

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 21, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF STAFF REPORT ON THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 2006 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF JONES POINT PARK

ISSUE: Consideration of staff report on the National Park Service (NPS) 2006 Environmental Assessment of Jones Point Park (JPP).

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Receive the staff report (Attachment 1);
- (2) Receive public comment on the JPP EA06 at its September 26, 2006, meeting; and
- (3) At its October 10 legislative meeting, consider comments for incorporation into a City report to be sent to NPS as Council's formal final position on the environmental assessment.

BACKGROUND: City Council received a presentation on the Jones Point Park 2006 Environmental Assessment at its September 12, 2006 legislative meeting. At that meeting, Council requested the Mayor to express the City's preliminary comments and concerns at the NPS Public Hearing on September 13, 2006. Also at its legislative meeting, Council scheduled a September 26 Council public hearing to allow additional comment on the JPP EA 06, prior to Council finalizing at its October 10 legislative meeting the comments that will be provided in written form to the National Park Service prior to their October 18, 2006, deadline.

DISCUSSION: On August 18, 2006, the National Park Service released the Jones Point Park 2006 Environmental Assessment document. The National Park Service's preferred alternative - Alternative 4 (Attachment b) dramatically differs from the City recommendation - Alternative 1 (Attachment a) in a number of areas.

- 1. The NPS Plan reduces the number of athletic fields from two full size fields (60 yards x 110 yards as shown in the City Plan) north of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge

to one small athletic field (40 yards x 80 yards) south of the Bridge. The reduction to one field will reduce the number of youth and adult teams that can be provided athletic field space. The City plan provided for continued growth and capacity for the future with the inclusion of two full-sized fields in the park design.

2. The event lawn area continues to be used for organized sport leagues in the NPS Preferred Alternative. In the City plan the area is used to create a pastoral, historical, cultural and archeologically significant area that has scheduled programs or events.
3. Parking is reduced in the NPS plan to 81 daily spaces and an access road is created that intrudes into the park to the riverfront. While the City plan does provide for more parking spaces (110), the parking remains west of Lee Street and the City plan keeps significant green vegetative open space near the riverfront area.
4. The NPS preferred alternative provides for 159 spaces of event parking underneath the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, but does not identify the specific security requirements or costs related to that parking. The City continues to contend that due to the Security Threat Assessment performed by TSA and the subsequent recommendation that was accepted by the federal and State agencies responsible for the Bridge (the same recommendation that mandated the changes to the 65% Jones Point Park Plan), that the City has lost the ability to provide parking to the public under the bridge and as such, parking underneath the bridge is not shown in the City plan. In addition, while all plans show the mandated 80 foot setback area of the bridge, the City contends that this security area is "lost to use" and mitigation for the loss should be provided to the City, as the NPS preferred alternative falls short of the parking legally required in the existing bridge settlement agreement between the City and the federal government.
5. The community gardens are shown to be re-aligned in the NPS preferred alternative. The City plan showed no change in the location of the Community Gardens area.

Staff developed formal draft comments which are included in the attached Draft Report on the National Park Service Jones Point Park 2006 Environmental Assessment Alternative 1 and Alternative 4 which can be included (as currently drafted, or as amended by Council on October 10) in the formal written response that the City will provide to the National Park Service prior to its October 18 deadline. Staff continues to support the City's Alternative 1, approved June, 2005 scheme A, and believes that the significant differences between the City's Alternative and the NPS Alternative would leave the City with a park that has substantially less value than previously agreed to by the federal government.

Should the final NPS decision document on the JPP EA06 recommend one small field south of the bridge, then staff recommends that the City demand that the FHWA provide the equivalent of the land, design and construction costs for two full-sized fields within the City limits.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1. Draft Report on the National Park Service Jones Point Park 2006 Environmental Assessment: Alternative 1 and Alternative 4.

Attachment a. Alternative 1 - Alexandria City Council's "Scheme A" dated 6/28/05

Attachment b. Alternative 4 - Preferred Alternative

Attachment c. City of Alexandria's NPS JPP EA 2006 Action Alternative Comparison (September 26, 2006)

STAFF:

Kirk Kincannon, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Rich Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services

Jim McKay, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria

Aimee Vosper, Supervisory Landscape Architect, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Pamela Cressey, City Archaeologist

A full copy of the NPS Environmental Assessment is available for review in the City Clerk's Office.

City of Alexandria

DRAFT REPORT ON THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE JONES POINT PARK 2006 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ALTERNATIVE 1 AND ALTERNATIVE 4

On August 18, 2006, the National Park Service released the Jones Point Park 2006 Environmental Assessment (JPP EA06) which included four action options and one no-build option. For the purposes of this report, only two of the five options in the JPP EA06 will be discussed.

Alternative 1- Alexandria City Council's "Scheme A" dated 06/28/05 (attachment a) is reviewed, as it is the recommended alternative submitted by City Council in 2005 and, Alternative 4 - NPS Preferred Alternative- (One Multi-Use Field South of the WWB) (attachment b) is reviewed, as it is the preferred alternative in the JPP EA06 NPS report. Also included in this update is the National Park Service's *Table S-1, Summary of Impacts by Alternative* (attachment c), which does show the NPS summary for all four action alternatives that were under NPS review and consideration, as well as the no action Alternative.

The City compared the Alexandria City Council recommended park concept design shown as Alternative 1 (submitted to the National Park Service in 2005 for inclusion in the JPP EA06 process), to the National Park Service Preferred Alternative shown as Alternative 4 in the JPP EA06 document. The City recommended alternative, most closely represents the Original Jones Point Park (*65% Plan*) Concept Plan that was approved by City Council in the year 2000. The earlier *65% Plan*, was included within the 2001 or initial National Park Service Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment review document (JPP EA2001) which was signed by the NPS on September 10, 2001, and was circulated for public comment from January 2002 - February 2002. Consideration of the JPP EA2001 alternatives were halted by the Federal Government as a result of security and threat assessments performed by the Transportation Security Administration (due to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001).

The TSA assessment that was endorsed and accepted by FHWA, VDOT and MSHA, was a recommendation to eliminate all parking underneath the Wilson Bridge as well as eliminate all public vehicle access within 80 ft. from either side of the Wilson Bridge North and South parapet drip lines. While the concerns for public safety in relation to the TSA threat assessment of the Wilson Bridge are understandable, a significant loss of park use has occurred, and as such, the City will suffer a loss from the newly imposed requirements which have eliminated the ability to utilize the large area underneath the Wilson Bridge for daily park users, or for other parking purposes. In addition, the forced lost parking under the bridge, has resulted in additional park impacts not accounted for in the settlement agreement between the "City of Alexandria and the United States Department of Transportation." These impacts have resulted in a relocation and reconfiguration of parking for park users that will create additional impervious surface areas in the park and, has also created an additional loss of useable parkland (approx. 7 acres) from the North and South side of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge within Jones Point Park due to the 80' vehicle setback.

CITY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE: Given the new parameters and the required parking changes by FHWA, VDOT and MSHA, and after months of deliberation, which included work sessions, meetings and public hearings, the City preferred alternative for JPP EA06 was submitted to the National Park Service in June 2005. The City recommended concept, *Alternative 1- Alexandria City Council Recommendation Scheme A- 06/28/05* as shown in the JPP EA06, included the following major elements:

- Two large (60 yards x 110 yards) multi-purpose fields north of the Bridge
- 110 parking spaces within the park and west of Lee Street
- Historical preservation of the Shipway
- Interpretive areas and trails
- Fishing piers and riverfront access for pedestrians
- Event lawn with passive use
- Play grounds
- Multiple play courts
- Natural resource areas
- Park trails and trail connections to Mt. Vernon Trail
- Jones Point Lighthouse
- Park Office and comfort station
- Community gardens

Specifically, the City recommended plan of June 2005 includes two 110 yards x 60 yards multipurpose fields north of the Bridge. One field is oriented north/south and the other adjacent field is oriented east/west. An estimated 14,810 square feet of impact to the wetlands occur with this layout due to the access road crossing two delineated wetland areas. The field layout is outside of the newly defined wetland areas, shown on the Wetland Delineation Map in the JPP EA06. This Alternative contains 110 parking spaces, located west of the Lee Street trail, east of Royal Street and within the park.

According to the JPP EA06 for Alternative 1, three trees larger than 24 inches will be impacted with this alternative, though throughout the deliberations concerning positioning of parking within Alternative 1, it was stated that all parking configurations were conceptual, and care would be taken to ensure minimal to no tree loss (of trees larger than 24 inches) during final layout of the parking proposal. Within this Alternative, approximately 4.1 acres of forested area would be removed, most of which is currently overrun with invasive species and vines. This parking would occur on previously disturbed lands.

Under Alternative 1, the Event Lawn and Historic Interpretive areas will remain as originally designed, and will not be impacted by the placement of the fields. This Alternative does not propose parking under the bridge. Since the TSA determination on security concerns, any parking under the bridge would not be feasible for the City of Alexandria due to the expense and requirements associated with security. According to the JPP EA06, there will be little effect on soils as the grading activities will result in the placement of clean fill material on top of existing

soils, which would leave the existing soils intact. Stormwater issues are improved with the proposed drainage improvements. Stormwater quality will need to be addressed in either of the options.

NPS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE: The *Alternative 4 - NPS Preferred Alternative- One Multi-Use Field South of the WWB* includes the following elements:

- One small 80 yards x 40 yards field, south of the Bridge
- An 81 space parking lot located within the current gravel parking lot area, close to the tot lot, ship lawn and fishing pier
- Historical preservation of the Shipway
- Interpretive areas and trails
- Fishing piers and riverfront access for pedestrians
- Event Lawn with active use
- Play Grounds
- Multiple play courts
- Natural resource areas
- Park trails and trail connections to Mt. Vernon Trail
- Jones Point Lighthouse
- Park Office and comfort station
- Reconfigured community gardens
- Special Event parking (159 spaces) under the Bridge

Alternative 4 contains one 80 yards x 40 yards south of the bridge located in the Event Lawn/Historic Interpretive area. The Event Lawn becomes a multi-functional athletic area. Approximately 15,680 square feet of wetlands will be impacted by this layout as the access road crosses two delineated areas, as well as up to 1 or more trees greater than 24 inches. A smaller forested area, approximately 2.7 acres within the park, currently overrun by invasive plant material, will be impacted by the layout. As noted above, according to the JPP EA06, there will be little effect on soils as the grading activities will result in the placement of clean fill material on top of existing soils, which would leave the existing soils intact.

