



## 4MRV Working Group Meeting

Tuesday, October 3, 2017

Drew Model School

7 p.m. – 9:15 p.m.

**Meeting began at 7:07 p.m.**

### Follow-up from Previous Meeting(s):

- a. Questions/Comments Related to Dog Park Committee Report
  - A Working Group (WG) Vice Chair (VC) – Haynes acknowledged that the WG Chair was not present at this meeting. The WG VC responded to questions/comments from the Dog Park Committee Report.
  - A WG member mentioned that there should be subsequent discussions on stormwater and invited the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) director to describe his stormwater experiences for the industrial building behind the Shirlington Dog Park. He acknowledged that it is difficult to install effective, stormwater techniques, and that it is costly.
  - A WG VC received staff comments from the Department of Environmental Services (DES) which included: bacteria issues, soil compaction and quality, and intensity of use of the dog park continues to be an issue.
  - A WG VC will provide information on the issues highlighted by DES and will post them online.
  
- b. Other
  - A WG VC mentioned the County Board notice regarding the Arcland property purchase. It was noted there may be some additional time at the next WG meeting (on Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>) to address this subject further.
  - WG member mentioned the issue of collocation (as described within the Joint Facilities Advisory Commission (JFAC) process), and agreed with buying the Shirlington Road property.

- Another WG member mentioned the JFAC meeting that discussed funding especially for leasing the Shirlington Road property. They encouraged the County to look at this property in creative ways and not rule out collocation in the future.
- A WG VC (Stompler) noted that a parking facility on the parcel near I-395 could be integrated, but that the parcel near Shirlington Road should embrace multi-use, innovated solutions, not buses.
- WG member mentioned there is a possible business opportunity on the frontage of Shirlington Road, especially for “mom-and-pop businesses”.
- WG member also mentioned the possibility of adding a field on this property as well (as a future use).
- County Board member, John Vihstadt stated that he asked for further clarification from the County Manager and the County Attorney on collocation opportunities for the subject property.
- A WG VC (Haynes) encouraged creative uses, long and short term options, and other “forward-thinking” ideas for the WG letter back to the County Board on the sale and possible use of this property.
- At the request of staff, a new meeting date for the November 7<sup>th</sup> WG meeting was needed since County facilities will not be able to accommodate the Working Group because of election night. Possible dates for consideration were Monday, 10/31, Tuesday, 10/31, Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, or Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>. A WG VC (Stompler) asked the group to consider those dates and the topic would be addressed at the end of the meeting.

### **Working Group Discussion of Future Jennie Dean Park Elements (discussion led by Robin Stompler, WG VC):**

- WG VC Stompler explained that she wanted the WG to express their thoughts: positives/negatives, begin a dialogue, share opinions on the Jennie Dean Park elements. She explained that what would be presented at this meeting are not the three (3) existing Jennie Dean Park options. Instead, the various park elements would be discussed in isolation as separate items. She encouraged WG members to discuss and state preferences, but she also acknowledged that some may not have a preference and may choose to abstain from making a selection.
  
- **Playground Placement** – The WG VC provided a presentation slide with three (3) graphics which highlighted alternative playground locations within the park.
  - WG member responded that having the restrooms next to a playground is a good idea. The WG member also stated that there needs to be adjacency to green space, it would be very inviting.
  - WG member responded by saying that when planning a park, the process needs to start by looking at the big picture and explore the details later. The WG VC responded that she would like to begin a dialogue, and after 17 months, this was an opportunity to discuss areas where the WG agrees or disagrees.
  - WG member did not have a preference to a specific playground placement, but did mention closeness to parking or a path to parking is important (because of transporting children), and fencing around the playground is important. One of the locations shown would be furthest away from any potential parking.
  - WG member responded that the locations closest to the street would be best, and that the one location located behind the fields seemed to be too out of the way from the rest of the park.
  - WG member responded that it would be helpful to provide the overall context to the locations shown. WG VC responded that the group was just speaking to the elements, in this case, specifically the playground. She followed by clarifying that members may speak to what general themes are relevant to the playgrounds. The WG member then responded that the playground's proximity to the fields is important, since there would be more eyes on the field and playground (since children are present). The WG member later expressed that seeing these elements in isolation was confusing.
  - WG member thanked County staff on the various options for Jennie Dean Park and the information regarding what can be done on Phase I as opposed to Phase

II. The WG member later followed by stating that the Shirlington Civic Association would like to discuss the park options further, but speaking at the elements in isolation may be difficult. Finally, the member expressed that highlighting the pros/cons on how the proposed park options will be relevant in Phase I and II would be helpful.

