


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 9, 2008
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 
SUBJECT: FY 2007 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE ALEXANDRIA PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

ISSUE: City Council consideration of the FY 2007 Annual Report from the Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission (Attachment).

RECOMMENDATIONS: That City Council receive the Annual Report from the Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission and thank the Commission for its efforts on behalf of the City.

DISCUSSION: The Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission is an eleven-member advisory board created by City Council in March 1970 to study issues relating to park and recreation needs. City Council appoints nine residents to the Commission from three planning districts and two high school age members to represent the youth of the City. The attached report highlights the activities of the Commission and its accomplishments during FY 2007.

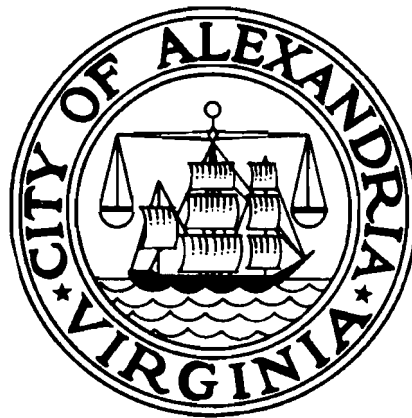
FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ATTACHMENT: FY 2007 Annual Report for the Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission.

STAFF:

Kirk Kincannon, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
William Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

**City of Alexandria
Park & Recreation
Commission**



**FY 2007 Annual Report
July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007**

**ALEXANDRIA PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT FY 2007
JULY 1, 2006 - JUNE 30, 2007**

Introduction

The Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission is an eleven-member advisory board created by City Council in March 1970 to study issues relating to park and recreation needs. City Council appoints nine residents to the Commission from three planning districts and two high school age members to represent the youth of the City.

The purpose of the Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission is to provide City residents an opportunity to participate in planning activities, serve as a panel to hear citizen suggestions or concerns relating to recreation and park programs, advise City Council on community park, leisure and recreation needs, and assist the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities in its continuing effort to be aware of and sensitive to public needs, and to meet the changing needs of the City's diverse residents.

The Commission meets on the third Thursday of each month from September to June at recreation centers throughout the City. The Commission recognizes outstanding City residents, organizations, and youth at its annual ceremony in July as part of the City's annual Birthday Celebration.

Members of the Park and Recreation Commission for Fiscal Year 2006 - 2007

- Planning District I - Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair
- Planning District I - Henry Brooks
- Planning District I - William Conkey (reappointed February 2007)
- Planning District II - Kenneth Basta (term expired November 2006)
- Planning District II - Ripley Forbes (reappointed February 2007)
- Planning District II - William Hendrickson (term expired February 2007)
- Planning District II - Robert Moir (appointed February 2007)
- Planning District II - Lindsey Swanson (appointed November 2006)
- Planning District III - David Dexter
- Planning District III - Kaj Vetter
- Planning District III - Kenneth Sharperson
- Youth Representative - Owen Jones
- Youth Representative - Aaron Wilson

City Staff to the Park and Recreation Commission

- Kirk Kincannon, Director - Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
- William Chesley, Deputy Director - Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

