

CHCA Meeting, Monday, October 14, 2019, 7 pm - Walter Reed Community Center
Board Members Present: Takis Karantonis, Josh Folb, Ed Miltenberger, Meredith Gade, Sarah McKinley, Ron Haddox, Marian Gooderham

Others Present: Sarah Absetz (Arlington Commons), Jerry (Arlington Village), Eleanor Mahoney (Arlington Village), Erin Waskiak, Juliet Hizney

County Parks & Rec Representatives: Bernadette Grullon, Landscape Architect Manager and Kasey Spriggs, Park Service Area Manager

7:00 PM President's Update and the goals for tonight – Ron Haddox

- Ron noted that in the interest of time, the presentation and discussion with the County's Parks & Rec representatives will take priority at tonight's meeting

7:05 PM Approval of the Meetings tonight agenda and the September 9th meeting minutes. (Marian and Ron)

- The Minutes for the September 9th Meeting were unanimously approved

7:10 PM Dept. of Parks and Recreation (DPR) – planning and design of playgrounds – discussion/presentation.

- Marian Gooderham opened the discussion with an overview of the background and demographics of the neighbors who currently frequent the playground at Walter Reed Community Center ("WR") and what the community would like to see at the playground should it be eligible for a renovation. In short, in its current state, the playground is of little interest to younger children ages 1-5 and could be better utilized by families if there were more age-appropriate and engaging features; this is especially important as the majority of households in CH are condos/apts with little greenspace and WR is the only walkable amenity/park/playground that families don't have to cross a major street to access.
- Safety and maintenance concerns were cited, including lack of fence between playground and parking lot, lack of shade, the sand is not well-maintained and attracts wasps in the summer months, the ropes feature between two rocks is frequently broken, and the metal drums installation are hot to the touch in summer months.
- Suggestions for additional or new features were given, based on community feedback, including requests for baby swings or regular swings, a small climbing playhouse w/slide, a creative play feature (car, boat, bus, train, etc.), a suspended circular swing, basically mimic toddler play areas found at other parks (Butler Holmes, Oak Grove, Fairlington, etc.), consider possibility of a splash pad or water feature.

Responses/presentation by Bernadette and Kasey:

- Introductions and explanation of their respective job functions
- Explained the funding process for Parks & Rec are a part of the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) funding cycles every other year, although there are funds available in

the Maintenance Capital Program for upgrades to existing features, they don't believe what we are looking for would qualify for those funds, might need to go through NCAC (Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee) to request upgrades/updates to WR playground.

- Q&A with attendees:
 1. WR playground was constructed in 2006, with community input
 2. Playgrounds are designed with two age groups in mind, 1-4yo and 5-12yo
 3. Playgrounds are designed with a 20-25 year lifespan; assessed every 10 years for inventory and furnishings survival; **WR would not be up for renovation consideration until 2026**
 4. Staff conduct quarterly inspections and daily maintenance routines
 5. Community demographics such as number of households w/children are considered when planning playgrounds (Takis pointed out that CH has added approximately 800 households since the WR playground was constructed in 2006, and more are coming)
 6. Playground construction takes generally 2 years
 7. Certain safety considerations in effect for the current size of the playground: safety surfacing considerations preclude adding features vs full renovation, swings would need to have 16 feet clearance front to back, structures require 6 foot buffer zones, some are able to overlap so 3 foot buffers in some instances
 8. Suggestion to add WR playground to our NCAC list, but CH already has one project in line, NCAC takes 5-10 years to get projects funded and was recently defunded by the County
 9. Example: Nelly Custis Park was funded through NCAC for approximately \$1M.
 10. Monroe St. Park in Douglas Park is up for renovation and process will begin next year (18mo concept-construction phase with 3-4 mo community input, takes about 1 year to get from design to bid plus 6 months of construction.
 11. **What we can do now is address the following safety and maintenance concerns:**
 - They will research cost of installing landscaping such as bushes in between the playground and the sidewalk area in front of the parking lot (less expensive than a fence)
 - They will research installing a strategically placed shade tree/s to produce natural shade, especially over sand area
 - (FYI-Sand Wasps do not sting and are beneficial as they eat bugs in the sand)
 - Kasey indicated the ropes feature had been fixed, but Eleanor indicated her son was unable to use it properly that evening, it was loose and not taught in order to function-Kasey will research possibility of retrofitting it with a different ropes configuration as it is not performing as intended
 - Install a sign "Hot to the touch" at the metal drums and Bernadette will research installing attached soft mallets so kids can actually play with the drums and not use their hands (similar to Quincy Park feature)

8:45 PM Career Center BLPC/PFRC update (Takis and Marian) and CHCA Schools Committee (Sarah-Bumped to next meeting)

- Takis discussed results from the traffic management survey
- Juliet and Sarah McKinley expressed concern over the presumption that there were plenty of spaces available offsite within the surrounding neighborhoods, basically a precursor for rationalizing less parking to be constructed on site
- Suggestion to remind the BLPC of the CCWG recommendation for the County/APS to purchase the ECDC parcel adjacent to the Career Center to make room for parking and additional facilities; this was previously supported by the PPG and CPRO.

9:00 PM Arlington Arts / Transit Station Art (Sarah)

- CH needs a representative for design concepts/deliverable process to select artist/s for the public art project installations along certain bus stops along Columbia Pike. The neighborhood representatives will report to the Arts Committee/Commission. There will be around four meetings in total. Juliet Hizney volunteered to be our rep.

9:05 PM CHCA Meeting at Pupatella/Halloween Party with Green Valley. (All-Bump to next meeting)

9:06 PM Future meeting with the County's Foresters. (Marian, All)

- Marian will work with Meredith to compile a list of tree-related concerns and see if the County Arborist can attend one of our meetings to discuss.

9:10 PM Old Business –Letter to CPRO (The current state of the Columbia Heights Farmers Market and Vendors concerns.) (Takis-Bump to next meeting)

9:11 PM Meeting adjourned