- WG member expressed support for the structure of this discussion, and that the WG should try something different by having a conversation with each other regarding the separate elements. The WG member liked the idea of a “wall” where children would be shielded from the road.
- WG member mentioned that placing the playground close to South Nelson Street was too close because of the proximity to the Shirlington Dog Park. The playground would need a fence (since children may run out, and dogs may run in to the playground). The member expressed their support for the two (2) locations closest to the WETA parcels. However, there may be noise issues because of the building’s generators “humming” on that site.
- WG member stated that the playground location would work anywhere and that the design of the playground would overcome anything. Parking nearby was not as important for a playground, because walking to the playground from the neighborhood should be part of the experience. The member then followed by stating that access to the playground was more important and making sure the trees were minimally impacted.
- WG member agreed that one location was too close to South Nelson Street and that it was buried in a wooded area of the park (there may be some maintenance issues to consider with this location). The other two locations would work. However, assuming the configuration on the fields, the one location preferred would be the one behind the ball fields and not near the outfield (because of flying balls possibly hitting children).
- WG member liked the two locations that situated the playground next to the pavilion. However, one location had better access from the street to the playground.
- WG member asked what playground placement can be built in Phase I? WG VC mentioned the group was not discussing existing park options or their phasing.
- WG member mentioned that one location provided the best placement for the playground, because it was the safest place in relation to the placement of the ball fields. The WG member then asked how would the commentary from this exercise be considered moving forward and would it supplement the Open House commentary? The WG VC stated that this was simply a dialogue.

- **Courts** – The WG VC then projected a slide showing two tennis courts and one basketball court and asked if maintaining current courts is acceptable.
  - WG member mentioned that having a third tennis court (increasing from 2 to 3) was important because of scheduling potential tournaments.

*County staff clarified that the charge says, “The Park Master Plan will provide a vision for the comprehensive replacement and realignment of existing park features (exclusively for park purposes) and the addition of new park amenities to meet the growing demand for active and passive recreation, cultural resources and natural resource preservation”.*

- WG member mentioned that the more courts (of any kind) that can be placed in the park, the better.
- WG member mentioned that if it was possible to situate four courts near the day laborer site, that it would be an opportunity.
- WG member stated that speaking about the elements in isolation was difficult, and that there was limited space to consider. The WG should consider expanding the various park elements as part of the discussion by treating all amenities equally. The WG member then stated that if there was consideration for a fourth court, that the preference would be for a basketball court.
- WG member stated that having a court that can be used at the same time as others would be preferable, and that this would likely be a basketball court.
- WG member expressed that having a multi-use court would be helpful, because various games/uses could be played.
- WG member reiterated that having an extra court could provide for various opportunities for practices (examples mentioned: handball, basketball practice, etc.). The WG member then asked if all the courts need to be grouped together, or may some of the courts be separated in other areas?
- WG member stated that the tennis community going from 2 to 3 tennis courts would be welcomed, and that the placement of the courts in separate locations within the park, would not be an issue if capacity is made larger. The member then mentioned that using smaller spaces and larger balls as part of a children’s learning program would be helpful, and by providing for a multi-purpose court, that would have the capacity to add nets for different kinds of games, which would then be helpful for tennis, pickleball, etc. (the time of day, capacity, and

other factors would be considered). The member then stated that tennis courts built properly should be oriented North/South, because East/West orientation was not ideal because of sun orientation/glare during the morning and afternoon hours.

- WG member mentioned that if the courts are collocated, this would allow for a parking structure underneath to be built, if needed.
- WG member stated that the park element discussion in isolation was an excellent exercise, because it allowed the WG members to think about the how the park should ultimately look like in the long run. The member then clarified that it was more important to ask, “Do we want courts together or separated?”, as opposed to “What do we want on Phase I vs Phase II?”. The member then said that having the courts split in different locations may be feasible.
- WG member mentioned that collocation of courts is a good idea, which would allow for parking garage construction, and should then imply that it should have easy access to a road.
- WG member stated that it would be helpful if the pavilion/restrooms moved closer to a parking lot. WG VC commented that rehabbing the “3700 Nelson building” may also provide opportunities for publicly accessible restrooms.
- **Open Space** – The WG VC then projected a slide showing three open space locations and asked, “What is the purpose of green, open, unprogrammed (casual use) space?”
  - WG member stated that the majority of casual use space should be near the stream rather than along Four Mile Run Drive for a more pleasant user experience. Other WG members agreed with this sentiment.
  - WG member stated that having seating near the open space areas was important for both adults and children, and that they can provide locations for public art.
  - A WG VC stated that open space in the context of this conversation does not include trees/tree canopy.
  - A WG member mentioned that open space provides running space for children and stormwater catchment.
  - WG member stated that unprogrammed, open space has many uses, because it provides casual use opportunities for throwing around a football, a Frisbee, etc., and that not all open spaces should be structured play.