Identification of archaeological resources at Jones Point Park has been adequate but work remains to be done. The environmental assessment cites the previous archaeological work and references the Jones Point Park Archaeological Preservation Plan, which indicates known and potential locations of significant resources.

The impact on the archaeological resources from activities associated with the rehabilitation and preservation of the lighthouse and D.C. cornerstone (including the demolition and rebuilding of the sea wall and vault, the reconstruction of several architectural features, landscaping, and construction of access paths for the physically challenged) has not been assessed. It is likely that these construction activities will have an impact on the potentially significant prehistoric and early historic resources that are located on the pre-1910 peninsula. As a result, archaeological

excavation will be needed in these areas prior to the construction activities. This impact should be incorporated into the analysis section of the various alternatives and should be indicated in the summary of impacts section on page S-5.

While it is correct that there has been an informal, small soccer field in the southern section, the original plan for the park called for the enhancement of the historical area by the removal of the field from this section. The Alexandria Archaeological Commission strongly supported the creation of this distinct historic area. Furthermore, the new bridge is now a city block closer to the lighthouse than the original Wilson Bridge and has a much larger footprint and piers, resulting in the entry to the southern section of Jones Point having a reduced historic character. By placing a playing field south of the new bridge, there will be a further reduction in the character of the viewshed to the lighthouse (as well as the open area adjacent to the lighthouse) and D.C. Boundary Marker as one enters the area. The southern part of Jones Point was already compromised by bridge construction, retaining the open space as passive is necessary to protect the diminished historic section of the park.

COMMONALITIES:

Both Alternatives contain the same amenities such as a comfort station, play courts, playgrounds, community gardens, fishing pier, canoe/kayak launch, recycling center, promenade, bicycle trail, boardwalk and historic interpretive elements. The JPP EA06 also indicated that these two active options, have the same impact to the runoff and storm water issues. Both of these “action alternatives” would have a beneficial, local, long-term, major effect on storm water flow in JPP by expanding the capacity of the storm drainage system to handle storms less than or equal to the 10 year storm event, reducing the potential flooding of roads. The proposed improvements of the action alternatives would not increase flooding from the Potomac River (pg. s-6 JPP EA06).

ISSUES:

Although the JPP EA06 lists that the City of Alexandria has “accepted” TSA’s position on “no parking” under the bridge, in fact the City has not agreeably accepted this requirement and as such, the City believes that the position constitutes a forced modification to the settlement agreement between the “City of Alexandria and the United States Department of Transportation.” The NPS preferred alternative precludes any other active use of the area under the bridge due to the “secured event parking.” Given the expense and methods required to facilitate secured parking, it is staff’s position that the parking use of this area is not feasible.

In NPS Alternative 4, the parking is shown significantly east of Lee Street and creates a impervious surface closer to the river front than the City’s recommended Alternative 1. Alternative 4 provides for fewer parking spaces (29) and locates them further from the proposed small field. It should be noted that within the City’s recommended alternative, that the NPS Alternative parking area would have been pervious playing field area which would have continued the green open space near the river. The City’s Alternative requires less vehicular traffic through the park.

Staff also believes that reducing the number, size and quality of fields would also constitute a modification to the settlement agreement between the “City of Alexandria and the United States Department of Transportation” and require City of Alexandria consent. In addition, the NPS *1984 Development Concept Plan* for Jones Point Park states the following goals: 1) achieve expanded recreational opportunities, and 2) improve the quality of recreational opportunities, within Jones Point Park. Within the JPP EA 2001, two large multi use fields were designated to fulfill those goals. Currently, the City of Alexandria’s Alternative 1 (JPP EA06) meets those goals. NPS Preferred Alternative 4 does not meet those goals due to the reduction in number and quality of fields.

Within the NPS JPP EA06, the Methodology/Assumptions (page 43) suggest that “JPP does not contain neighborhood and community facilities, with the exception of two community gardens and a recycling center.” Staff considers recreational fields to be a “community facility” as is typically viewed by many park systems. The JPP EA06 does not include the two recreational fields as a community facility, and as such, does not address the impacts of displacement of one or more of the proposed fields. Using the NPS criteria outlined in assessment of Neighborhood and Community Facilities, which are: *(1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation of JPP; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park; or (3) identified as a goal in the 2001 JPP EA, or other relevant NPS planning documents* (page 45), would result in a major impact or impairment to Jones Point Park if one or more multipurpose fields were reduced in quality or quantity. In addition, the loss of one large field and the proposed existence of only one smaller field would impact approximately hundreds of Alexandria residents and eliminate a recreational amenity that currently exists. The NPS Preferred Alternative falls significantly short of meeting the Settlement Agreement and the identified and does not meet or address community recreational needs identified in the 1984 JPP Development Concept Plan.

The City’s recommendation, Alternative 1, does not impact the historical and archeological areas within the park due to the location of the multi-use fields. With the field located south of the bridge in the NPS preferred alternative, this plan does not provide a relaxed, interpretive and contemplative environment for those historical and archeological areas.

CONCLUSION:

In summary, the City continues to be in support of Alternative 1, the preferred City option adopted by City Council and submitted to NPS in June of 2005. The City’s plan fulfills the goals that were identified in the 1984 Jones Point Park Development Concept Plan for expanding and improving the recreational opportunities within the Park. The City’s plan provides for continued growth and park capacity for the future while the NPS plan reduces the current and future recreational use capacity for the park.

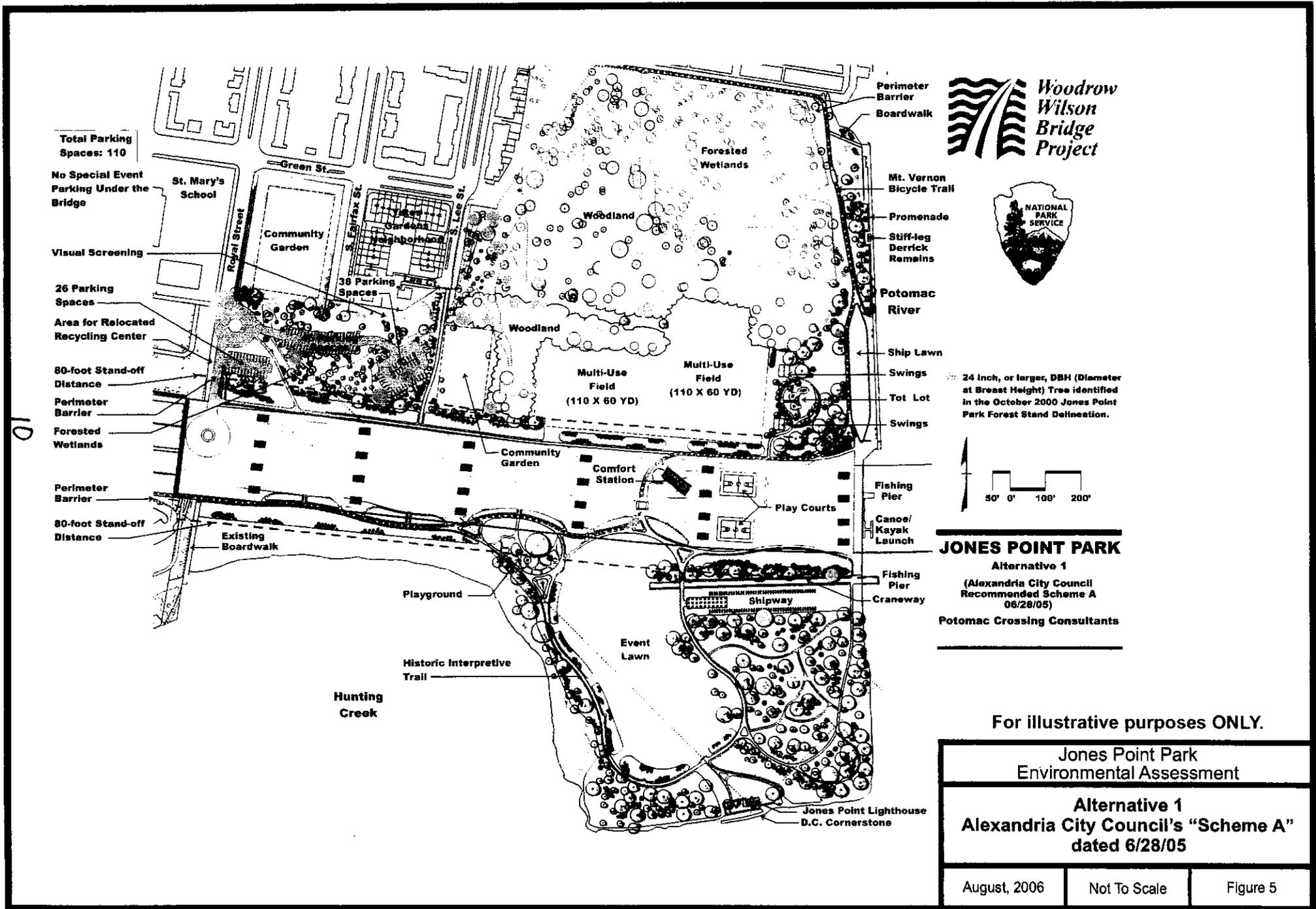
Staff believes that the significant differences between the City’s Alternative and the NPS Alternative leave the City with a park that has substantially less value than previously negotiated with the federal government. The City has already experienced great hardship with the major disruption of the WWB project. Staff recommends that given the conditions imposed by the NPS plan, the lost parking and lost open space via the vehicle setback, the City seek additional

mitigation and compensation from the federal government if Alternative 4 is approved.

Should the final NPS decision document on the JPP EA06 recommend one small field south of the bridge, then in order to address the fact that the NPS plan falls short of the Settlement Agreement the City takes the position that the federal government, through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) needs to provide the equivalent of the land, design and construction for two new full-sized fields within the City limits.