1. Park and Recreation Commission Accomplishments

- The Commission received specific project updates on and continue to support the following projects: Windmill Hill Park, Open Space Acquisitions, Four Mile Run Stream Restoration Plan, Land Bay K Potomac Yard park land, and athletic fields improvements, Jones Point Park, Wilson Bridge Project mitigation sites for parkland (Witter Street and Freedman's Cemetery areas), the All City Sports Facility, Patrick Henry Recreation Center, Chinguapin Park Recreation Center, Holmes Run sign improvement; improvements to Minnie Howard athletic field, multi-use and athletic court repairs and renovations; National Harbor initiatives at the City Marina; and
- The Commission provided position letters for the record to City Council, the City Manager, National Park Service and other stakeholders on important issues throughout the year. Position letters include:
 - Letter regarding Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment to City Council, September 21, 2006 (Attachment 1)
 - Letter regarding Endorsement for the Northern Virginia Regional Commission application for Transportation Enhancement Program Funds for the Four Mile Run Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge, September 22, 2006 (Attachment 2)
 - Letter regarding a statement to the City Council Hearing on the Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment, September 26, 2006 (Attachment 3)
 - Letter regarding the Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment to the National Park Service, October 18, 2006 (Attachment 4)
 - Letter regarding All City Sports to James K. Hartmann, City Manager, January 20, 2007 (Attachment 5)
 - Letter regarding Budget Considerations for Athletic Field Upgrades to City Council, April 9, 2007 (Attachment 6)
- The Commission received updates on and continue to support: the City youth anti-violence and anti-gang initiatives, out of school/after school program initiatives, pedestrian and bicycle improvements to on and off street trail systems, regular community clean-ups in City parks and stream valleys, Department efforts to expand and improve the City tree canopy, and efforts to beautify the City through the use of the Departments existing "Adopt a Park" and "Adopt a Garden" Programs; and
- The Commission unanimously endorsed the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Comprehensive Recreation Program Plan. This plan outlines the Department' strategic planning with regards to programs and activities; identified Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT Analysis) for all core programs; and included the Department's one year Marketing Plan and Education for Leisure Plan. The Comprehensive Recreation Program Plan will be reviewed annually; and

- The Commission solicited and received nominations for the Annual Park and Recreation Commission CIVIC Awards and was awarded at the City’s Annual USA/Alexandria Birthday Celebration held on July 7, 2007. Citizen Award was presented to Trish Freeman, Joseph Shumard, William E. “Bill” Clayton, Brian Marquis, and Matthew Pilewski. In addition, an Organization Award was presented to the Old Town North Community Partnership. These citizens and organizations were recognized for the dedicated service in enriching the quality of life for the residents of the City of Alexandria.

2. **Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearings**

- In fiscal year 2007, the Commission held topic specific public hearings, and following the conclusion of the topic specific public hearing, residents were provided the opportunity to comment on any park and recreation issues. The Commission encouraged increased community participation by holding public hearings and regular monthly meetings at various recreation center locations throughout the City. The following public hearings were held:
 - **July 20, 2006 – FY 2008 Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Budget**
The purpose of the hearing was to provide citizens with the opportunity to comment on the proposed FY 2008 Operating Budget for Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and for staff to inform the Commission and the public of the budget process.
 - **September 21, 2006 – Proposed Fee Increase for the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities**
The purpose of the hearing was to provide citizens with the opportunity to comment on the proposed increase in fees for facility use and services associated with the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. Fee increases were endorsed by the Commission, and approved by City Council as part of the FY 2008 budget process. In addition to the fee increases, City Council provided the City Manager the authority to adjust fees annually based on the CPI. Fee changes exceeding an adjustment based on the CPI will continue to need City Council approval.
 - **October 26, 2006: Proposed Athletic Field Master Plan**
At the public hearing, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities staff and consultants presented an overview of the draft master plan and received public comment.
 - **November 16, 2006 – Proposed Athletic Fields at Witter Property**
At the public hearing, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities staff and consultants presented an overview of the draft athletic filed plan and received public comment.

- **January 25, 2007: Proposed All-City Sports Facility**
At the public hearing, consultants from Rhodeside and Harwell presented details of the proposal to locate the All-City Sports Facility at Joseph Hensley Park, located at 4200 Eisenhower Ave. In December 2003, City Council directed staff to investigate potential sites for such a facility on City-owned land. Of four sites evaluated, the Joseph Hensley Park location was determined to be the most suitable for a multi-use facility.
- **April 30, 2007: Witter Property**
The purpose of the public hearing was to discuss athletic fields and other site features proposed for the Witter property, a 13.7-acre site located west of Telegraph Road between Duke Street and the railroad and Metrorail rights-of-way. Consultant and design engineer, A. Morton Thomas Associates, Inc., provided an in-depth design. Acquisition of the Witter property and project development by the City is being implemented with federal funds received in conjunction with the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project.
- **May 17, 2007: Proposed Lighting Enhancements at the Fort Ward Park Athletic Field**
At the public hearing, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities staff presented an overview of the lighting enhancements at the Fort Ward Park Athletic Field as part of the conversion from natural turf to synthetic turf, and received public comment.

