

Reeves Farmhouse Update



County Board Meeting
February 28, 2017

BACKGROUND

- ❑ The Reeves Farmhouse property is a 2.47 acre addition to the adjacent Bluemont Park that was purchased by the County in 2001. It's purchase allowed the County to protect the much-loved sled riding hill, expand recreation opportunities at Bluemont Park and preserve the farmhouse and milk house.
- ❑ In 2003 the County hired a consultant to develop an historical, archeological and architectural survey of the property, and in 2004 the County placed designation and historic zoning overly over the property.
- ❑ Since that time, the County Board asked the Historic Affairs and Landmark Review Board to partner with the community to develop interim uses for the farmhouse, and the County issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) and then a Request for Interest (RFI) seeking potential partnerships to restore and reuse the farmhouse.
- ❑ The County was unsuccessful in finding a partner willing to invest in the property, which led to two Board actions in 2015.

PAST COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS

At the May 18, 2015 the County Board authorized the County Manager to take the following four (4) actions regarding the Reeves Farmhouse property:

- ❑ **Create a separate parcel for the former Reeves Farmhouse and a limited portion of the surrounding park land** that conforms to zoning requirements, subject to necessary Board approvals. Once the new parcel is created, pursue the sale of the property to a private owner subject to Board approval of the sale
- ❑ **Preserve the historical integrity of the Reeves Farmhouse**, consistent with the designation of the house and Reevesland property as a Local Historic District
- ❑ **Use the remaining balance of FY 2013 closeout funds** towards transaction costs related to creating a conforming parcel and enhancing urban agriculture activities on the portion of the parcel the County will retain for Bluemont Park
- ❑ **Maintain the continued use and recently approved expansion** of the raised planting beds by the Reevesland Learning Center

At the September 19, 2015 the County Board took the following actions:

- ❑ **Approved a use permit for a Unified Residential Development, with modifications from the Zoning Ordinance for setbacks, lot width and lot coverage. Directed the County Manager to not record the subdivision plat until instructed to do so by the Board.**
- ❑ **Approved a use permit for a Public Park for open space and incidental uses including but not limited to passive recreation, trails, shelters and benches and other small structures.**
- ❑ **The Use Permit approval will expire in September 2018 unless the URD subdivision is recorded. The Use Permit conditions list requirements that the County must meet before the plat can be recorded (repave driveway, create parking pad, create maintenance access, demolish non-historic garage, remove one tree and one bush and replace with two new trees).**

Reeves Farm Conservation Society, Inc.

- ❑ The Reeves Farm Conservation Society, Inc. (RFCSI) nonprofit corporation was incorporated in September 2015 and received 501(c)(3) designation in February 2016.
- ❑ Staff worked with RFCSI to share background information; meetings were held with various staff from parks and recreation, building code, zoning, and historic preservation to explore ideas and answer questions; and a draft Letter of Intent was developed for a ground lease.
- ❑ RFCSI developed a draft business plan for the project, which they shared with County staff and the neighborhood in May 2016.
- ❑ In June 2016, RFCSI notified the County that they would not be pursuing reuse of the farmhouse. They have disbanded as an organization and in December 2016 they donated all remaining funds they had raised to the Arlington Community Foundation.

Reevesland Learning Center

- ❑ In November 2016, senior staff and two members of the County Board met with the Reevesland Learning Center. The RLC is a separate non-profit that manages the raised planting beds on the Reeves Farm property. The County previously had lengthy discussions with the RLC in 2014-2015 exploring a potential partnership regarding restoration and reuse of the farmhouse.
- ❑ The RLC shared a revised partnership proposal. The proposal included a partnership with the Arlington Career Center to assist with some of the construction labor and some pro-bono professional services. However, the proposal continues to rely 100% on County providing the construction costs to restore the house.

County Manager Recommendation and Next Steps

- ❑ The County Manager recommends that the County not be a financial partner in the restoration and reuse of the farmhouse.
- ❑ The County Manager will bring the Reeves Farmhouse project back to the Board seeking formal direction from the Board to move forward with recording the subdivision plat.
- ❑ The Board Report will lay out the next steps to prepare the Reeves farmhouse for sale and the timeline for that to happen.