ATTACHMENTS:

- (a) Alternative 1- Alexandria City Council Recommendation Scheme A- 06/28/05
- (b) Alternative 4 - NPS Preferred Alternative- *One Multi-Use Field South of the WWB*
- (c) City of Alexandria- Action Alternatives Comparison



City of Alexandria's NPS JPP EA 2006 ACTION ALTERNATIVE COMPARISON
September 26, 2006

MAJOR EVENTS	ALTERNATIVE 1 City of Alexandria's Scheme A dated 6/28/05 Recommendation to NPS	ALTERNATIVE 2 VDOT "Access Option 5"	ALTERNATIVE 3 Based on "Alternative 2" from JPP EA dated 9/10/01	ALTERNATIVE 4 NPS Preferred Alternative – One Multi-use Field South of the WWB
Fields	Two 110x60 fields north of the bridge.	Two 110x60 fields north of the bridge- Fields are end to end.	One 110x60 field north of the bridge and one 80x40 field south of the bridge.	One 80x40 field south of the bridge.
Parking	110 spaces west of Lee Street. No special event parking under the bridge due to security concerns.	110 spaces – 72 near the water's edge and 38 spaces between the reconfigured community gardens and the western most multi-use field. 130 special event parking spaces under the bridge.	110 spaces –60 between the wooded area and the multi-use field north of the bridge and 50 spaces west of Lee Street. 130 special event parking spaces under the bridge.	81 spaces near the water located within the existing gravel parking lot, north of the bridge. 159 special event parking under the bridge.
Community Gardens	No Impact on Royal St. or Lee St. gardens	Affects approx. 170 sf of Royal St. gardens and affects approx. 11, 785 sf of Lee St. garden, but reconfigured to mitigate impact.	Affects same amount of Royal St. garden as Alt. 2 and affects approx. 2,280 sf less of Lee St. garden than Alt. 2.	Affects same amount of Royal St. garden as Alt. 2 and affects approx. 1,100 sf less of Lee St. garden than Alt. 2.
Recycling Center	Included-unchanged	Included-unchanged	Included-unchanged	Included-unchanged
Comfort Station/Office playgrounds, etc.	Included-unchanged	Included-unchanged	Included-unchanged	Included-unchanged

12

Event Lawn	Untouched	Untouched	Multi-use field located within event lawn	Multi-use field located within event lawn
Historic/Archeology Interpretive trail and areas	Untouched	Untouched	With field located near hist/arch elements, interpretive areas become less passive. Potential impact to DC Cornerstone interpretive line.	With field located near hist/arch elements, interpretive areas become less passive. Potential impact to DC Cornerstone interpretive line.
Stormwater/Flooding	Improvements to park improve SW issues	Improvements to park improve SW issues	Improvements to park improve SW issues	Improvements to park improve SW issues
Wetlands	Areas impacted: Approx. 14,810 sf	Areas impacted: Approx. 20,900 sf	Areas impacted: Approx. 15,953 sf	Areas impacted: Approx. 15,680 sf
Vegetation- differences only- (all options remove specific vegetation for the bridge and near the shipway)	Removes approx. 4.1 acres of forested area, much of which is overrun with invasive species, including up to 3 trees >24" dbh.*	Removes approx. 4.6 acres of forested area, much of which is overrun with invasive species including up to 1 tree >24" dbh.	Removes approx. 3.5 acres of forested area, much of which is overrun with invasive species, including up to 1 tree >24" dbh.	Removes approx. 1.7 acres of forested area, much of which is overrun with invasive species, including up to 1 tree >24" dbh.
Soils	Clean fill to be added to address any soils issues	Clean fill to be added to address any soils issues	Clean fill to be added to address any soils issues	Clean fill to be added to address any soils issues
Opportunities under the bridge	Room for recreational opportunities under the bridge	Event parking takes up available room under bridge	Event parking takes up available room under bridge	Event parking takes up available room under bridge

* As presented in the NPS document.

JONES POINT PARK

Staff Report

National Park Service

Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment 2006

September 26, 2006

Public Input

- ◆ August 18, 2006 –Release of NPS JPP EA06- Four action options included
- ◆ City Council Update- September 12, 2006
- ◆ NPS Public Hearing- September 13, 2006
- ◆ **City Council Public Hearing – September 26, 2006 to hear comments on the EA from the public**
- ◆ City Council consideration of comments – October 10, 2006
- ◆ City Council to provide formal written comments to NPS before October 18 deadline

Benefits

- ◆ All Action Alternatives provide:
 - Stormwater Management Improvements
 - Improvements to Park Amenities
 - Goal to Remove Invasive Species

Shortfalls

- ◆ Does not meet Settlement Agreement
- ◆ Additional Impacts to Park
- ◆ Impacts to Programs

Shortfalls-Issues

- ◆ Security Impacts- Parking Under the Bridge
- ◆ Security Setback- 80' Standoff Security Area
- ◆ Loss of Planned Parking
- ◆ Impacts to Natural Resources
- ◆ Program Impacts
- ◆ Impacts to Community Facilities
- ◆ Impacts to Historical and Cultural Resources

Summary

- ◆ Significant differences between City's Alternative and NPS Preferred Alternative
 - Would leave the City with a park that has substantially less value than previously agreed to by Federal Govt.

Therefore:

- City should seek **additional** mitigation and compensation from Federal Govt. if Alternative 4 is approved

22

9-26-06



<ginaflango@hotmail.com>

09/27/2006 12:46 PM

Please respond to
<ginaflango@hotmail.com>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>, <timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>, <council@krupicka.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>,

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: NPS plan for Jones Point is the Right One

COA Contact Us: NPS plan for Jones Point is the Right One

Time: [Wed Sep 27, 2006 12:46:03] IP Address: [135.214.154.100]

Response requested:

First Name: Gina
Last Name: Flango
Street Address: 807 S Royal St
City: Alexandria
State: Va
Zip: 22314
Phone: 703 549 3311
Email Address: ginaflango@hotmail.com
Subject: NPS plan for Jones Point is the Right One

I was unable to attend the City Council Meeting last nite, but wanted to express my STRONG SUPPORT for the National Park Service Recommendation for Jones Point Park.

Comments:

The NPS recommendation will minimize the number of trees that need to be cut down and limit the impact to the wetlands which are so crucial in filtering water into the Potomac and serve as a natural flood barrier to the surrounding areas. While I would prefer to see the Park left as is, the NPS plan does allow for some improvements to the existing facilities, including one athletic field. It seems that the NPS has tried to find a true balance to the competing interests while not sacrificing its mission to retain natural spaces for all citizens to enjoy.

This isnt just a "not in my backyard" protest to the those on the Council (including the Mayor) who remain stubbornly opposed to the NPS plan. Athletic fields are a wonderful asset to any community. However, they belong in an area with a less challenging hydrology and ideally in a more centrally located area.

22
9-26-06

To: Mayor William Euille and members of the City Council

From: John Belshé, 600 South Royal Street, Alexandria

**Subject: Environmental Assessment for Jones Point Park
(Item 22 on 26 Sept. 06 Council agenda)**

The City Clerk has distributed to you written comments which I have made to the National Park Service (NPS). I would appreciate your reviewing these as you proceed with deliberation on the Jones Point Park planning.

I will confine my present comments to two matters:

- the failure of NPS to address comments made during the public meeting process of October 2005, and
- a lack of balanced comparison in the four alternatives presented in the environmental assessment currently under review.

On page 114 of the Environmental Assessment of August 2006 (EA06) the 200 written comments made to the October 2005 presentations are simply divided into 7 topics. No attempt is made to present the pros and cons of the arguments, or acknowledge any accuracies or inaccuracies among them. This seems to make the public comments balance out to a sum of zero importance, whereas agency comments are provided in full in Appendix H. The public comments should also be displayed in full in a separate appendix. How else can the citizenry most affected by these actions be aware of some matters of concern to one another, and those citizens coalesce into mutual support groups?

Among the four alternatives, there is a lack of symmetry: two have two playing fields north of the bridge, one has a large field to the north and a small field to the south, and one has only a field to the south. Why was there no consideration of an alternative with only one field to the north? This would be very much like alternative 3 without the southern field, or alternative 2 without the western field, therefore its environmental impact would be minimal: "the eastern field would be located in an existing open area" (EA06, page 22). This would place parking near the playing fields, a convenience for the users. It would effect a separation of active recreation (to the north of the bridge) and passive recreation (to the south). "The area south of the WWB would be upgraded for use in cultural resource education and preservation, to facilitate management and protection of cultural resources as well as interpretation of local archeology and history to the public." (EA06, page 20.) Could not this form the basis of a fifth alternative, a comprise alternative, which would achieve the majority of the objectives of our citizenry?

**Comments for Consideration by the National Parks Service
on the August 2006 Draft EA for Jones Point Park
and delivered at the 9/13/06 public meeting**

Planning for the Jones Point Park involves several intersecting communities, among them:

- the neighboring residential community,
- the citizens of the City of Alexandria,
- residents from areas adjacent to Alexandria, and
- visitors attracted to a historic National Park.

Planning for both passive and active recreational use be expected to have a diminishing interest in this same order. For that reason it is disappointing to see that citizen's comments made in response to the NPS October 2005 meeting have not been circulated, and only summarized in a general way. Don't CEQ/NEPA regulations recommend full disclosure? The thoughts and arguments of affected interests may exceed in relevance those of the institutional reviewers whose comments are included in full. I would certainly like to know and consider such comments; I would imagine that some pro and some con comments have been lumped together in the summaries. Further, I do not think the summary categories do justice to some of the written comments I made. For that reason, I am re-submitting those comments.