3. Park and Recreation Commission Member Liaisons

- In addition City Council appointment to the Park and Recreation Commission, members served as Commission liaisons and City Council appointments to other City community groups in Fiscal Year 2007:
 - Judy Guse-Noritake – Open Space Committee
 - Henry Brooks – Waterfront Committee and Urban Forestry Steering Committee
 - William Conkey – Youth Policy Commission
 - Ripley Forbes – Four Mile Run Joint Task Force
 - William Hendrickson - Urban Forestry Steering Committee
 - Robert Moir – Youth Sports Advisory Board
 - Lindsey Swanson – Youth Policy Commission
 - David Dexter – Open Space Committee
 - Kenneth Sharperson - Youth Sports Advisory Board and Freedman’s Cemetery

4. Park and Recreation Commission Future Goals

- The Commission will continue to work with staff to evaluate existing recreation programs and will continue to make recommendations to enhance and expand programs that will serve the diverse needs of Alexandria residents. The Commission will hold public hearings on future Department projects and work with staff to ensure budget

proposals reflect future CIP renovations and operational needs of the Department. The Commission will continue to work on issues pertaining to parkland and facility needs that have been identified in the adopted Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Strategic Master Plan and City Open Space Master Plan

Attachments:

1. Letter regarding Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment to City Council, September 21, 2006
2. Letter regarding Endorsement for the Northern Virginia Regional Commission application for Transportation Enhancement Program Funds for the Four Mile Run Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge, September 22, 2006
3. Letter regarding a statement to the City Council Hearing on the Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment, September 26, 2006
4. Letter regarding the Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment to the National Park Service, October 18, 2006
5. Letter regarding All City Sports to James K. Hartmann, City Manager, January 20, 2007
6. Letter regarding Budget Considerations for Athletic Field Upgrades to City Council, April 9, 2007



"Judy Noritake"
 <jnoritake@nka-arch.com>
 03/20/2008 03:01 PM

To <Jack.Browand@alexandriava.gov>
 cc
 bcc
 Subject Jones Point EA letter to City Council from P&R Com

September 21, 2006

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

Re: Jones Point Park Environmental Assesment

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

As you are aware the National Park Service (NPS) recently published the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the re-design of Jones Point Park and 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. It is the only plan in the EA that fits the needs of our community. The National Park Service's Preferred Alternative, #4, fails badly in a number of ways. The three items that present the biggest shortcoming of Alternative 4 are the following:

1. **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 accordingly. The fields were also a formal part of the legal settlement between the Federal Government and the City.
2. **It places a large, compacted surface parking lot for 81 cars and access road more 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 laid out 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.
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.** No

one wanted to place a field any field, in this 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, 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 throughout the document about small-scale active recreational uses under the new bridge.

There are number of items in the EA that are of particular concern to the Park and Recreation Commissioners.
Gardens



"Judy Noritake"
<jnoritake@nka-arch.com>
03/20/2008 03:01 PM

To <Jack.Browand@alexandriava.gov>
cc
bcc
Subject YON Letter

Park and Recreation Commission

22 September 2006

Mr. Michael A. Estes
Local Assistance Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Mr. Estes,

The City of Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission strongly endorse the Northern Virginia Regional Commission application for Transportation Enhancement Program funds for the Four Mile Run Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge.

The pedestrian and cyclist bridge represents the primary focal point of the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan, a recently adopted document that lays the groundwork for more than \$260 million in infrastructure improvements along the 2.3-mile boundary separating the City of Alexandria from Arlington County. The adoption of the Master Plan culminated from five years of unparalleled cooperation between the citizens and agencies of Arlington and Alexandria as well as the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency and the office of Congressman James P. Moran.

