

2h
9-25-10

Statement to the Alexandria City Council, September 25, 2010, by Gary J. Carr

Mr. Mayor, Mr. Manager, Members of Council, my name is Gary Carr. I am, by now, well known to you as a persistent advocate of running tracks in the City of Alexandria. Combating childhood obesity, as was expressed in the recent proclamation by the Mayor in support of National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, should be a national health priority and is a moral imperative. Unhealthy over-weight children is an indictment to all of us, as parents, citizens and you as leaders. Alexandria has one of the highest obesity rates in the metropolitan area. It has everyone looking for an answer. I view running tracks as an important part of the solution to the problem. The answer to childhood obesity is vigorous physical activity, instilled at a young age. This activity should be available to all children, at all times. The answer is running. And children need a track to run on.

Let me pose a question. How many running tracks are maintained by the Department Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Activities? I will come back to that. How about fields? Three have been built recently, with more new synthetic surface fields on the drawing board, none of which have running tracks. At the most recent additions, Ben Brenman Park and Potomac Yards, the lack of running tracks has them serve a small and exclusive portion of the population, and I will explain why.

First, I feel compelled to object to the supposed "community meeting" held on the proposed fields at Potomac Yard. It was held in the middle of July, with less than one week notice, which hampered public awareness. If it wasn't the intent, it certainly leaves the impression, that it was held at such a time to prevent community input. Also, minutes of the meeting are not easily assessable on-line. If all the children of Alexandria get out of the Potomac Yard development is no new school, no running tracks and an isolated field, it is time to have another community meeting on exactly how the children of this community are benefiting from Potomac Yard. All city departments should be advised that community meetings should have a minimum of two weeks notice, and if at all possible during times when council is in regular session. To do otherwise is to undermine the spirit, if not the letter of the law.

Secondly, I must disabuse you of the notion that fields serve the entire community. Fields are locked-up or off-limits to the majority children. Why? Because they necessitate being on a team, and also requiring a permit. There is no time when the field are open and free for use by anyone who so desires. That should change. The city should institute a “free play time” at all artificial turf field where you can just show-up with your kids and play. If the fields are truly for everyone, you could make this change immediately. Furthermore, what percentage of the population does a field serve? The answer is at the most 20%, and these are by definition the healthiest of our citizenry. I am not against fields. I support the fields. But it is time to include to other 80% of the population by constructing running tracks when we build fields. A track would be used day and night, rain or shine, of this you can be assured. How much does it add to the cost to build a field? It a half-mile of road, asphalt and paint, that's what it is, not what it ain't Start saying “yes, we can”, don't accept “no we can't”.

The correct response to how many running tracks are maintained by the Department Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Activities? The answer is none. And when school is in session the the one public running track we do have in the city is closed to the public from 7:30am to 4:30pm; when daylight savings time starts, at the only high school in the state (if not the country)without lights, we have *none*. If we are serious about the fight against childhood obesity. If we are to as the Mayor stated in he address introducing the Proclamation on Childhood Obesity Month “Do everything we can” then we must build theses running tracks whenever we build a field. That is my case and here is my motto- If you build it, we will run.

[for more information see wewillrun.org]

Addendum to Statement by Gary J. Carr regarding Potomac Yard Field

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*From the City's Website: Date Jul 16, 2010
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Potomac Yard Replacement Fields at 600 East Monroe Ave.*

The public is invited to attend a community meeting for a project update on the approved replacement fields' plan for Potomac Yard located at 600 East Monroe Ave. (adjacent to Simpson Park). The meeting will be held on Thursday, July 22, at 7 p.m. at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Avenue.

City staff and the developer will address recent public comments and answer questions on the project. Persons who are unable to attend the community meeting can send written comments to the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Attention: Roger Blakeley, 1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria, VA 22314, or e-mail roger.blakeley@alexandriava.gov.

The City of Alexandria is committed to compliance with the City's Human Rights Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act. For additional information regarding the meeting and to request a reasonable accommodation or materials in an alternative format, call Roger Blakeley at 703.746.5495 (TTY 703.838.4902) or e-mail roger.blakeley@alexandriava.gov.

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WHEREAS, participating in physical activity is important to children and teens...
and...

“WHEREAS ...Organizations...are working to decrease childhood obesity... through a range of efforts, including...greater opportunities for physical activity.”

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Statement to the Alexandria City School Board Public Hearing, 9-23-2010, by Gary J. Carr

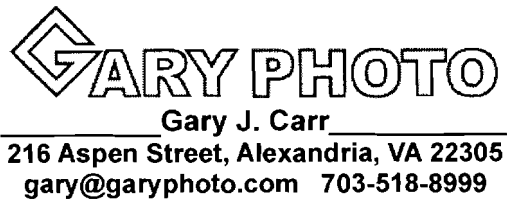
The persistent rise in childhood obesity is national disgrace, and should be a health and moral priority. My request is basic and simple- pull a rabbit out of the hat, and somehow leverage available dollars to repair the historic running track at George Washington Middle School. Over a thousand children can't afford to wait years for us to figure this out. Nothing fancy. Some grading here, fill there and level here. Pave it as simple as a street, and draw some lines. No rubberized surface. Keep it simple and cheap.

As for how to fund this idea, my answer is simple- ask. Many local corporation's are looking for a good idea and a request. There are bunches of organization that are looking for an answer to childhood obesity. Running is the answer. How could you get a whole public school, of 500 children, to get meaningful exercise all at the same time, in an hour or less? The answer is running.