Especially troubling was the lack of attention, in the draft EA, to these matters:

- The boundaries of the Park are still not clear. Figure 2 shows a diagonal double line extending from the end of Green Street to the end of Potomac Street; is this a true ownership boundary? Is there not public land west of that double line and east of the property plots along the east side of South Lee Street? Is the Battery Rodgers site at the east end of Green Street part of the Park? Are the community gardens part of the 25 year agreement with the City of Alexandria?
- Consideration of a single playing field (as "favored" by alternative 4) but north of the bridge in positions other than that shown in alternative 2. If the eastern field shown in alternative 1 were rotated by 90° it could avoid the impacts to wetlands and forests.
- The proximity of the playing field to parking space is much closer in alternative 2 than in alternative 4, and the importance of this to those using or observing the fields needs discussion.
- Warm air polluted by the vehicles on the bridge will rise and generally drift south before cooling and reaching ground level. The air quality on the playing fields may be better for a site north of the bridge than to the south.
- The possibility of separating passive and active uses (the former south of the bridge, the latter to the north) may be beneficial to both. A considerable support for continued dog walking in the Park has been expressed by many Alexandria commentators. Certainly the public health hazards of animal droppings on or near playing fields needs discussion.
- Tree preservation needs to be balanced with tree replacement consideration. For nearby residents, addition and replacement of the deciduous vegetation by various evergreen species could mitigate the seasonal exposure to traffic noise radiating from the bridge.

Notwithstanding the above criticisms, there is much for which to commend the NPS in this document. With further study, and reflection on the 9/13/06 public meeting, I expect to submit further comments in writing.

John Belshé
600 South Royal Street
Alexandria VA
9/13/06

Comments for Consideration

by the

National Parks Service

(In preparing an environmental assessment
of the changes to Jones Point Park planning
necessitated by realignment of the access road.)

NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS

The purpose and necessity for revising plans for the development of the Jones Point Park should be elaborated. Items to be discussed should include: the relation to the planning and construction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge replacement project; the revised security guidelines for such a structure; the needs and responsibilities for National Environmental Policy Act compliance; and any constraints on the planning revisions.

Some readers may not be familiar with prior planning documents, including preceding Environmental Impact Statements, while others may have had extensive involvement with their preparation. Both need to know why adherence cannot be held to earlier plans, and possibly schedules.

CHARACTERIZING THE PUBLIC SERVED BY THE PARK.

A concise but detailed summary of the ownership of the planning area, including any temporary user lease arrangements, need to be presented, both verbally and with maps. This should help the reader understand the interactions between the competing use demands of national, regional, commonwealth, city, district, and community interests.

I cite two examples. First, at the June 27, 2005 Public Hearing of the Alexandria City Council, Councilmember Smedberg asked about historic properties to the north of the existing bridge; in the ensuing response no one mentioned the Battery Rodgers site from the Civil War at the foot of Green Street, nor some structures associated with the World War I Virginia Shipbuilding Company nearby on Lee Court and in the woods to the southeast – are these considered part of the Park? Second, at the May meeting of the Jones Point Park Work Group (as reported in the Alexandria Gazette Packet) Ms. Guse-Noritake of the city's Parks and Recreation Committee asked if the Park was a National Park, and Mr. Kincannon, Director of the Dept. of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs stated that the "community gardens" were operated under a separate lease. Separate from what?, are there other leases in existence?, what are the purpose and length of all such leases? What are the right-of-way provisions for the Interstate Highway and/or the Woodrow Wilson Bridge?

ACCESS ROAD

The planning objectives for the access road need to be specified. As I understand it, the road needs to be moved north, and consideration is being given to making it one lane rather than two.

If it will be one-lane, consideration should be given to making it a loop road rather than a cul-de-sac. Events can be envisioned which would cut off a return route for emergency vehicles. Since Fairfax St., Lee St., Potomac St., and Union St. all end at the north edge of the Park, one of these could serve to complete a loop with South Royal St. I would add the observation that such improvements from Union St. along the Mt. Vernon Bike Trail could serve as an improvement to that trail, since the access road, as I understand it, is to be only in occasional use.

SEPARATION OF PASSIVE AND ACTIVE USES

The City Council's recommendations, passed June 28, were for any athletic fields to be north of the bridge, and retain the south portion for historic appreciation and passive recreation. This should be respected.

Councilmember Woodson's observation about dog litter on the playing fields currently south of the bridge were very much to the point, and the public health aspects of this need even more emphasis. Also, there is a strongly held hope within the City of Alexandria that civic events, such as the traditional, and very heavily attended, July (4+7) celebration, may some day be able to return to this southern portion of Jones Point Park.

CHANGES IN THE PLANNED PLAYING FIELDS

The City Council recommendations (as an endorsement of Plan A) were for two soccer fields of regulation size, adjacent but oriented in an "L" configuration. Other orientations and footprints should be considered which might have less environmental impact, and particularly preserve more trees immediately north of these fields.

Prior discussions suggest that the access road will be narrower than first proposed and that there will be no provision for its use by fishermen, or any parking provided near the Potomac. These facts seem to urge for consideration of an in-line orientation of the two soccer fields, with their long axes oriented east-west. They might also be sited a bit more to the east and south, into the fishermen's parking area and access road as they now exist. This could reduce the loss of trees north of the fields. Though the move eastward would encroach upon the existing route of the Mt. Vernon bike trail, that trail could also be moved eastward into the present fisherman's parking area and then loop westward along the emergency access road.

PARKING MATTERS

The major change from earlier plans, as caused by the security concerns, is the

loss of parking space under the bridge. The impact of this is not to Park users, but to City employees (and hotel users as permitted by the City) who have used that parking, not for Park visitation but for parking convenience while doing things elsewhere.

The reduction of parking spaces to about half of that first planned appears still comfortably within the needs projected for all concurrent uses of the Park. Planning for such parking near the entrance to the Park (i.e. near South Royal St.) should consider the open spaces now referred to as community gardens. The one along South Royal St. and opposite St. Mary's School would seem to be of sufficient size as to accommodate the target figure for parking. This might also be helpful to the school and nearby community in relieving road congestion by ancillary use as a drop-off and turn-around area for parents driving children to and from this school. Such a mitigative action would be well deserved for this School which has been so much adversely affected by the Bridge project.

TREE COVER

Much concern was expressed in both Alexandria public hearings and Council meetings about excessive tree loss.

If either or both garden areas are not used for parking needs, as suggested above, then allowing reforestation in these cleared areas could provide some noise reduction in nearby neighborhoods. This could be a mitigative action to compensate for tree losses sustained by the development of the two soccer fields. Additionally, National Park Service planners should examine the composition and condition of the existing foliage. Not only might there be some opportunities for additional planting, but the species selected might improve both acoustical and visual screening in this buffer area, particularly during winter months.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER AREAS.

The security needs for bridges and interstate highways are not unique to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Some discussion of how this relates to other settings, and what modifications this is causing at existing facilities, would help the interested public in understanding the proposals for the Jones Point Park.

Jones Point Park has many counterparts. One such is Rosalie Island under the eastern (Maryland) end of the Bridge. Another is the Sandy Point State Park under the western end of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, near Annapolis MD. Others places along I-95 in Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey should also be examined. Restrictions on access and on parking are in particular need of exposition.

John C. Belshé
Alexandria VA
(former president of the
Friends of Jones Point)

22

9-26-06

Nancy Coats/Alex
09/26/2006 11:59 AM

To Jackie Henderson/Alex@Alex
cc
bcc

Subject Fw: for the hearing record on Jones Point

----- Forwarded by Nancy Coats/Alex on 09/26/2006 11:59 AM -----



"Judy Guse-Noritake"
<jnoritake@nka-arch.com>
09/26/2006 11:20 AM

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <MacdonaldCouncil@msn.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>, <council@krupicka.com>, <timothylovain@aol.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>, <PaulCSmedberg@aol.com>
cc <Jim.Hartmann@alexandriava.gov>, <Kirk.Kincannon@alexandriava.gov>
Subject for the hearing record on Jones Point

September 26, 2006

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members:

I regret I will not be able to personally testify at your hearing this evening as I have another commitment. However, I wish to offer this written statement for the record.

My message to you regarding the formal comment from Alexandria in the form of the City Council's response to the current Environmental Assessment is two-fold. First and quite simply, stay the course. Our entire community debated the redesign of this park not once but twice. The conclusions were pretty much the same both times and those conclusions are best captured in the EA's Alternative 1. This 60 day comment period is a time to re-enforce the conclusions that were reached twice before. There is a great deal that our community is owed for "hosting" the major north-south transportation link on the east coast. This EA is an attempt to undercut the understanding of what constituted fair compensation at the outset of this project. The only alternative presented for Jones Point Park that even comes close to the compensation we are entitled to is found in Alternative 1. At this time you must tell NPS that the outcome of the EA must be Alternative 1.

Secondly, I concur with the content of the staff report that was prepared for this evening's hearing. It is a good summary of where things stand and serves as a good draft upon which to build the comments that you will send forward to the NPS. I would offer several additions to this draft as you look to finalize our City's statement of facts and position. They are as follow:

I may be one of very few who has had a formal and continuous involvement with this project as an original member of the Jones Point Stakeholder's Panel and as a voice for the City's Park and Recreation Commission. What I clearly remember is that the "interim" parking lot was located in the area where the City and the Potomac Crossing Consultants anticipated the athletic fields would be finally constructed in order to minimize ecological disturbance over the phased bridge construction process. Now the NPS in this EA, in strange twist of logic, has used the location of the "interim" parking lot as justification for the configuration and location of their proposed 81 car compacted gravel surface parking lot. What was originally done on an interim basis to minimize environmental damage is now being used as justification for the worst design aspect of the Preferred Alternative #4. You need to ask the NPS to go back and look at the project records about the reasoning behind the initial placement of the interim parking lot and then tell them to reconsider their proposed parking lot in light of what they learn. Its location and

configuration is wholly inappropriate for any area in this park.

Next, I would like to point out that on the very first page of the EA it states that because TSA recommended there could be no parking under that bridge that this *"...resulted in the need to reassess the parking, access, and security components of the park design. This EA evaluates four action alternatives that address parking, access, and security issues in JPP"*. The City's comment letter needs to ask why this charge to *assess parking, access and security* resulted in the reconsideration of the two full-sized athletic fields that had always been a part of the project. It would appear that NPS has overstepped their bounds in re-drafting the all but completed EA from September 2001 which featured these two fields but only lacked final signature. NPS has failed to explain in this "new" EA why they delved into other aspects of the plan clearly beyond the scope of the clear statement on the first page and why, once they did, that the conclusions leading to the preferred alternative were so dramatically different than the first EA. The current EA is written as if the first never existed. NPS needs to draw a more rational line between the two EAs in order to justify what appears to be a second conclusion that could be construed as both arbitrary and capricious. In this second EA it would appear that NPS is operating far outside their scope of investigation.