The purpose of the pedestrian and cyclist bridge in the Master Plan demonstration project is to provide a connection between two communities separated for decades by the underutilized Four Mile Run corridor. This new bridge will attract residents and regional trail users to the Run with safer and more pleasant access to the Four Mile Run trails. The vision and goal of the Master Plan is to transform an inaccessible corridor into a community focal point that unites the two communities, and the bridge will be the emblematic focus of the initiative.

The City of Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission members believe that the proposed bridge is a crucial element in providing a continuous north-south link between non-motorized facilities in both Arlington County and the City of Alexandria. The bridge will connect trails on either side of Four Mile Run, which are also popular non-motorized commuter facilities. Both of these trails connect with the W&OD Regional Park trail to the west and the Mt. Vernon/GW Parkway Trail to the east. It is estimated that more than 2 million trail users visit the W&OD annually and 1 million use the Mt. Vernon trail on an annual basis. This bridge on Four Mile Run will be heavily used.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. If I can be of assistance with additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (703) 739-9366.

Respectfully,

Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair

cc: Kirk Kincannon, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities



"Judy Noritake"
<jnoritake@nka-arch.com>
03/20/2008 03:02 PM

To <Jack.Browand@alexandriava.gov>
cc
bcc
Subject Jones Point letter to City Council Sept 26 06

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 logical 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 it's 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 been move 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



"Judy Guse-Noritake"
<jnoritake@nka-arch.com>
10/18/2006 06:32 PM

To <MayorALX@aol.com>, "ken pasta" <kbasta@hotmail.com>, <hbrooks-1@comcast.net>, "William Conkey" <BConkey@Esocoff.com>, "Dave Dexter" <Kirk-Kincannon@alexandriava.gov>, <Aimee Vosper@alexandriava.gov>, <Jim Hartmann@alexandriava.gov>
bcc
Subject Jones Point EA comment for the record

From: Judy Guse-Noritake
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2006 6:28 PM
To: 'David_vela@nps.gov'
Subject: Jones Point EA comment for the record

Superintendent Vela:

Please find below the formal comments of the Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission submitted for the record on the proposed Environmental Assessment for Jones Point Park. These comments are also attached in a Word Document.

Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair
Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
605 Prince St.
Alexandria, Va. 22314

Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission

October 18, 2006

Superintendent David Vela
National Park Service
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, Va. 22101

Re: Comment for the Record on the Jones Point Park Environmental Assessment

Dear Superintendent Vela:

The Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission is submitting this letter as our formal comment on the National Park Service's (NPS) recently published the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the re-design of Jones Point Park. This Commission, after many years, numerous public meetings, hearings and several unanimous votes continues to offer full support for Alternative 1 which most closely reflects the wishes of the vast majority of our community for the redesign of this park. You must choose Alternative 1 at the conclusion of your analysis.

The Park and Recreation Commission has always been concerned about the overall design and function of

this, the largest park inside our City's borders. We are concerned that it is beautifully designed, that its environmental functions are retained and enhanced, that the unique archeological and historic resources are protected and showcased. We also believe this 65 acre park can and should provide two full sized athletic fields for use in the east end of our community. Alternative 1 accomplishes these things in a far more balanced manner than any of the other Action Alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative 4. The NPS Preferred Alternative 4 is a plan that was never presented publicly during the numerous meetings on the park design. As such there has not been a full and open public debate about many of the aspects of this alternative that are highly controversial in our community. 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 substantively in a number of ways. The items that represent the biggest shortcomings of Alternative 4 which must be accounted for and addressed during the comment assessment period are the following:

1. **Alternative 4 places a single large, gravel-paved 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 City's parking layout was to be finalized in the field, working around large specimen trees and other important natural features (and in this regard the EA's assertion that 3 large trees would be removed owing to the City's parking configuration is false and that text must be removed from all pertinent sections of the EA). 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 cars and 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. This park needs to be more about "park" and less about "parking". Alternative 4 in its design places a higher priority on parking than on active recreation. It is not acceptable.

