want to see more specific information as to where park uses may potentially be located, like the athletic fields and the dog park. The purple blobs were too general.
- There is support for multiple bridges across Four Mile Run.
- Unprogrammed open space is a need that should be included in the Park Master Plan and deliberately planned.
- Walking trails should extend from Walter Reed Drive through the park to Shirlington.
- There is a critical massing that should be achieved by grouping indoor and outdoor park uses.
- WG was in favor of parking incorporated into buildings and under recreational amenities, like an athletic field.
- WG was split over showing uses west of Nelson on private property. A comment was made that phasing is important so that new park uses can be achieved if land is slowly acquired over the next few decades.
- Don't put buildings or parking on top of existing green space. Want to preserve green space and it should not be just 'left over' space.
- Dislike park diagrams that push the athletic fields closer to the neighborhood. There are concerns about noise and field lighting. There is also a desire, by some, to push the athletic fields away from the 4MR RPA and for this area to be used for other activities.
- Suggestion was made to deck over Four Mile Run Dive to connect neighborhood and create parkland above.
- Explore constructing a Field House in Shirlington Crescent near the bus storage.
- Member of the public is interested in safe places to run/train outdoors. Jennie Dean does not feel safe because of the poor lighting at night. Would like a place to gather in the afternoon/night with friends, possibly with a fire pit and fun activities. Also a place to simply lay on the grass and listen to music.
- Keep restrooms near the playground.
- Keep dog park in its current location.

- Open, greenspace needs to be delineated separately in the conceptual drawings
- Untenable to put fields and other activities near Four Mile Run Drive near residential properties.
- Consider topography of the area and impact of sound and light.

Comments on specific alternatives:

- Alternative 1
  - Like
    - Lots of open space including recreation
    - Trail along open space
    - I get to keep my job! -Mike
  - Dislike:
    - Eliminates linear dog park
    - More stream crossings needed
    - Doesn't differentiate between active and passive open space
- Alternative 2
  - Dislike
    - Eliminates too many small businesses
    - Increasing open uses without parking added?
  - Does violet include structured parking with ballfields on top?
- Alternative 3
  - Dislike
    - Too much built east of Nelson
    - Why build open use here (west of Nelson)
    - Built uses in Jennie Dean Park
    - Chopped up
- Alternative 4
  - Where is dog park?
- Alternative 5
  - Dislike:
    - Open uses too chopped up
    - Too shallow an area for playfields, playground, basketball
- Alternative 6
  - Like
    - Balance between open and built
  - Dislike:
    - No indoor here (near WETA) closes off the neighborhood
- Alternative 7
  - Dislike:
    - No festival street in front of park and residential
    - Promenade should run from Walter Reed through to Shirlington Road, industrial theme