Also, the manner in which this EA addresses "environmental justice populations" is far too narrowly drawn for the letter and intent of the NEPA. Under the "environmental justice" issues identified on page s-2 of the EA it defines this as "effects on minority populations that fish on the finishing pier". While there are many minority populations that fish here and up and down the Potomac River primarily for substance, this is not the only "environmental justice population" impact that should be considered in this park design. And here I would note that the fishing piers have always been an important part of the design of this park. I take exception to the notion that these park users have a greater need to drive and park nearer to the waterfront than any other park users, which is asserted by the NPS conclusions.

What I would suggest the City's comments to include is the notion that the children of our "environmental justice populations" living in the eastern part of the City will suffer a critical opportunity for recreation if Alternative 4 is the final outcome. The NPS drew its line of consideration for the affect on environmental justice populations far too narrowly under the law and as a result their preferred alternative will cause harm to these groups.

NPS, in assessing the impacts of the plan on "environmental justice populations", reached the conclusion that there were no such populations within the boundaries of the JPP to be affected (page 61). While that is technically true because the residents within the tightly defined boundaries of the project are highly affluent, from the City's perspective there are plenty of families with kids that live on the east end of town (the JPP side of town), where we have only the small field at Jefferson Houston and the ball diamond at Lee Center. I would note that the Lee Center field has been so diminished by the newly constructed approaches to the bridge that is rarely scheduled for play any longer. Its utility has been severely limited by the bridge project and that loss has been compounded by NPS reversing its position on the two full sized fields at Jones Point. There is a real and growing dearth of active recreational fields on the east end of our community.

Many of these "environmental justice population" families live in public housing on the east end and have kids that we define as "at risk". They are the kids we have been reaching out to get into organized sports for years – many of them in fields sports. The two biggest obstacles to their participation is the space to accommodate additional teams and the lack of transportation to practice and games. Often they don't have parents at home after school to take them and some of these families must rely wholly on public transportation. The Park and Recreation Department hears all the time that transportation is the biggest road block to participation by this group of kids. The NPS preferred alternative exasperates that problem for these families on the east end. It decreases the number of available fields and the impact of that is measurable. The nearest full sized fields used by almost all youth sports is at George Washington Middle School – too far if you must depend on walking or biking to get to practice. The City's comment letter needs to ask NPS to reevaluate their environmental justice analysis using this broader scope that is more appropriate to our city's circumstance.

Our children, especially those that don't have activist parents, are the ones that are coming up

short in this EA. I feel it is my duty and your charge to make sure that this park, where we are going to spend about \$14 million dollars, meets their needs as well as those of the close by neighbors and all the citizen of this City far into the future. Make our City's response strong and passionate and inclusive. Ask loudly that NPS choose Alternative 1.

Warmest regards,

Judy Guse-Noritake

Note: Though this statement is my own, it is shaped by 20 years living near this park, by my daughter who played recreational league soccer for many years, my long service on the Park and Recreation Commission, the federally-appointed Jones Point Stake Holders Panel, the City Council appointed Jones Point task force, my seat on the Governor-appointed State Board of Forestry, as well as 15 years of professional work on environmental issues on the Hill and with several environmental non-profit groups.

Judy Guse-Noritake

605 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
[t.] 703.739.9366 x.105 [f.] 703.739.9481
jnoritake@nka-arch.com

22
9-26-06



<nhenry9@yahoo.com>

09/22/2006 09:30 AM

Please respond to
<nhenry9@yahoo.com>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>,
<timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>,
<council@krupicka.com>, <delperpe@aol.com>,

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: Jones' Point Park

COA Contact Us: Jones' Point Park

Time: [Fri Sep 22, 2006 09:30:12] IP Address: [72.75.47.107]

Response requested:

First Name: Nishita
Last Name: Henry
Street Address: 3294 Mount Vernon Ave
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22305
Phone: 7035480713
Email Address: nhenry9@yahoo.com
Subject: Jones' Point Park
Comments: Please support two full-sized fields at Jones' Point Park. The space is badly needed for our city's kids!

22
9-26-06



<khhippen@comcast.net>

09/21/2006 04:28 PM

Please respond to
<khhippen@comcast.net>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>,
<timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>,
<council@krupicka.com>, <delperpe@aol.com>,

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: Jones' Point Park

COA Contact Us: Jones' Point Park

Time: [Thu Sep 21, 2006 16:28:11] IP Address: [68.83.214.129]

Response requested:

First Name: Kathryn
Last Name: Phippen
Street Address: 11 West Linden St.
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22301
Phone: 703-739-9852
Email Address: khhippen@comcast.net
Subject: Jones' Point Park

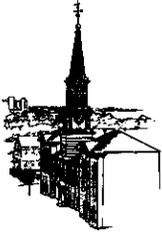
Dear Mayor, Vice-Mayor and Council Members,

I respectfully request that you please support two full-sized fields at Jones' Point Park.

Comments:

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,
Kathryn Phippen



Alexandria, Virginia

Historic Alexandria Resources Commission

220 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-2521
(703) 838-4554



22
9-26-06

September 20, 2006

The Honorable William D. Euille
Members of City Council
City Hall, 301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members:

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission met on September 19, 2006, and discussed the Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment submitted by the National Park Service. In his letter written on September 13, 2006, the Superintendent of the George Washington Memorial Parkway stated that Alternative 4, the preferred alternative of the National Park Service, "maximizes the protection of the cultural and natural resources of Jones Point Park." We strongly disagree with this statement for the following reasons.

The enlargement of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge has most adversely effected the southern, history-rich portion of the park. Within this small area lie Native American sites and artifacts dating back more than 9000 years; the remains of taverns, homes, gardens, forts, a ropewalk, a home of one of Washington's freed slaves, and African American religious and recreational places that date from the 17th to the 19th centuries; the DC South Cornerstone placed in 1791; the Margaret Brent Memorial; the Maryland-Virginia Boundary Commission Monument; and the Jones Point Lighthouse. Jones Point Park holds enormous historic significance for our city, as well as our nation. The new bridge encroaches upon this sensitive area by approximately one entire city block, further intruding upon and disrupting a beautiful and serene place.

The southern portion of the park was always intended for passive use -- walking along curving paths with attractive plantings; reading the signage describing the history of the park; enjoying the wooded, natural beauty of the river shore; sitting on the benches that will be placed along the walks. While there have been informal fields and an "event lawn" on the south portion for many years, these informal fields are far different from a formal field, even one of smaller proportions. A formal field has a raised bed for drainage, permanent goals, and a permanent location (not one marked temporarily with removable orange cones). This will naturally invite very active, not passive, use for this portion of Jones Point Park, and put cultural resources at greater risk, not "maximize their protection."

Alternative 4 does not protect the cultural and historic resources of the park, but significantly endangers them. Nine thousand years of history should not be sacrificed or minimized but should be celebrated by preserving the southern portion of Jones Point Park as a serene and contemplative location for all citizens to enjoy.

Sincerely,

Ellen Stanton, Chair

cc: James K. Hartmann, City Manager

22
9-26-06



<depu@comcast.net>

09/21/2006 08:34 AM

Please respond to
<depu@comcast.net>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>,
<timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>,
<council@krupicka.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>,

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment

COA Contact Us: Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment

Time: [Thu Sep 21, 2006 08:34:55] IP Address: [69.140.64.124]

Response requested:

First Name: Patricia
Last Name: DePuy
Street Address: 32 Alexander St.
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22314
Phone: 703-548-0599
Email Address: depuy@comcast.net

Subject: Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment
Dear Mayor, Vice-Mayor and Council Members,

We have been residents of Alexandria for over 30 years and have enjoyed the many benefits and opportunities living in this city has afforded us.

Comments: We would like to go on record as supporting the National Park Service Alternative 4 as the Preferred Alternative for improvements to Jones Point Park.

Sincerely,

Pat and Bill DePuy

22
9-26-06



<jkittredge05@comcast.net>

09/21/2006 04:42 PM

Please respond to
<jkittredge05@comcast.net>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>, <timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>, <council@krupicka.com>, <delperpe@aol.com>

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: jones point park

COA Contact Us: jones point park

Time: [Thu Sep 21, 2006 16:42:14] IP Address: [69.140.70.141]

Response requested:

First Name: Jacquelyn & Ben
Last Name: Kittredge
Street Address: 412 n. view ter
City: alexandria
State: va
Zip: 22301
Phone: 703-836-4919
Email Address: jkittredge05@comcast.net
Subject: jones point park
Please support two full-sized fields at Jones' Point Park!
Comments: thank you-
ben & jacquelyn kittredge

22
9-26-06



<khenry9@hotmail.com>

09/21/2006 03:18 PM

Please respond to
<khenry9@hotmail.com>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>,
<timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>,
<council@krupicka.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>,

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: Jones' Point Park

COA Contact Us: Jones' Point Park

Time: [Thu Sep 21, 2006 15:18:59] IP Address: [72.75.47.107]

Response requested:

First Name: Kevin
Last Name: Henry
Street Address: 3294 Mt Vernon Ave
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22305
Phone: 703-863-7729
Email Address: khenry9@hotmail.com
Subject: Jones' Point Park
Comments: I would like to recommend 2 full fields at Jone's Point Park. This space is needed for youth sports.

22
9-26-06



<nancarver@earthlink.net>

09/21/2006 03:28 PM

Please respond to
<nancarver@earthlink.net>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>, <timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>, <council@krupicka.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: Jones Point Park

COA Contact Us: Jones Point Park

Time: [Thu Sep 21, 2006 15:28:07] IP Address: [66.167.148.74]

Response requested:

First Name: Nancy
Last Name: Carver
Street Address: 5451 Fillmore Avenue
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22311
Phone: (703)824-1742
Email Address: nancarver@earthlink.net
Subject: Jones Point Park
Comments: Please support two full-sized fields at Jones' Point Park.