2. **The NPS has failed to account for the deleterious environmental effects of the gravel-paved interior access road and parking lot and must make a full assessment and disclosure of the effects before reaching a final conclusion and choice of alternative.** Now here in the EA does the NPS state what amount of land is in the interior of the park that will be covered by the proposed gravel pavement under the Preferred Alternative. During the comment period it has been asserted by many that this road and parking lot will have less effect on wetland function and flooding in and near the park than the two grass turf fields proposed in Alternative 1. In the Version 2.1 (current) of the Reference Guide for LEED standards (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a program of the U.S. Green Building Council), in the Sustainable Sites section it outlines the criteria and calculations to assess the impacts of various surfacing materials on most site conditions for runoff volumes and impacts. The runoff co-efficients for various site surfaces are:

flat turf with a 0 to 1% slope	= 0.25
turf with a 1 to 3% slope is	= 0.35
pavement, concrete or asphalt	= 0.95
pavement, gravel	= 0.75

From this well accepted "green methodology" of calculating effects of storm water runoff, it would appear that the access road and 81 car parking lot proposed in Alternative 4 will have 2 to 3 times the runoff impact of the turf fields anticipated in the same location under Alternative 1. NPS must assess, quantify, and **FULLY DISCLOSE** this condition and the anticipated effects in the final EA using currently accepted green site design principles. Why did NPS ignore this condition in the assessment presented in the August 18th EA? It is the most egregious design aspect of Alternative 4 and it was not treated with full disclosure.

3. **Alternative 4 does not contain replacement athletic fields for the two that have always been a part of the park** Former Superintendent Audrey Callhoun in a public meeting last year said the "National Park Service would not be made whole if the final plan did not feature two athletic fields." This is a matter of public record. If the NPS has not been thus "made whole" by the lack of two active recreation fields in the Preferred Alternative, then how will it be made whole in this regard? There have always been two fields at Jones Point and Alternative 4 represents a 50% diminution of the active recreation component at this park. The City of Alexandria, in much the same manner as a concessionaire in other national parks, leases this park in order to meet certain needs in the City, most notably active field sports. This park's utility for the public investment we have made and will continue to make for its operation and maintenance will be severely diminished from its past use under the current lease agreement if Alternative 4 is the final outcome. What does NPS propose to compensate for this loss of active recreation space that has always been a part of this park?

4. **The EA's "Methodology/Assumptions" on page 43 of the EA states that "JPP does not contain neighborhood and community facilities, with the exception of two community gardens and a recycling center."** This assertion is in error and must be amended in all its aspects in the final EA. The Park and Recreation Commission and the citizens of Alexandria consider recreational fields to be a "community facility". The EA does not count 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. This loss will be felt by the youth sports teams across the City and will eliminate a recreational amenity that was of great value, value that is only increasing as our population grows.

5. **Two full sized fields have always been a planned as part of the bridge project at this location since the project was first begun.** The City of Alexandria's recreational planners have counted on these 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 pre- 911 65% design drawings for the park improvements show two full-sized athletic fields, along with 240 cars parked under the bridge which changed. These drawing and the cost estimate to execute them were made a formal part of the legal settlement agreement in federal court between the City and FHWS. This part of the agreement is found in Appendix G of this EA. Exhibit A is a drawing of Jones Point Park showing two multipurpose fields to the north of the new bridge and it notes under paragraph 3 of the settlement agreement that changes to this design needs the City's approval except for "minor modifications" that the State could do if required to by project/engineer changes. Under the terms of this agreement between the Federal governments, of which NPS is a part, 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. The Federal government is obligated to provide two full-size athletic fields as a part of the bridge construction mitigation. NPS must address this legal short coming as a part of the final EA.