It's half mile of road, asphalt and paint- that's it is, not what it ain't.
If you can't fix the field, then the field can wait. A track serves more children, there is no debate.
It is what you do, that determines your fate. Say "yes we can", not "no we can't".

On the the road fixing the track and field at Hammond Middle School, I had and epiphany. Not only should we restore tracks at our middle schools, but every middle school in the country (many are former high schools) should have a running tracks. Children need a safe place the run free. In elementary school its too early, by high school its too late. Middle school is where the battle for obesity is to be lost or won, and running is the key to victory. Running tracks are the not-so-secret weapon. I could talk basal metabolism, diet and activity levels, but it's this simple. If a child can run 2 miles in twenty minutes or less, and do it three times a week, they're healthy. Most children can't. I'm not talking hop-scotch or double-dutch, I'm talking running. It can be measured and documented, the 2 mile parameter is well established and it takes less than an hour. This change should start here, and we should start now.

Met a woman who was trying to loose weight, eat better, lower her cholesterol and blood pressure, to stop smoking, and have more energy. I suggested to start running. She said of running "I'm not feeling it". I said honey-child, you need to be feeling it. Running helps with it all that ail you.. For sometime soon the day will come, call it half-work or call it half-fun. You will build it, we will run.



First Lady Michelle Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Madame First Lady,

I am writing this letter to to both you and the President with a suggestion that will provide jobs, spur local economic activity, and enhance health and fitness of our youth *all at the same time*. This idea is a national effort to refurbish running tracks at our middle and high schools. The concept is fairly simple- many of the running tracks at our public schools have fallen into disrepair. If a national effort was made to repair these facilities, it would have many direct and indirect benefits. Specifically I think it could play a major positive role in your leadership in the fight to combat childhood obesity. Running could play a critical part.

Running is a activity that all can participate in, and all who participate will benefit. I will not attempt to relate the many benefits of the simple act of running. Needless to say it has a positive impact not only on our youth, but on every member of our community. Though the repair and expansion of running facilities, we will greatly expand the opportunities for all Americans to "Get Moving". It will also permanently improve the infrastructure of schools across the nation.

Having seen you speak many times, I will confess to being a great admirer of yours. I believe as you do, that the fight against childhood obesity is a fight for the future of America. It is a worthy and noble cause. I wish you all the best in your efforts

Respectfully yours,

Gary J. Carr

THE WHITE HOUSE

June 8, 2010

Mr. Gary J. Carr
Gary Photo
216 Aspen Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22305-1812

Dear Gary:

Thank you for writing to me. It has been heartening to hear from people who are interested in helping to combat childhood obesity, and I thank you for taking the time to share your ideas with me. We launched an initiative here at the White House called *Let's Move!* to address this growing concern, and we need ideas like yours for this initiative to be successful.

As you know, children all across this country are afflicted by poor health and a lack of nutrition in increasingly devastating numbers. Childhood obesity rates in America have tripled over the past three decades, and for the first time in our Nation's history, the current generation may be on track to have a shorter lifespan than their parents. These trends are startling, but I am encouraged because I know that individuals and organizations are already hard at work to combat this issue.

We launched *Let's Move!* with an ambitious national goal of solving the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation, so that children born today will reach adulthood at a healthy weight. *Let's Move!* will engage every sector impacting the health of children to achieve this national goal, and will provide schools, families, and communities simple tools to help kids be more active, eat better, and get healthy. This initiative is comprehensive, collaborative, and community-oriented, and it will specifically address the various factors that lead to childhood obesity by helping parents make healthier choices for their families, providing healthier food in schools, increasing physical activity, and improving access to affordable food in all communities.

We are going to need everyone working together to achieve our goal, and so I urge you to join us online at www.LetsMove.gov, where you can stay updated on news and connect with our efforts. Our strength as a Nation and our ability to responsibly shape our future depends upon tackling this issue, and I hope you stay active in the fight against obesity in your home community. We need your ideas, your hands, and your heart to lead us to a brighter, healthier tomorrow.

Thank you again for writing. I wish you all the best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Obama". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, during the past four decades, obesity rates have soared among all age groups, increasing more than fourfold among children ages 6 to 11; and

WHEREAS, 31.8 percent or 23,000,000 children and teenagers ages 2 to 19 are obese or overweight, a statistic that health and medical experts consider an epidemic; and

WHEREAS, significant disparities exist among the obesity rates of children based on race and poverty; and

WHEREAS, the financial implications of childhood obesity pose a tremendous financial threat to our economy and health care system, carrying up to \$14,000,000,000 per year in direct healthcare cost, with people in the United States spending about 9 percent of their total medical costs on obesity-related illnesses; and

WHEREAS, obese young people have an 80 percent chance of being obese adults and are more likely than children of normal weight to become overweight or obese adults, and therefore more at risk for associated adult health problems, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, sleep apnea, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis; and

WHEREAS, in part due to the childhood obesity epidemic, 1 in 3 children (and nearly 1 in 2 minority children) born in the year 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes at some point in their lifetime if current trends continue; and

WHEREAS, some consequences of childhood and adolescent obesity are psychosocial and obese children and adolescents are targets of early and systematic social discrimination, leading to low self-esteem, which, in turn, can hinder academic and social functioning and persist into adulthood; and

WHEREAS, participating in physical activity is important for children and teens as it may have beneficial effects not only on body weight, but also on blood pressure and bone strength; and

WHEREAS, proper nutrition is important for children before birth and through their life-span as nutrition has beneficial effects for health and body weight, and is key in the prevention of various chronic diseases; and