22
9-26-06



<archaeology@alexandriava.gov
>

09/22/2006 10:54 AM

Please respond to
<archaeology@alexandriava.gov>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>,
<timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>,
<council@krupicka.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>,

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment

COA Contact Us: Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment

Time: [Fri Sep 22, 2006 10:54:37] IP Address: [206.113.148.2]

Response requested:

First Name: S. Kathleen
Last Name: Pepper
Street Address: Alexandria Archaeological Commission
Alexandria Archaeology Museum
105 N. Union Street, #327
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22314
Phone: 703-838-4399
Email Address: archaeology@alexandriava.gov
Subject: Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment
PLEASE READ BEFORE PUBLIC HEARING,
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26-
(This letter was also sent by fax.)
September 21, 2006

The Honorable William D. Euille and Members of
City Council
City of Alexandria
City Hall,
301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of City Council:

Summary

The Alexandria Archaeology Commission urges
City Council to reject the selection of the National
Park Service Preferred Alternative 4, which
includes a playing field south of the bridge.

Placing an athletic field in the history-rich southern portion of Jones Point is as incongruous as placing an athletic field at Gettysburg or at the foot of Mt. Rushmore and for the same reasons – an athletic field involves a significant active recreation use which does not fit the character, viewscape, or purposes of sites involving historic resources which involve passive, more contemplative uses. An active playing field contrasts sharply with the significant historical landscape, and would detract from the distinctive historical setting, vistas and character of this unique Alexandria area. The NPS Environmental Assessment does not adequately evaluate the impact of the athletic field on the cultural resources and the visual and aesthetic conditions south of the bridge. A simple statement! that the proposed playing field is located in an area that previously had a field does not sufficiently address the impacts of a new field. We recommend that City Council ask the National Park Service for a new Environmental Assessment which adequately evaluates the impact of athletic fields south of the bridge and notify the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation so that they are aware of the council's concerns. Alternative 4 (and Alternative 3) endanger our history more than any of the other plans.

The Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC) supported Alternative Plan 1 for Jones Point Park, the plan which was also supported by the City Council. The AAC has reviewed and discussed the National Park Service's Environmental Assessment (EA) and Preferred Alternative Plan 4 for Jones Point Park. The Environmental Assessment indicates that Plan 4, which proposes a small, formal athletic field south of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, will have negligible to minimal impact on the cultural resources and the visual and aesthetic conditions of the area. The AAC disagrees with this assessment for the reasons set forth below.

Jones Point Park encompasses 9,000 years of human activity. It is an area with many known and potential archaeological sites on which is also located the Jones Point Lighthouse, the first D.C. cornerstone, the Maryland-Virginia boundary marker, and the Margaret Brent Memorial. It is the site where the earliest Native American artifact in Northern Virginia was found, where one

of George Washington's freed slaves lived after his manumission, where Alexandrians helped to secure our country's freedoms in the 20th Century from the World War I shipbuilding to the World War II and cold war Signal Corps activities. Its rich history for Alexandrians and Americans of all backgrounds is undisputed and is reflected in its having been designated a National Historic Landmark Historic District and a National Register Historic District. Jones Point Park is the only area along the Potomac which has such a long and diverse history, making it unique among the many parklands in the Potomac ! River watershed. Because its unique status, the past 6+ years of park planning have envisioned this area as having only passive uses compatible with the enjoyment of the historic resources.

Comments:

The EA fails to adequately examine the impact of a formal athletic field on the cultural resources and the visual and aesthetic conditions south of the bridge. First, the EA does not address or acknowledge the fact that the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge is significantly larger than its predecessor. Nor does it observe that the new bridge intrudes into the southern portion of the park a full city block more than did its predecessor. Thus, the new bridge makes a substantially larger visual impact due to its size and its significant encroachment into the south end of the park. Second, the EA does not address or acknowledge the differences between the informal soccer field which existed prior to construction, and which were delineated by removable orange cones and temporary goal posts and a formal multi-purpose athletic field as proposed in Plan 4 for the southern portion of the park, which will be an elevated playing area with permanent goal posts. A simple statement that the! proposed playing field is located in an area that previously had a field does not sufficiently address the impacts of a new field. The combination of the larger bridge intruding into the southern part of the park means that any athletic field will be placed in a much smaller area than were the informal pre-construction athletic fields.

Moreover, thirty years ago, when the informal fields at Jones Point began, soccer was not a popular sport in the United States and lacrosse and rugby were even less popular. Today soccer is a major sport with community leagues as well as professional leagues. Lacrosse and rugby are growing in popularity. There are frequently waiting lists for community leagues, particularly at the older child and adult levels. These changes mean

than any athletic field in the southern portion of Jones Point Park will have heavy and regular use. Such usage is not limited only to the players on the teams, coaches, and umpires. There will also be parents, family, and friends who watch the games. There will be teams and coaches, as well as their family and friends waiting for the game or practice session before them to end so that they can use the field. Thus, any athletic field, regardless of size, involves a lot of people and the attendant noise which accompanies any sporting event. This activity is incompatible with area's historic resources and its national and state historic district designations. Placing an athletic field in the history-rich southern portion of Jones Point is as incongruous as placing an athletic field at Gettysburg or at the foot of Mt. Rushmore and for the same reasons – an athletic field involves a significant active recreation use which does not fit the character, viewscape, or purposes of sites involving historic resources which involve passive, more contemplative uses.

Third, the EA also fails to adequately account for the visual intrusion of a formal, raised athletic field with permanent goal posts on an historic landscape which has already been truncated by a city block by the intrusion of the new, larger bridge. Park users who want to enjoy the historic views in an ambience which will allow them to appreciate the park's past will find the view entering the southern portion of the park to be dominated by a formal, raised athletic field with permanent goal posts and significant numbers of people playing or watching sporting events. Throughout much of the walk along the path to and around the Lighthouse, the athletic field and activities will remain in sight and sound. There is nothing in the EA which addresses the actual effects of a regularly used, formal athletic field on the historic viewscape.

The AAC opposes Plan 4 due to its placement of a formal, permanent athletic field in the southern portion of Jones Point Park because such active use is incompatible with the enjoyment of the historic resources in that portion of the park. We are disturbed by the failure of the EA to meaningfully address the impacts of an athletic field in the southern portion of the park. This failure is magnified by the Park Service's failure to address at all the recommendations of the Jones Point Park Task Force, as adopted by the City Council. For these reasons, we urge City Council to reject the selection of the National Park Service Preferred Alternative 4. We recommend that City

Council ask the National Park Service for a new Environmental Assessment which adequately evaluates the impact of an athletic field south of the bridge and inform the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation so that they are aware of the council's concern! s.

Sincerely,

S. Kathleen Pepper, Chair
Alexandria Archaeological Commission

cc James K. Hartmann, City Manager
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Michelle Evans, Deputy City Manager
Jim Mackay, Acting Director, OHA
Kirk Kincannon, Director, Recreation Dept.
Richard Baier, Director, T&ES/Admin.
Ellen Stanton, Chair, HARC
Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair, Park & Recreation
Commission



<jeffpeisch@aol.com>

09/26/2006 03:47 PM

Please respond to
<jeffpeisch@aol.com>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>,
<timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>,
<council@krupicka.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>,

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: Jones Point Park

22
9-26-06

COA Contact Us: Jones Point Park

Time: [Tue Sep 26, 2006 15:47:44] IP Address: [204.9.28.20]

Response requested: []

First Name: Jeffrey
Last Name: Peisch
Street Address: 1206 Orchard St.
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22302
Phone: 703 299-9381
Email Address: jeffpeisch@aol.com
Subject: Jones Point Park

September 26, 2006

Dear Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Macdonald And
Members of the Alexandria City
Council:

My name is Jeffrey Peisch. I am the President of
the Alexandria Little League and a
homeowner in the City of Alexandria. I reside at
1206 Orchard St., Alexandria,
Virginia 22302. I am writing this letter based on a
unanimous motion recently
approved by the Alexandria Little League Board
of Directors. The board represents
over 350 families living in Alexandria.

The purpose of my letter is to provide comments
on behalf of Alexandria Little
League about the proposed re-design of Jones
Point Park in Alexandria, Virginia and
to strongly encourage the National Park Service
to select Alternate 1, which is the
City Council's choice, and allow the construction

of two full-size athletic fields at Jones Point.

Comments:

Baseball is America's Pastime. It is a great game for both children and adults. More and more children are now playing the game. Last spring, approximately 400 children between the ages of 8 and 15 played baseball for Alexandria Little League, which represents an increase of over 20 percent from the prior year. This number does not include the children who play in the youth Tee-Ball, Coach-Pitch Baseball and Softball programs administered by the City's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. Alexandria Little League anticipates that even more children will register to play next spring and in the years to come.

While the popularity of baseball is on the rise, the number of available places to play baseball is diminishing. As result, Alexandria Little League, along with other youth sport organizations in the City, is finding it increasingly difficult to find enough places for practices and games. Alexandria Little League is forced to share fields with other sports because there are simply not enough athletic fields in the City. The loss of two full size athletic fields at Jones Point will make this situation far worse for Little League and other sports programs in the City.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Jeffrey Peisch
President, Alexandria Little League

22

9-26-06



<emerald_dragon@hotmail.com>
>

09/25/2006 04:20 PM

Please respond to
<emerald_dragon@hotmail.com>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>, <timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>, <council@krupicka.com>, <delperpe@aol.com>

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: Jones Point Park Solution

COA Contact Us: Jones Point Park Solution

Time: [Mon Sep 25, 2006 16:20:13] IP Address: [68.83.218.251]

Response requested:

First Name: John Howard
Last Name: Eisenhour
Street Address: 630 South Pitt Street
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22314
Phone: 703 836 0430
Email Address: emerald_dragon@hotmail.com
Subject: Jones Point Park Solution
Honorable Lady and Gentlemen --

The following very short paper offers a solution to the Jones Point Park problem.

The only reason I can think of for not using the space under the bridge more effectively is that some may harbor the hope that all of that area will be available for parking when the current homeland security paranoia finally passes. If that is the plan, stop here. If not, please read what follows:

Regards --

JHE

Jones Point Park - Alternative 1- 4

Introduction

There is a simple way to accommodate both the city and NPS interests at Jones Point Park. It is not a new idea, but, given the EA released by the NPS, it may be a concept whose time has come.

Thus alternative 1 - 4.