- WG member expressed that the use for open space/nature was helpful for personal well-being. Unprogrammed play (for Frisbee throwing, for example) was important. The WG member then clarified that open space can be stormwater friendly, with meadow like plants, wildflowers, and land should be used to provide for these natural opportunities.
- WG member stated that open space should be available to everyone and used by everyone, not necessarily for a programmed/specific sport. The member then stated that the priority should be providing for an abundance of open/casual-use space.
- WG member mentioned that picnicking in Jennie Dean Park has been a long-standing use of the existing open space, and this should be considered for any new/reconfigured spaces of open space. The member later stated that the community surrounding the park uses the entirety of the park, and loves it all, and providing lots of open space, shade and walkways was an important consideration.
- WG member stated that using open space to provide for some sort of event space, summer concert/movie/festival, or connection to the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) trail for a race, would draw many people in to the area.
- WG member reiterated that a picnic space is important for children and families. However, the WG member cautioned that the WG should be clear about what should/should not be allowed within open spaces and that wayfinding/signage should clearly define this.
- WG member stated that constructive spaces for open space should “keep the ground level” and be stormwater friendly. The WG member reiterated that the WG should advocate for open spaces to be used constructively, and that it should be clear with what can/cannot be done on these spaces.
- WG member stated that it was unintuitive to have an “unprogrammed” use, but that open space really does mean that it may be a multi-purpose space for a variety of uses.
- WG member emphasized that a synthetic turf on a diamond field, accomplishes many things, which keeps the field maintainable and reliable. The member later clarified that there are maintenance issues associated with this and that fencing around it may be an issue. However, the member also acknowledged that there may be an alternative way of thinking about open space (for example, with the use of synthetic fields for concert/movie spaces, etc.).

- Another WG member responded to this comment by stating that a synthetic field used for multi purposes was a fantastic idea.
- WG member emphasized that artificial turf/natural grass fields should be “unlocked” for use when they are not used for programmed activities (moving fences and other field features). WG member then followed up by asking if there was Resource Protection Area (RPA) mitigation associated with the installation of a synthetic field on an RPA. County staff stated that they are not the subject matter expert, however, in the past this may have been done since synthetic turf is permeable.
- WG member stated that synthetic turf field may not work well for picnicking and other casual uses.
- The next slide presented the placement of open space in three possible areas:
  - WG member mentioned the preference would be for the two (2) locations that show adjacencies to playgrounds.
  - WG member preferred the option that would not be close to the ball fields, where impacts to pedestrians and open space users would be minimal.
  - WG member mentioned that open space can be small and divided and may provide some privacy. The member then stated that open space and trees are multipurpose in nature.
  - WG member stated that having divided open space was not an issue, but did state that what was striking about the presented location was that the open space as shown seems to be an “after-thought”. The member then stated that the WG needs to look at this as equally weighted as all other park uses in this process.
  - WG member stated that the location which shows a little piece of green space near Four Mile Run Drive may conflict with the trees that are placed there. Another WG member stated that the group cannot answer what may be planted at this location or what impacts it would have. Another WG member stated that this location provides a buffer to the busy road.
  - WG member emphasized that the open space configured at Thomas Jefferson Park works well and should be looked at further as an example for Jennie Dean Park. The member then stated that open space does not have to be in any one place, but that it should be considered primarily regarding its use and purpose.

- WG member stated that one location did not take in to account new open space that may be acquired if the WETA building/site is acquired. Furthermore, the member stated that the current coloring of open spaces and the projected locations may not be a good representation of what may be ultimately available. The member emphasized that trees should be considered for open space opportunities and that the parcels west of South Nelson Street envisioned for a possible Arts District could have been used for new open space opportunities.
    - WG member stated that the group should look at the overall context, because there are many townhouses and apartment buildings in Nauck with no access to open space, other than with the parks that are nearby. The member later stated that this is a highly dense area, and ball field placement and open space placement should be analyzed further.
    - WG member stated that open space may be used for advertisement/signage purposes. The WG VC mentioned that the WG should not be considering this.
    - WG member stated that from the cement plant to the north, there is an open space opportunity and where the pool hall is there is a hill that could be used as a potential open space location. The member then stated that this is a dense location, and placing parking on this park (garage or surface) should not be considered and that installation of more green space should be emphasized.
    - WG member observed and stated if there are green, open areas next to or close to a playground, does that make the open space “less serene”? WG VC stated that some people like the sound of children’s voices.
- **Recreational Fields** – The WG VC stated that by the charge, it is one softball and one baseball field. The VC then asked the WG, “Are you comfortable with these two fields?”
  - WG member stated “yes”, they were comfortable with the two fields. The WG member clarified, that considering what happened with the Williamsburg lighting process, the two fields in question should be used to its reasonable capacity. Furthermore, the member stated that it was untenable to consider that there are fields in the County that cannot be used to their full potential. The WG member also stated that the WG should consider how these fields can be used when they are not programmed and that the existing fields on Jennie Dean Park should be used to the greatest extent possible (which is not currently the case). The member then stated the orientation of the fields should be considered, and that the options orienting the fields towards the stream was a good idea, because of fly/foul balls.