WHEREAS, childhood obesity is preventable yet does not appear to be declining; and

WHEREAS, public, community-based, and private sector organizations and individuals throughout the United States, including First Lady Michelle Obama, are working to decrease childhood obesity rates for people in the United States of all races through a range of efforts, including educational presentation, media campaigns, websites, policies, healthier food options, and greater opportunities for physical activity; and

WHEREAS, Mayors across this nation have championed cause of childhood obesity prevention by raising awareness and implementing local programs and policies to address the issue of childhood obesity.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM D. EUILLE, Mayor of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, and on behalf of the Alexandria City Council, do support the designation of National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month to raise public awareness and mobilize the country to address childhood obesity; recognizes the importance of preventing childhood obesity and decreasing its prevalence in the United States.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Alexandria to be affixed this 14th day of September 2010.

WILLIAM D. EUILLE **MAYOR**
On behalf of the City Council
of Alexandria, Virginia

ATTEST:

Jacqueline M. Henderson, MMC City Clerk

A Concept Design for George Washington Middle School Alexandria Virginia by GaryPhoto.com



**The George Washington Sports Complex
A Residential Sports & Fitness Facility**

**METRO
TAXI & BUS**

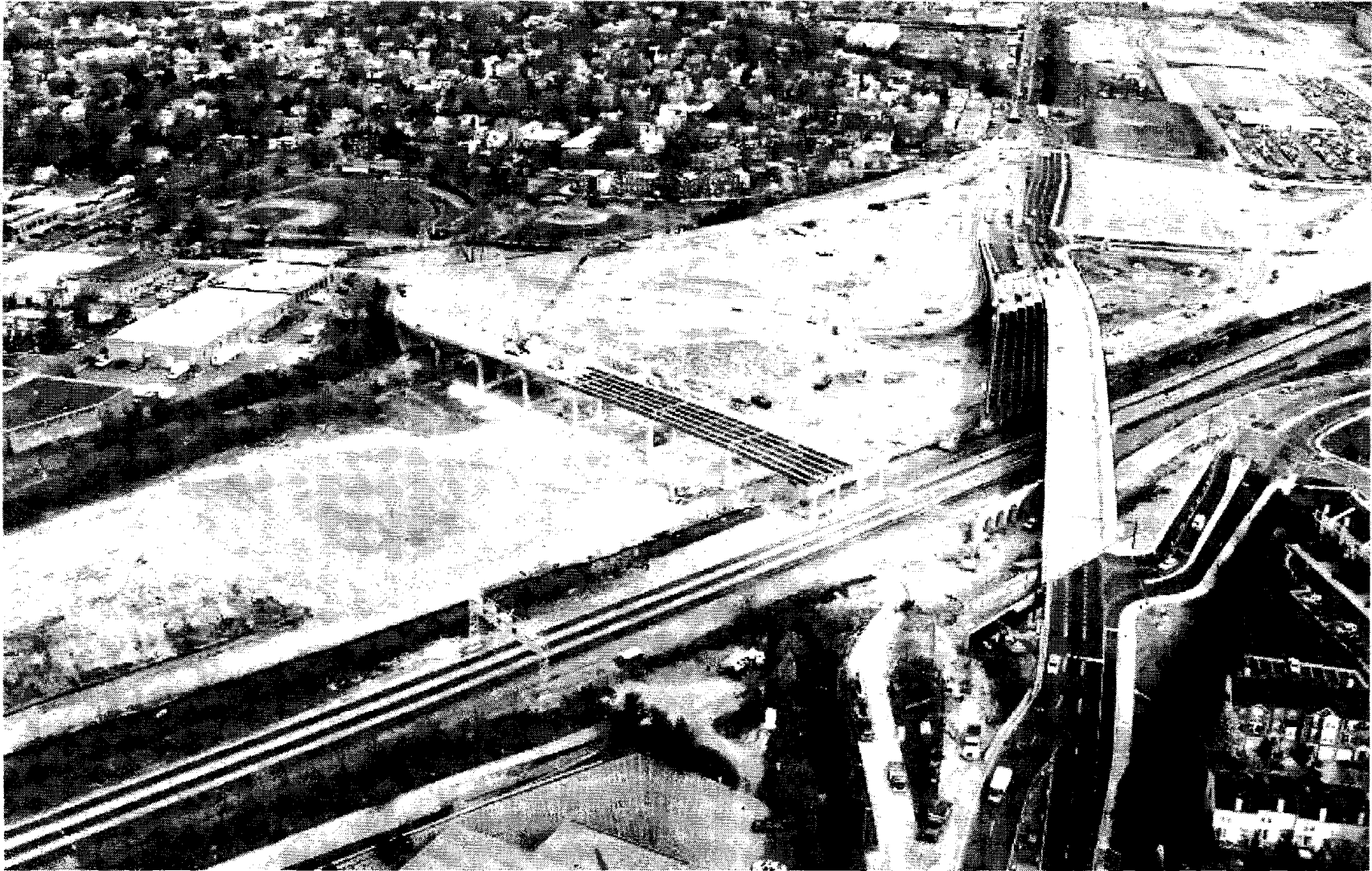
Community Meeting

July 22, 2010



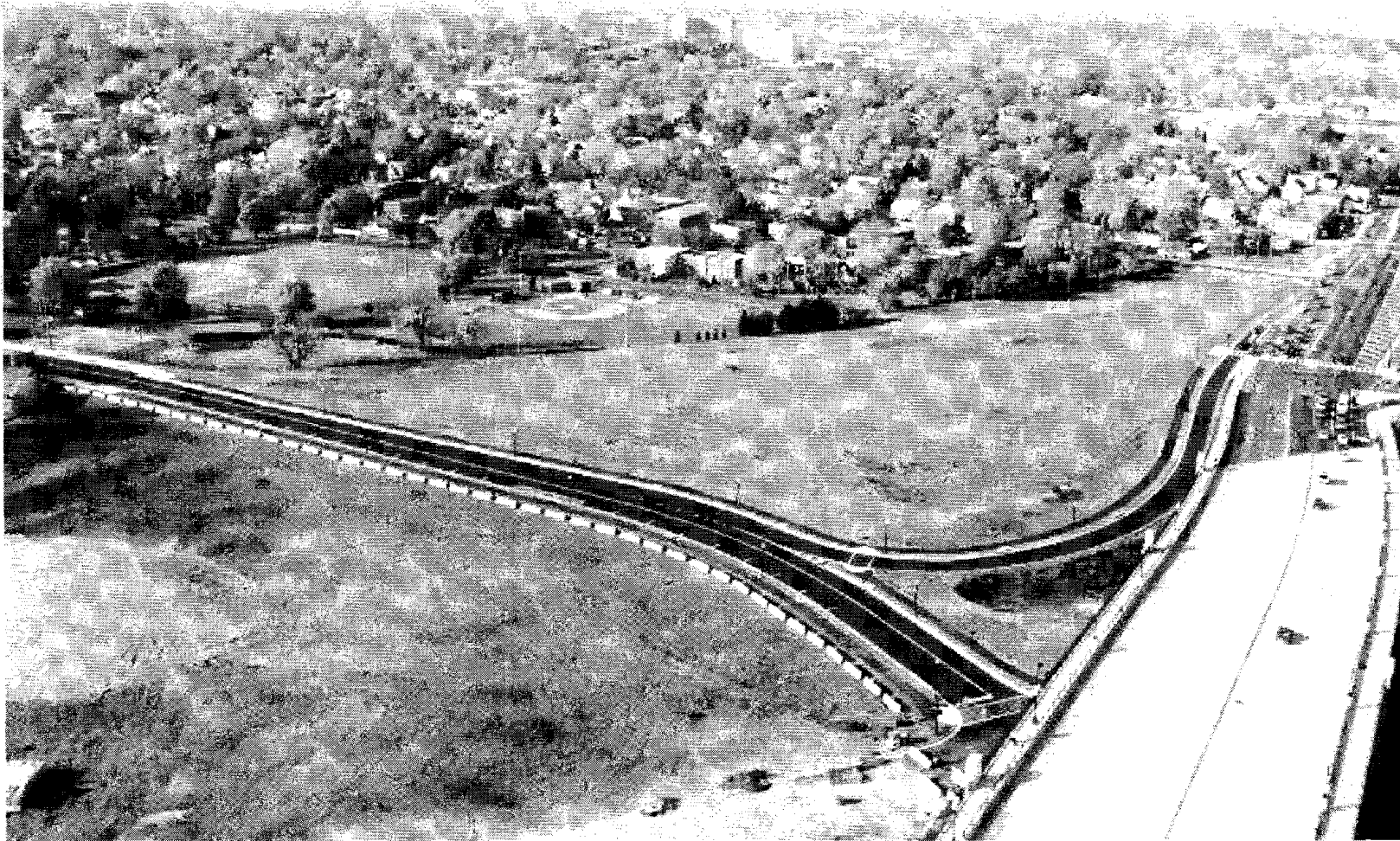
City of Alexandria

Community Meeting – Potomac Yard Fields



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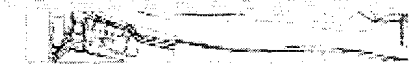