6. **Alternative 4 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 one 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 far 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 subsurface investigations done during the bridge project - dictates that locating fields south of the bridge is

inappropriate from an overall park design standpoint. NPS in the final EA must do a better job of accounting for the impact of a field on the historic aspects and design characteristics of much smaller southern section of the park in the final analysis of this EA.

In addition, there are a number of errors of fact in the EA that the NPS needs to correct as the final version of the EA is crafted.

1. 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 10 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 as stated in the paragraph makes no sense. It must be removed from the EA.

2. 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. The wording in the EA to the contrary, and the assessment of the effects, must be removed in the final EA version.

3. The Preferred Alternative in its assessment of impacts on environmental justice population indicates that there are no such populations located within the project boundaries and that use of the park by environmental justice populations for fishing is the only use that must be assessed under these provisions of the EA. This is in error and must be assessed and corrected in the final EA. As a matter of fact, there are many children that fall under this definition that have used and could in the future use athletic fields in this location. The City cannot expand the number of youth sports teams in the City at this time because there is not field space to accommodate more practices and games. This is the situation on the ground while at the same time there are a number of commissions working to reach out to "at-risk" youth in our community to involve them in organized sports as a way of keeping these kids in school and out of trouble. These "at-risk" youth are highly correlated with the "environmental justice populations" that NPS MUST address in this EA. The impact of not providing two athletic fields in this location on the youngest members of our "environmental justice population" in this community will be felt for decades to come in very real terms. Sports can play a big part in saving these kids futures and sometimes their lives. There are a fair number of these children that live on the east side of the City, where Jones Point Park is located. The biggest problem in getting this group of kids into sports programs is a lack of transportation to and from practices and games. The children in this population group need these fields here in this part of our city to facilitate either walking or riding bikes to practices and games. The EA's consideration of impacts on environmental populations in our City is geographically too small and too narrowly defined as fisherman. In its final form the EA must include a reassessment taking into consideration the use - both previous and anticipated - of the athletic fields, and the impact on the environmental justice population residing in Park and Recreation Planning District 1, the eastern planning district of Alexandria.

In addition, the Park and Recreation Commission would like to align ourselves with the full set of formal comments submitted by the City of Alexandria under the signature of Mayor William Euille and do hereby make them a part of our comments in full. You have a copy of those comments.

In conclusion, it is our recommendation that the National Park Service in the final analysis choose the Alexandria City Council's position on the redesign of Jones Point Park as reflected in Alternative 1. It is the only alternative presented that meets and balances all the needs of Alexandria and will produce the best design for the many uses anticipated at this park for years to come. The Preferred Alternative falls very short in that regard.

Sincerely,

Judy R. Guse-Noritake
Chair
Park and Recreation Commission

c/o Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs
1108 Jefferson Street
Alexandria, Va. 22314-3999
703-838-4343

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



Jones Point EA comment letter Oct 18.doc



"Judy Noritake"
<jnoritake@nka-arch.com>
03/20/2008 03:00 PM

To <Jack.Browand@alexandriava.gov>
cc
bcc
Subject ACSF letter to Hartmann

January 20, 2007

Jim Hartmann
City Manager
City of Alexandria, Va. 22314

Re: All City Sports Facility

Dear Manager Hartmann:

At the last regular meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission in November we had a short presentation from Rhodeside and Harwell, Inc. (RHI) on the progress on the All City Sports Facility (ACSF). RHI explained to the Commission the scope of further site investigation, as well as natural resource and life-safety regulatory issues. They showed a range of options for some aspects of the site and facility layout, and indicated other aspects where options were limited by the constraints uncovered during the schematic design phase.

The Commission was supportive of the direction the planning is headed. One aspect discussed in detail with the Commission, staff and some audience members was the amount and configuration of the seating. As you know, the program given to RHI called for about 4000 fixed seats. As the design progressed, it became apparent that major structured seating could only be accommodated on one side of the athletic field. The site constraints, mostly rights-of-way and underground utilities, constrained the side to side dimension of the buildable area. In response to these constraints RHI's sketches at that point indicated about 3000 seats could be accommodated on one side of the field.