Concept

Comments:

There is room between the first and second set of bridge supports and between the second and third set of bridge supports (starting from the river) to fit in the two large rectangular athletic fields that the City of Alexandria needs provided the surface is modern artificial turf. Such an approach would require some increased initial cost but only minimal maintenance. No lighting would be needed and the green artificial turf fields would replace hardstand/gravel (not vegetation) that is shown for these areas in the existing alternatives 1 and 4. Some minor rerouting of the non-public road (old Jones Point Road), several walking paths, and relocation of the basketball courts and the comfort station would also be required.

Details

Unless the drawings used in the NPS documents are out of scale, one can easily prove the feasibility of this new alternative by cutting out the multi-use field representations in Alternative 1 and placing them between the red lines (sand-off distance) shown on Alternative 4. Unlike the old bridge, overhead clearance would not be a problem because of the soaring height of the new bridge over this part of the park. Placement of the fields parallel to the river in the center of the available space between the bridge supports would eliminate any concern about overhang even if much wider fields are chosen and there would be plenty of room for spectators, etc. Backstop fencing beyond the end of the fields could be incorporated into the barriers that are going to run most of the length of the bridge. The small natural grass multi-use field south of the bridge might be eliminated as all sports would probably prefer the larger fields which would be closer to the parking lot as well.

22
9-26-06



<kevbros@gmail.com>

09/25/2006 08:14 PM

Please respond to
<kevbros@gmail.com>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>, <timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>, <council@krupicka.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: Jones Point

COA Contact Us: Jones Point

Time: [Mon Sep 25, 2006 20:14:00] IP Address: [69.140.80.68]

Response requested:

First Name: Kevin
Last Name: Brothers
Street Address: 808 S Royal St
City: Alexandria
State: va
Zip: 22314
Phone: 703.548.8592
Email Address: kevbros@gmail.com
Subject: Jones Point

Comments: I urge you to support the National Park Service's decision with regard to the National Parkland at Jones Point Park. Some on the Council insist on cutting down two acres of trees to support a small, but vocal sports community. We are following this issue very closely to see where the Council really stands on preserving one of the largest remaining stands of trees in the area. Although I cannot attend the upcoming meeting, I remain vigilant on this issue and stand ready to get engaged against those who are not looking out for the best interest of all Alexandrians. Support the Park Service and your constituents.

22
9-26-06

Nancy Coats/Alex
09/25/2006 04:11 PM

To Jackie Henderson/Alex@Alex
cc
bcc
Subject Fw: Jones Point Hearing

fyi

----- Forwarded by Nancy Coats/Alex on 09/25/2006 04:11 PM -----



"Judy Guse-Noritake"
<jnoritake@nka-arch.com>
09/25/2006 02:43 PM

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <MacdonaldCouncil@msn.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>, <council@krupicka.com>, <timothylovain@aol.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>, <PaulCSmedberg@aol.com>
cc <Jim.Hartmann@alexandriava.gov>, <Kirk.Kincannon@alexandriava.gov>
Subject Jones Point Hearing

Dear Mayor and City Council;

Please find attached a letter from the Park and Recreation Commission on the Jones Point Environmental Assessment process. It is our formal statement to you for the record for your September 26, 2006 hearing on this subject. I regret will not be able to attend owing to another commitment.

Thank you.

Judy Noritake
Chair
Park and Recreation Commission

Judy Guse-Noritake
605 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
[t.] 703.739.9366 x.105 [f.] 703.739.9481
jnoritake@nka-arch.com



Jones Point letter to City Council Sept 26 06.doc

Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission

September 26, 2006

The Honorable William Euille
Vice Mayor Andrew Macdonald
Councilman Ludwig Gaines
Councilman K. Rob Krupicka
Councilman Timothy Lovain
Councilwoman Redella Pepper
Councilman Paul Smedberg

Re: Statement for the City Council Hearing on the Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

The Park and Recreation Commission would like submit this letter as you consider public views relative to the National Park Service's (NPS) recently published the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the re-design of Jones Point Park. We understand that NPS is taking public comment on the five alternatives presented in the EA until October 18, 2006. The Park and Recreation Commission will be submitting a comment letter to the NPS before that deadline asking them to choose the park plan that the City of Alexandria voted for and submitted for consideration previously, Alternative 1. It is the only alternative in the EA that fits the needs of our community. We ask you to stand firm in full support of your previous vote and communicate that resolve in your formal comment letter to the National Park Service before the close of the EA comment period. Your previous vote and comment letter represent the resolve of our entire community.

This resolve in support of the City's Alternative 1 is all the more important now because the NPS Preferred Alternative 4 is a plan that was never presented publicly during the numerous meetings and debates on the park design. There are aspects of it that were never contemplated or which were rejected outright by our community. We all want a beautiful park at the end of the bridge construction process, but Alternative 4 puts that in jeopardy.

The National Park Service's Preferred Alternative, #4, fails badly in a number of ways. The three items that represent the biggest shortcomings of Alternative 4 are the following:

1. **It places a large, compacted surface parking lot for 81 cars and an access road protruding nearly one third of mile into the center of the northern part of the park.** The City's plan held parking for 111 cars near the entrance on Royal Street, bringing cars about 500 feet into the park. The parking layout was to be finalized in the field, working around large specimen trees and other important natural features. The drive aisles and parking spaces were to be of "green construction", utilizing pervious planted pavers. The Commission was adamant about not accommodating required parking in one or two large surface lots and was against placing parking further east than Lee Street extended. We thought either of these would place too much attention on parking in this important green area and would violate important park design principals. The parking in Alternative 4 compromises basic principles of good park design.
2. **It does not contain replacement athletic fields for the two that have always been a part of the park.** Former Superintendent Audrey Calhoun in a public meeting last year said the NPS would not be made whole if the final plan did not feature two athletic fields. Additionally two full sized fields have always been a part of the bridge project at this location since the project was first begun. The City of Alexandria's recreational planners have counted on those fields becoming a part of our inventory for well more than a dozen years and have planned for that accordingly. The fields were also a formal part of the legal settlement between the Federal Government and the City. The Preferred Alternative not only fails to provide the two full-sized athletic fields promised as a part of the mitigation, but represents a significant step backward for our critically short field inventory by retreating to one small field only.
3. **It violates the original important and agreed upon design principal for this park of honoring, restoring and highlighting the important historical and archeological aspects found in the southern half of the park by placing on small athletic field there.** The Park and Recreation Commission, charged with caring for all aspects of this park, did not want to place a field in this important passive and historic part of the park. While it is true that this was the location of the fields previously used in years past, it must be remembered that this part of the park is significantly reduced

in size as the footprint of the new bridge moved significantly south of the former location. This reduction in size, along with the new emphasis on the historic resources – many of which were only revealed through the sub-surface investigations done by the bridge project - dictates that locating fields south of the bridge is inappropriate from an overall park design standpoint.

In addition there are a number of errors in the EA that the City needs to ask the NPS to correct as it moves to a final version of this EA. The first of these is the contradictory information found in the document about the small-scale active recreational uses under the new bridge. On page ten the EA states that the TSA recommendation not to park under the bridge resulted in the elimination of further consideration of these small scale active recreation concepts. Yet the illustrative plans for the various alternatives all show some accommodation of small scale recreation that was envisioned under the bridge. It has always been understood by the Park and Recreation Commission and the City that the project would include this kind of active recreation under the bridge. It was also understood that the programming and site-specific design of these elements would occur when the design for the park was re-initiated by the bridge project and these recreational areas would in fact be built as part of this park project. Nothing has occurred that would have changed this and there is no reason to preclude these activities just because parking will not be allowed. The NPS statement on page 10 is not true and the logic in the paragraph makes no sense.

Second, the EA states that the parking configuration shown in the City's Alternative 1 would result in the removal of some large specimen trees (over 24"DBH), which was never the City's intent. When the City forwarded its preferred plan including placement of the required parking near Royal Street, it did so with the stated caveat that the parking shown was conceptual only and that its final layout would be done on the ground, configured to avoid all large specimen trees and other important natural features.

Third, the Preferred Alternative moves the community gardens at Lee Street and reduces them in size. While leasing a community garden plot does not confer a "property right" for its continued use, the City's alternative at least respected the investment these gardeners have made in these small and highly productive plots of land. At no time during the several years of deliberating the design of this park was the reconfiguration of these gardens ever discussed.

There is one other item we wish to bring to your attention which we believe has not been accounted for as the bridge project moved forward and that is the downsizing of the field at Lee Center. On the east side of our City there are currently only two small athletic fields, one at Lee Center and the other Jefferson Houston Elementary School. Accommodating the new approach to the bridge from Route 1 South meant that the ball field at Lee Center was significantly reduced in size. We always knew that some land would be taken at that location but it is now very apparent that the utility of the remaining ball field has been extremely compromised since the fence was moved in and is now rarely scheduled even for youth games. This is all the more disturbing because it is located in a part of town that is a focus of outreach efforts to involve children in organized sports. The loss in utility of this field is compounded by the preferred alternative the NPS has now proffered for Jones Point. The biggest problem with engaging some of our youth living in some of the areas east of Route 1 in organized sports is the lack of transportation to practice and games. These children living close to Route 1 and east of it will have virtually no opportunity if we allow the number of fields in this part of Alexandria to be further diminished by the final selection of Alternative 4.

In conclusion, during this 60-day NPS comment period we urge you to strongly reiterate the City Council's past position on the redesign of Jones Point Park reflected in Alternative 1. Tell the NPS that they must, for all the reasons you gave them before, choose Alternative 1. It is the only alternative presented that meets and balances all the needs of Alexandria.

Sincerely,

Judy R. Guse- Noritake
Chair
Park and Recreation Commission

Cc: Jim Hartmann, City Manager
Kirk Kincannon, Director
Park and Recreation Commission



<nelson1@verizon.net>

09/26/2006 12:29 PM

Please respond to
<nelson1@verizon.net>

To <alexvamayor@aol.com>, <macdonaldcouncil@msn.com>, <timothylovain@aol.com>, <councilmangaines@aol.com>, <council@krupicka.com>, <delpepper@aol.com>

cc

bcc

Subject COA Contact Us: Jones Point Park

22
9-26-06

COA Contact Us: Jones Point Park

Time: [Tue Sep 26, 2006 12:29:19] IP Address: [149.2.132.3]

Response requested:

First Name: Michael
Last Name: Neilson
Street Address: 4110 Fort Worth Place
City: Alexandria
State: Virginia
Zip: 22304
Phone: 703 751 6053
Email Address: nelson1@verizon.net
Subject: Jones Point Park

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of Council,

For more than 5 years, you have made the correct judgement about the design for Jones Point Park. Please continue to pursue the City's design and oppose the design that the National Park Service is offering that would cause the loss of 2 full size athletic fields.