- WG member stated that this was one of the conversations that the WG group needs to be clear about. The member explained that the fields are precious for the current and future generations, but also stated that the WG should recognize the history of these fields; so yes, the WG member supports the fields as provided.
- WG member agreed with having both ball fields at this site. The member later stated that by expanding access to the fields when they are not in use for programmed sports, it would alleviate the casual open space areas for multi-purpose uses. The member also stated that by having a ball field situated closer to a road would provide for an opportunity to place parking nearby.
- WG member agreed with keeping the two fields, but emphasized that it is expanding their access and how the fields can be used when they are unprogrammed that should be considered further. One idea mentioned by the WG member was to considering the installation of removable fences. Furthermore, the WG member stated that leaving the outfield for use by the community when it is unprogrammed and placing the temporary fenced infrastructure on the infield could be a possibility. However, the member also acknowledged that the cost of field use should be considered for programmed opportunities. Another WG member mentioned that the fields can be rented for rates as specified by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) for certain hours of usage.
- WG member supported and supplemented the need to maintain both the diamond fields. The member stated that people need open space for recreation, and that the diamond field when unprogrammed should be used by the community for unprogrammed, recreational purposes. The member stated that the group should bear in mind the charge, and maintain existing park features in what is Jennie Dean Park. However, the member also clarified that what Jennie Dean Park is used for today may not be what Jennie Dean Park may be used for in the future, and stated that there may be the need for another field type (rectangular field, etc.).
- A WG VC asked if anyone wanted to address the “elephant in the room”. She asked if the group was accepting of two diamond fields or if a soccer field or convertible field should be discussed as alternatives.
- Another WG member supported and reiterated the importance of how the community can use the existing, diamond fields when they are unprogrammed for casual-use and that it was a great idea.
- WG member stated that diamond field utilization is too low, and that the data should have been presented to the group much earlier in the process, because it affects the master plan discussion. The member stated that the issue of utilization may now be considered in a larger context. The member stated that County staff should provide the height of field lights and their brightness within the context of

the County's other diamond fields. Furthermore, the member stated that the size of the diamond fields programmed as shown in the established options (square footage area) should be provided. County staff stated that the information can be provided. The working group members added that existing lighting times should also be provided (i.e. when field lights are turned on and off). However, County staff stated that the details of the lights as part of this process, would likely be developed as part of the final design phase.

- WG member stated that improving the ability to use the diamond fields for girls' softball would be helpful. Further discussion about Title IX opportunities was also identified.

**Public Comment:**

- Shirlington Resident – the resident stated that she has played softball in Arlington since 2001, and her team has been in existence since the mid-90s and they use the Jennie Dean Park fields. She stated that she liked the idea of refurbishing and improving the existing diamond fields. She stated that one of the reasons why the fields are locked is because it helps with maintaining the infield/mounds from collapsing, or else they would be maintained with greater frequency which would then be costlier. She concluded by stating that Arlington’s co-ed teams are an asset to the community.
- A WG VC conveyed an e-mail to the rest of the WG which was sent by Mr. Barry Isaac (the e-mail was originally directed to County staff for distribution to the WG). Mr. Isaac supported the ability to maintain the diamond fields and to improve their conditions, not to eliminate them. He stated that eliminating the diamond fields was inconsistent with the County Board’s mandate to preserve and expand field usage.
- Community Little League Baseball Coach – the coach stated that he appreciated the discussion of using the diamond fields for various sports groups (not just adult leagues, but also girls’ softball for example). He clarified that the lighting on LED lights are designed to minimize light pollution to surrounding neighborhoods. He stated that Musco provides the ability to control the lights if they are not used during the programmed times, and that the lights can be turned off if not used. The coach also supported the idea of using the fields more efficiently and that it was an important discussion to have. He stated that a “diamond is a diamond” and should be used by all users, and not just the diamond field leagues. He concluded by stating that he appreciated the WG conversation on the various topics.
- Community Member – The resident stated that the County should show what spaces are unprogrammed within the various Jennie Dean Park options, and explore further what can be used for casual uses. The resident concluded by asking that the County to quantify (%) the amount of unprogrammed space is available under all options (open space, trees, etc.).
- A WG VC entertained alternate dates for the Tuesday, 11/7 meeting. Noting lack of consensus, the decision was tabled to a later date.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.**