After a round of discussion staff indicated that they had done some investigation of similar facilities in the region to narrow in on what the appropriate seat count might be. They believed that a 2000 seat capacity would be adequate for perhaps 90% of the regular use of the facility. The cost associated with a reduced fixed-seat number was projected to be over a one million dollar cost savings.

In addition it was pointed out that there would need to be separate "visitors" seating on the opposite side of the field for high school sporting events. It was pointed out by TC Williams Athletic Director, Kerry Donley, that combining "home" and "visitors" seating in one area has the potential to cause problems. RHI indicated they would go back to the drawing boards and re-examine the possibility of seating on both sides of the field, with the "visitor's" seating at a much lower number than the "home" seating, as is often the case at similar locations.

The Commission discussed the pros and cons of the overall seating capacity. We thought that having a facility with 4000 fixed seats set up a situation where for most events the stands would appear to be half empty. In addition, even at the start of this project, we all know that we must all be vigilant for potential cost savings. The cost savings associated with reducing the number of seats will become important as the work progresses. Spending a million dollars on increased seating capacity for the four or five events per year that might require them seemed not to make a great deal of sense.

RHI indicated that they were designing the project to provide additional flexible seating options at both end-zone areas. Wrapped around one end zone they had introduced the notion of broad, turfed semi-circular terraces as a functional landscape feature. They envisioned these almost ceremonial terraces as being the location where the high school band might set up for games, or where a chorus might stand to sing the national anthem or to perform for graduation exercises. It's also an area that might be the first choice for patrons to sit on blankets for many events. At the opposite end zone RHI had sketched a turfed sloping area, also ideal for picnic blankets and informal seating. This type of "lawn seating" feature is one incorporated at many outdoor sports and performing arts venues, including Wolftrap. In addition, RHI spoke about designing various "hardscape" elements around the field – retaining walls, curbs, etc – to be sitting height and width to provide for increased seating capacity when needed. When not needed, they will appear to be landscape design elements.

All this is to say that the proposal to reduce the number of fixed bleacher seats from what was in the program and provide, through innovative design, additional seating capacity around the facility, was wholly supported by the Park and Recreation Commission. We believe that the lawn and terrace seating, once built, will be the preferred first option for many families attending sporting events. We asked RHI to see how many fixed and alternative seats they could come up with. Everyone left the meeting excited about the possibilities.

The Commission wanted to convey to you our thoughts about reducing the fixed bleacher seats and the addition of designing to increased capacity in other ways. We hope that you will agree and give direction to your staff and the design team to move in that direction as the design is refined.

The Park and Recreation Commission has scheduled a public hearing on the ACSF for our next regular meeting, January 25th. We are looking forward to seeing what progress RHI has made. It is a difficult site, but we believe that this will be a great addition to the City when it is finished. If we may be helpful in any other way, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Judy R. Guse-Noritake
Chair, Park and Recreation Commission

Cc: Kirk Kincannon
Park and Recreation Commission
Rhodeside and Harwell, Inc.



"Judy Noritake"
 <jnoritake@nka-arch.com>
 03/20/2008 03:03 PM

To <Jack.Browand@alexandriava.gov>
 cc
 bcc
 Subject field budget letter april 9 07

Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission

April 9, 2007

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

re: Budget Considerations for Athletic Field Upgrades

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

At our March meeting the Park and Recreation Commission discussed at length the critical need to accomplish the installation of a number of full-sized artificially-turfed athletic fields with lights, as was detailed in the recently completed Athletic Field Master Plan. This discussion was in the context of the tight budget situation the City is facing in the coming year. The Park and Recreation Department has been asked to tighten their belts along with every other City department. In that context and in a spirit of fiscal prudence we wanted to communicate to you that we believe the accelerated installation of artificial field replacement now will result in a *significant saving* over the next five years in construction costs, maintenance, staff time and resources. As difficult as it may seem, we believe that going to the bond market now to finance five or more fields for artificial turf installation by fall of 2009 is the most fiscally prudent course to take in the long run. To accomplish this, the planning for the rehabilitation of these fields would need to begin at the start of this coming fiscal year in June.