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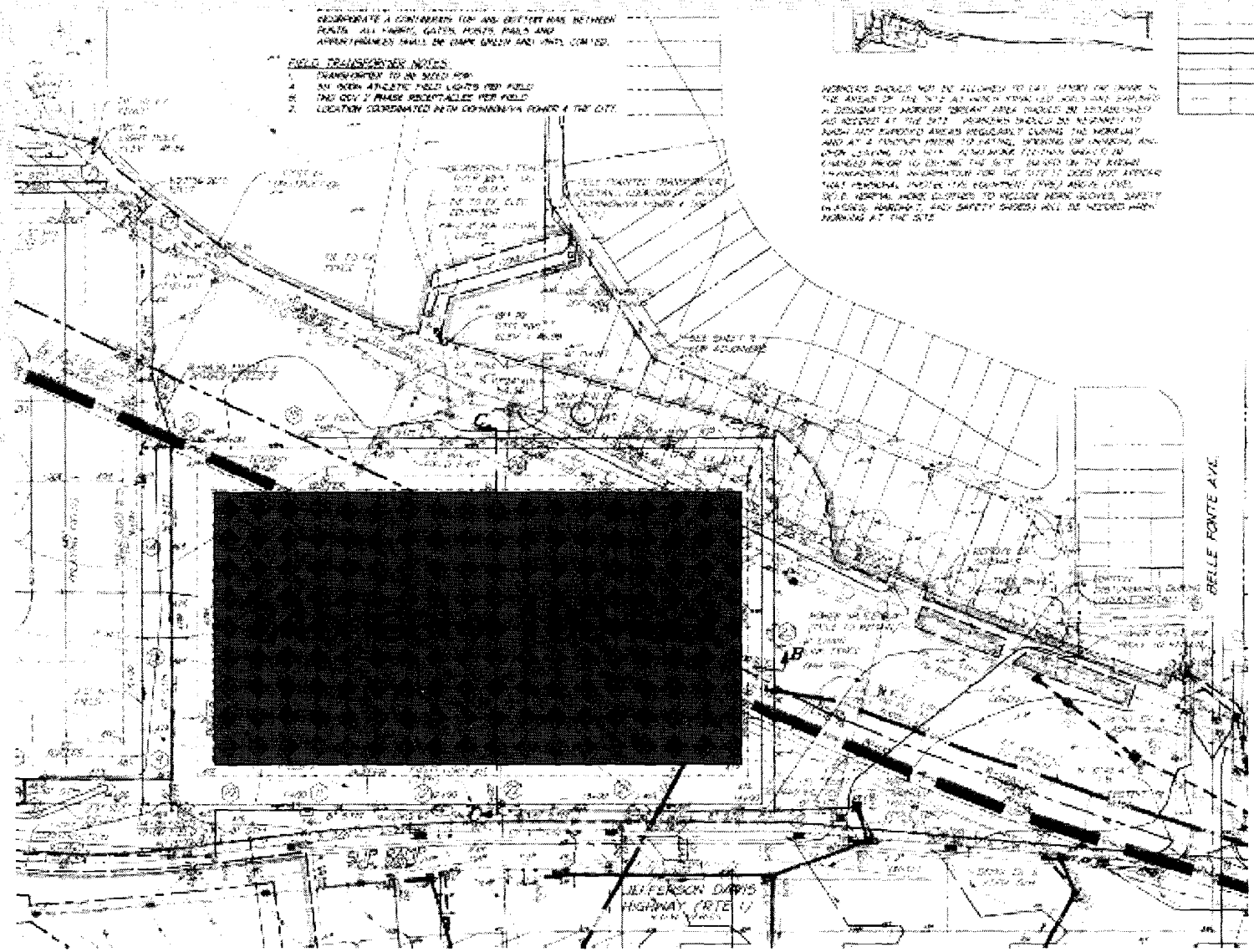
Community Meeting – Potomac Yard Fields

INCORPORATE A CONTINGENCY FOR ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
 POINTS. ALL MARKS, GATES, PLOTS, PAIRS AND
 APPROPRIATE SHALL BE MARK GREEN AND WHITE COMB.

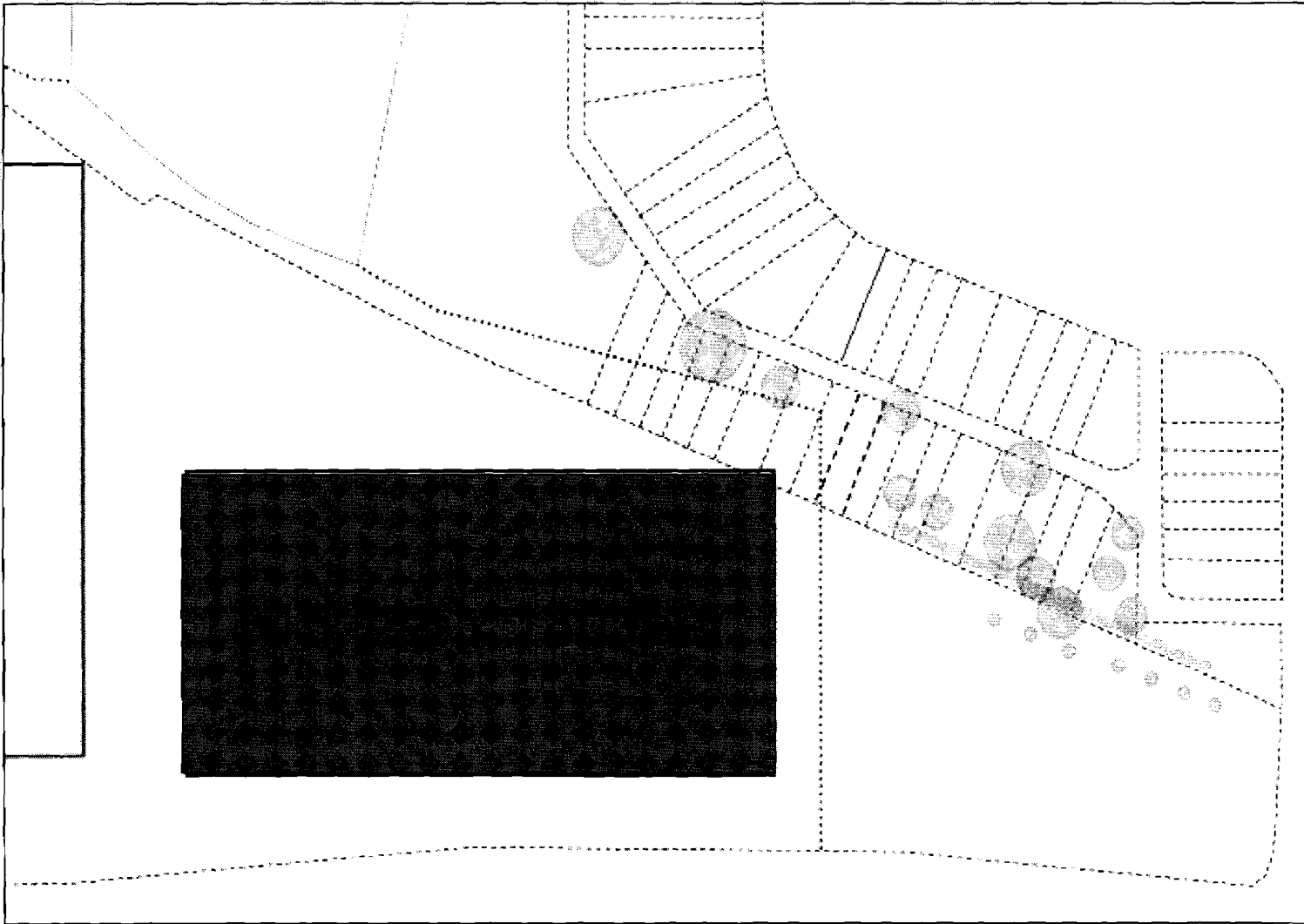
- FIELD TRANSMITTER NOTES**
1. TRANSMITTER TO BE SITED AS:
 2. AN OPEN ANTENNA FIELD LIGHTS PER FIELD
 3. TWO GUY WIRE RECEPTACLES PER FIELD
 4. LOCATION COORDINATED WITH COMMUNITY POWER & THE CITY.