You should recognize, as you have before, that 65 acre Jones Point Park must help serve the needs of all of our City's citizens.

As you know, we have an enormous deficit in the number (and quality) of athletic fields needed to meet the recreational needs of our citizens, both children and adults. We need to help our citizens by having resources for an active and healthy life.

As you recognized before, the City's plan separates in a sensible way the uses of the park for passive and active recreation. It preserves very well the recreation, historic, and archaeological attributes of Jones Point Park. The National Park Service plan is harmful to all of these uses.

There are no materially important differences in environmental impacts between the NPS plan and the City's plan. However, the NPS plan throws away two essential full size athletic fields in favor of building a parking lot.

Comments:

The Alexandria youth sports communities and their members are and will continue to be submitting comments to National Park Service to oppose its plan and to support the City Council's approved plan for Jones Point Park. Members of our sports community also recognize, support, and appreciate the work done by members of the Council in the past to support the two athletic fields at Jones Point Park. We ask you to protect your existing decisions.

These two athletic fields are park of the settlement and mitigation of impacts that the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project has had on the existing use of Jones Point Park for active recreation. Please continue the fight for our essential athletic fields and to maintain the judgment made by the City -- twice now -- that this is an important use that must be protected.

Although my children are nearly grown, my family believes it is important that recreation resources like these fields be maintained to meet the needs of our citizens, and those who are attracted to move to Alexandria, including active adults.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael, Susan, Timothy and Sara Neilson

#22
9-26-06

Alexandria Archaeological Commission
America's First Archaeological Commission



September 21, 2006

The Honorable William D. Euille and Members of City Council
City of Alexandria
City Hall,
301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of City Council:

Summary

The Alexandria Archaeology Commission urges City Council to reject the selection of the National Park Service Preferred Alternative 4, which includes a playing field south of the bridge. Placing an athletic field in the history-rich southern portion of Jones Point is as incongruous as placing an athletic field at Gettysburg or at the foot of Mt. Rushmore and for the same reasons – an athletic field involves a significant active recreation use which does not fit the character, viewscape, or purposes of sites involving historic resources which involve passive, more contemplative uses. An active playing field contrasts sharply with the significant historical landscape, and would detract from the distinctive historical setting, vistas and character of this unique Alexandria area. The NPS Environmental Assessment does not adequately evaluate the impact of the athletic field on the cultural resources and the visual and aesthetic conditions south of the bridge. A simple statement that the proposed playing field is located in an area that previously had a field does not sufficiently address the impacts of a new field. We recommend that City Council ask the National Park Service for a new Environmental Assessment which adequately evaluates the impact of athletic fields south of the bridge and notify the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation so that they are aware of the council's concerns. Alternative 4 (and Alternative 3) endanger our history more than any of the other plans.

The Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC) supported Alternative Plan 1 for Jones Point Park, the plan which was also supported by the City Council. The AAC has reviewed and discussed the National Park Service's Environmental Assessment (EA) and Preferred Alternative Plan 4 for Jones Point Park. The Environmental Assessment indicates that Plan 4, which proposes a small, formal athletic field south of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, will have negligible to minimal impact

Alexandria Archaeology Museum 105 North Union Street Alexandria, Virginia 22314
703/838-4399 Fax 703/838-6491

on the cultural resources and the visual and aesthetic conditions of the area. The AAC disagrees with this assessment for the reasons set forth below.

Jones Point Park encompasses 9,000 years of human activity. It is an area with many known and potential archaeological sites on which is also located the Jones Point Lighthouse, the first D.C. cornerstone, the Maryland-Virginia boundary marker, and the Margaret Brent Memorial. It is the site where the earliest Native American artifact in Northern Virginia was found, where one of George Washington's freed slaves lived after his manumission, where Alexandrians helped to secure our country's freedoms in the 20th Century from the World War I shipbuilding to the World War II and cold war Signal Corps activities. Its rich history for Alexandrians and Americans of all backgrounds is undisputed and is reflected in its having been designated a National Historic Landmark Historic District and a National Register Historic District. Jones Point Park is the only area along the Potomac which has such a long and diverse history, making it unique among the many parklands in the Potomac River watershed. Because its unique status, the past 6+ years of park planning have envisioned this area as having only passive uses compatible with the enjoyment of the historic resources.

The EA fails to adequately examine the impact of a formal athletic field on the cultural resources and the visual and aesthetic conditions south of the bridge. First, the EA does not address or acknowledge the fact that the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge is significantly larger than its predecessor. Nor does it observe that the new bridge intrudes into the southern portion of the park a full city block more than did its predecessor. Thus, the new bridge makes a substantially larger visual impact due to its size and its significant encroachment into the south end of the park. Second, the EA does not address or acknowledge the differences between the informal soccer field which existed prior to construction, and which were delineated by removable orange cones and temporary goal posts and a formal multi-purpose athletic field as proposed in Plan 4 for the southern portion of the park, which will be an elevated playing area with permanent goal posts. A simple statement that the proposed playing field is located in an area that previously had a field does not sufficiently address the impacts of a new field. The combination of the larger bridge intruding into the southern part of the park means that any athletic field will be placed in a much smaller area than were the informal pre-construction athletic fields.

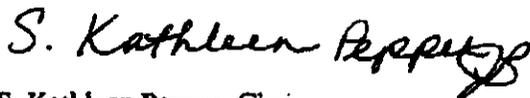
Moreover, thirty years ago, when the informal fields at Jones Point began, soccer was not a popular sport in the United States and lacrosse and rugby were even less popular. Today soccer is a major sport with community leagues as well as professional leagues. Lacrosse and rugby are growing in popularity. There are frequently waiting lists for community leagues, particularly at the older child and adult levels. These changes mean that any athletic field in the southern portion of Jones Point Park will have heavy and regular use. Such usage is not limited only to the players on the teams, coaches, and umpires. There will also be parents, family, and friends who watch the games. There will be teams and coaches, as well as their family and friends waiting for the game or practice session before them to end so that they can use the field. Thus, any athletic field, regardless of size, involves a lot of people and the attendant noise which accompanies any sporting event. This activity is incompatible with area's historic resources and its national and state historic district designations. Placing an athletic field in the history-rich southern portion of Jones Point is as incongruous as placing an athletic field at Gettysburg or at the foot of Mt. Rushmore and for the same reasons – an

athletic field involves a significant active recreation use which does not fit the character, viewscape, or purposes of sites involving historic resources which involve passive, more contemplative uses.

Third, the EA also fails to adequately account for the visual intrusion of a formal, raised athletic field with permanent goal posts on an historic landscape which has already been truncated by a city block by the intrusion of the new, larger bridge. Park users who want to enjoy the historic views in an ambience which will allow them to appreciate the park's past will find the view entering the southern portion of the park to be dominated by a formal, raised athletic field with permanent goal posts and significant numbers of people playing or watching sporting events. Throughout much of the walk along the path to and around the Lighthouse, the athletic field and activities will remain in sight and sound. There is nothing in the EA which addresses the actual effects of a regularly used, formal athletic field on the historic viewscape.

The AAC opposes Plan 4 due to its placement of a formal, permanent athletic field in the southern portion of Jones Point Park because such active use is incompatible with the enjoyment of the historic resources in that portion of the park. We are disturbed by the failure of the EA to meaningfully address the impacts of an athletic field in the southern portion of the park. This failure is magnified by the Park Service's failure to address at all the recommendations of the Jones Point Park Task Force, as adopted by the City Council. For these reasons, we urge City Council to reject the selection of the National Park Service Preferred Alternative 4. We recommend that City Council ask the National Park Service for a new Environmental Assessment which adequately evaluates the impact of an athletic field south of the bridge and inform the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation so that they are aware of the council's concerns.

Sincerely,



S. Kathleen Pepper, Chair
Alexandria Archaeological Commission

cc James K. Hartmann, City Manager
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Michelle Evans, Deputy City Manager
Jim Mackay, Acting Director, OHA
Kirk Kincannon, Director, Recreation Dept.
Richard Baier, Director, T&ES/Admin.
Ellen Stanton, Chair, HARC
Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair, Park & Recreation Commission

ALEXANDRIA



ARCHAEOLOGY

FAX TRANSMISSION

TO: Mayor & Council & Aides FROM: S. Kathleen Pepper, Chair
703-838-6433 DATE: Alexandria Archaeological Commission, 9/22/06

Name: _____ TIME: 11:00 am
 Dept: _____
 Company: _____

No. of Pages (inc. fax cover): 4

MESSAGE

URGENT - Please read letter before
Public Hearing, Tues., Sept 26, 2006.

This is being sent via email as well, if there is a problem with the fax or email, please contact Jennifer Barker at Alex. Arch.

105 North Union Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314
 Office of Historic Alexandria City of Alexandria, Virginia
 phone: 703/838-4399 E-mail: archaeology@ci.alexandria.va.us fax: 703/838-6491
 website: <http://ci.alexandria.va.us/oha/archaeology>

22
9-26-06

RICHARD A. HOLDERMAN
ELSA V. HOLDERMAN
17 Alexander Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

RECEIVED
OCT 20 2006

October 17, 2006

Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

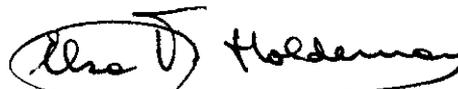
Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor and Council Members:

We would like to add our voices to others in favor of alternative 4 which would add a soccer field in the area and also preserve the environment and maintain the quality of life for the area residents. The city does not maintain properly the existing soccer fields but maintains a development mentality. As a result of area flooding from Hurricane Isabel it is believed that flood dangers would be increased, especially for some homes built below the current flood plain level.

Sincerely yours,



Richard A. Holderman



Elsa V. Holderman