The Commission has previously investigated and reported the considerable cost savings associated with artificially turfed fields over natural grass fields. After reviewing the proposed plan of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to install one artificially turfed field per year in the coming years, the Commission asked the Department to provide some figures on the escalation in artificial turf construction costs over that time period. What the Department reported indicated that the construction costs are rising at a fairly rapid pace. Our question was: *"What is the cost of the building a field each year for the next five years as opposed to building them all in one year?"*

And the answer: *"The cost for Minnie Howard is \$1,040,882 noting that 3 years ago the cost for other synthetic fields in the area were \$650,000 and last year's costs were \$850,000. Also note that the low bid for Minnie Howard was rejected for the lack of a bid bond. (\$818,480) Because of the low bid rejection the City took the next lowest bid, which was \$1,040,882. The bids ranged from \$818,480-\$1,629,604. However, in general all the bids were over one million dollars .*

With uncertain market conditions and the possible fuel increases ... (effecting the price of plastics used on the field and transportation costs) and the increase in demands upon field installers, the Department of Parks,

Recreation and Cultural Events projects that by using Today's Baseline Dollars for a single field installation at \$1,040,882 with a modest 5% increase the cost of a single new installation will cost in :

Year One: \$1,092,926
Year Two: \$1,147,572
Year Three: \$1,204,951
Year Four: \$1,265,198
Year Five \$1,328,458

You can see from this conservative escalator that by the end of the fifth year we are paying an additional cost of \$287,576 for each field. Some projections list construction costs rising 8% or higher each year.

This information paired with both higher costs for maintenance and operation of the current grass fields in their over-programmed condition and the fact that bidding perhaps 5 to 6 fields in a single concurrent bid package in this next fiscal year will achieve a dramatically lower bid-per-field (economy of numbers) leads us to conclude that it is prudent to do more fields sooner. We believe this approach can achieve a significant cost saving for the City, perhaps enough to pay the interest on the bonds that would be needed for construction, and then some. The benefit beyond savings over time to the taxpayers would be better field conditions for our youth and adult players, along with more game time on the fields.

While there are a handful of artificially turfed fields in the planning stages in the City which we will acquire as a result of development projects, none of these are proceeding quickly and decisively. We believe that prompt action with dedicated City resources is required at this time to meet field demands, as well as maximize the cost saving over time. We would also note that Arlington County is adding its sixth artificial turfed field now and Washington, DC plans to install five artificially turfed public fields this summer. The City of Alexandria will take five years to catch up to where our neighboring jurisdictions are today if we proceed under the current plan contained in the City Manager's proposed budget and/or wait for the fields coming from development projects. Please make the commitment to the active adults and children of this community to at least match our neighboring jurisdictions in terms of playable year-round field surfaces.

We want to encourage you to take the steps now – to plan and budget for five or more fields – so that we can realize a significant improvement in the field situation in our community by fall of 2009. The children and adults that play – or who want to play – field sports in City of Alexandria have been waiting too long. This approach also serves the tax payer interests best over the next 5 years as well. It is not an easy task to undertake this coming fiscal year, but it is the right thing to do.

Respectfully,

Judy R. Guse- Noritake
Chair, Park and Recreation Commission
Commissioners;
Henry Brooks, PD-I
William Conkey, PD-I
Lindsey Swanson, PD-II
Ripley Forbes, PD-II
Robert Moir, PD-II
Kenneth Sharperson, PD-III
Kaj Vetter, PD-III
David Dexter, PD-III
Owen Jones, TC Williams
Aaron Wilson, TC Williams

Cc: Jim Hartmann, City Manager
Kirk Kincannon, Director