PERSONS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO GET STUCK OR INJURED IN
 THE AREAS OF THE SITE AT WHICH TRANSMITTERS WOULD BE OPERATED
 IN DESIGNATED HAZARDOUS AREAS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED
 AND POSTED AT THE SITE. PERSONS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO
 ENTER ANY HAZARDOUS AREAS PROHIBITED DURING THE NORMAL
 HOURS OF OPERATION. TO PREVENT INJURY TO PERSONS AND
 OTHER DAMAGE, THE SITE SHOULD BE FENCED OFF AND
 ENCLOSED PRIOR TO ENTERING THE SITE. SHOULD THE FENCING
 BE DAMAGED OR REMOVED FOR THE SITE IT DOES NOT APPEAR
 THAT PERSONS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE SITE.
 THE SITE SHOULD BE FENCED OFF TO INCLUDE AROUND SAFETY
 PLACING AROUND THE SAFETY SHOULD BE NEEDED WITH
 FENCING AT THE SITE.



City of Alexandria

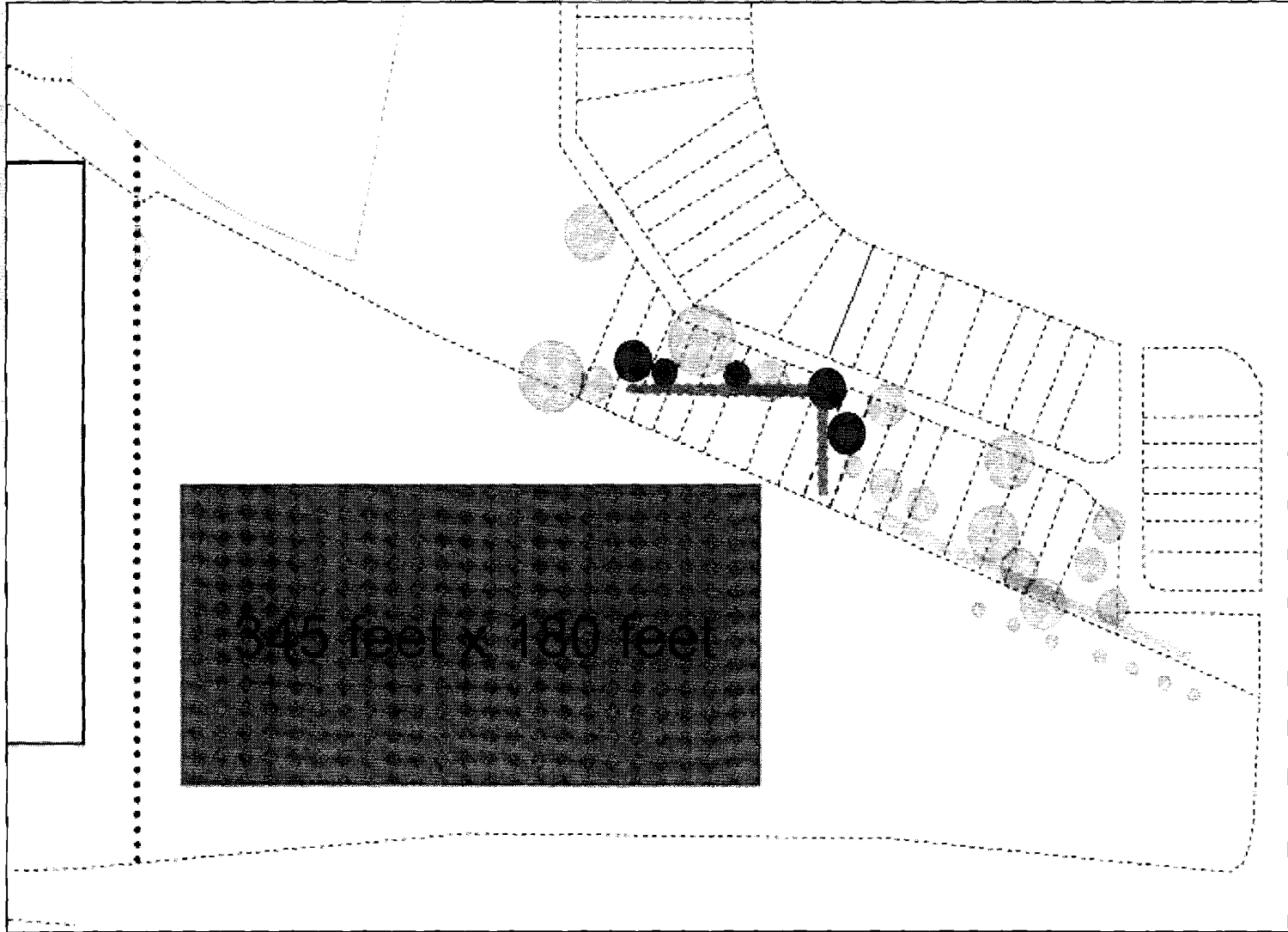


City of Alexandria

Community Meeting – Potomac Yard Fields

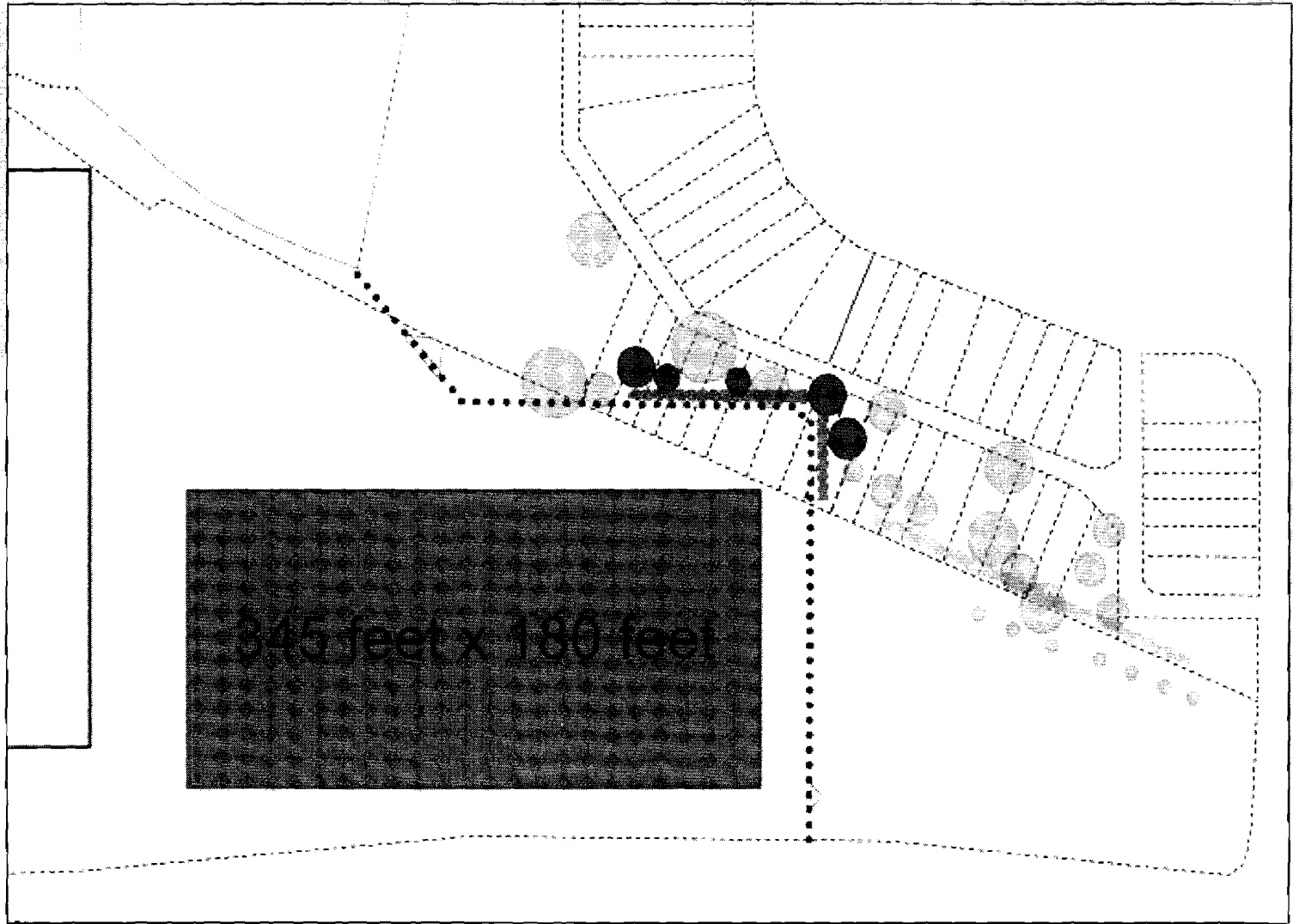
- **The approved conditions for Potomac Yard Park (Landbay K) list a dimension range for the fields.**
- **The fields may be a maximum of 380 x 230 feet**
- **The fields must at minimum meet the National Federation of State High School Association requirements for soccer, lacrosse and field hockey – 330 x 180 feet**
- **Replacement of the Interim Fields – 345 x 180 feet**





City of Alexandria

Community Meeting – Potomac Yard Fields



City of Alexandria

Community Meeting – Potomac Yard Fields



City of Alexandria

Community Meeting – Potomac Yard Fields



COA Contact Us: Follow-up to Public Hearing Statements

william.euille, frank.fannon, kerry.donley, alicia.hughes,

Gary Carr to: delpopper, paulcsmedberg, rose.boyd, jackie.henderson,
elaine.scott, rob.krupicka, linda.owens, elizabeth.jones

Please respond to Gary Carr

09/28/2010 05:56 AM

2h
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1 attachment



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Time: [Tue Sep 28, 2010 05:56:22] Message ID: [24504]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: Gary
Last Name: Carr
Street Address: 216 Aspen Street
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22305
Phone: 703-518-8999
Email Address: gary@garyphoto.com
Subject: Follow-up to Public Hearing Statements
Mr. Mayor and Members of Council,

Just a few follow-up comments to my
statements at the City Council Public Hearing of September 25, 2010:

It
was stated that the Community Meeting on the Potomac Yard Field on July 22,
2010 with six days notice by the Park and Recreation Department was to the
address specific concerns of the neighbors immediately adjacent to the new
fields. If that is the case, and the all members of the community are not
invited, perhaps we should come up with another designation for the
meeting, such as a "neighborhood meeting". If it was a "community meeting",
and advertised as such, it is an invitation to the entire community. For
the media to publicize the location requires a minimum of two weeks. While
certain issues may seem to involve only a segment of the community, it

can't be taken for granted that others aren't interested.

This also

brings up a larger point. Concerns have been expressed that actions by the Park and Recreation Commission and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Activities, while tremendously important to the children of this city, are occurring in obscurity. Their decisions never seem to come up for review by the full City Council. The location for the minutes and actions taken by the Commission and Department are not easily available on the city's website. It might be worthwhile to consider Public Hearings and meetings involving important or controversial decisions at a time and location that allows them to be televised. There should be a logical database of all relevant material. Meeting minutes and other information online is outdated or unavailable. (search for "Potomac Yard Field(s)" on City's website displays limited contemporaneous data)

Comments:

In response to the

assertion the linear parks will somehow fill the void for running tracks at Potomac Yard, and that "not everyone wants to run in circles"; my primary concern is, and has always been, the children of Alexandria. The linear parks, while suitable for an adult to run at, are often inappropriate for children to exercise. Track "circles" provide a safe and easily supervised location for youth of all abilities to run freely. That is what makes them different from other venues.

To those who think lightly of my efforts to

bring running tracks to a city that has none, my response is, where is your better idea? How would you include all of our children in physical activity? Not just those athletes' on a team that can afford a permit for a field. We have sat on our hands long enough, while we have one of the highest childhood obesity rates in the region. The status quo is unacceptable. Methods of the past are not working. It is time to treat this like a crisis. While proclamations are nice, we need actions and not just words.

Respectfully, Gary J.

Carr

alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/.../July22PotomacYardFieldsPresentation.pdf

cms.alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=35606

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Let me pose a question. How many running tracks are maintained by the Department Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Activities? I will come back to that. How about fields? Three have been built recently, with more new synthetic surface fields on the drawing board, none of which have running tracks. At the most recent additions, Ben Brenman Park and Potomac Yards, the lack of running tracks has them serve a small and exclusive portion of the population, and I will explain why.

First, I feel compelled to object to the supposed "community meeting" held on the proposed fields at Potomac Yard. It was held in the middle of July, with less than one week notice, which hampered public awareness. If it wasn't the intent, it certainly leaves the impression, that it was held at such a time to prevent community input. Also, minutes of the meeting are not easily accessible on-line. If all the children of Alexandria get out of the Potomac Yard development is no new school, no running tracks and an isolated field, it is time to have another community meeting on exactly how the children of this community are benefiting from Potomac Yard. All city departments should be advised that community meetings should have a minimum of two weeks notice, and if at all possible during times when council is in regular session. To do otherwise is to undermine the spirit, if not the letter of the law.

Secondly, I must disabuse you of the notion that fields serve the entire community. Fields are locked-up or off-limits to the majority children. Why? Because they necessitate being on a team, and also requiring a permit. There is no time when the field are open and free for use by anyone who so desires. That should change. The city should institute a “free play time” at all artificial turf field where you can just show-up with your kids and play. If the fields are truly for everyone, you could make this change immediately. Furthermore, what percentage of the population does a field serve? The answer is at the most 20%, and these are by definition the healthiest of our citizenry. I am not against fields. I support the fields. But it is time to include to other 80% of the population by constructing running tracks when we build fields. A track would be used day and night, rain or shine, of this you can be assured. How much does it add to the cost to build a field? It a half-mile of road, asphalt and paint, that's what it is, not what it ain't Start saying “yes, we can”, don't accept “no we can't”.

The correct response to how many running tracks are maintained by the Department Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Activities? The answer is none. And when school is in session the the one public running track we do have in the city is closed to the public from 7:30am to 4:30pm; when daylight savings time starts, at the only high school in the state (if not the country)without lights, we have *none*. If we are serious about the fight against childhood obesity. If we are to as the Mayor stated in he address introducing the Proclamation on Childhood Obesity Month “Do everything we can” then we must build theses running tracks whenever we build a field. That is my case and here is my motto- If you build it, we will run.

[for more information see wewillrun.org]

Addendum to Statement by Gary J. Carr regarding Potomac Yard Field

QUESTION? Why was the community meeting with less than one week notice and in the middle of July? Is there one field's or two? What about the school? Where is that site? How are children to get to the field directly after school. Where is the parking. Who is this field meant to serve. Do you feel that the city received fair value in exchange for the placement of this field? Why are Park and Recreation Commission meeting held on the same day and time as the school Board's Public Hearing? Is it time to consider term limits at the Parks and Recreation Commission?)

*From the City's Website: Date Jul 16, 2010
Public Invited to Attend Community Meeting on
Potomac Yard Replacement Fields at 600 East Monroe Ave.*

The public is invited to attend a community meeting for a project update on the approved replacement fields' plan for Potomac Yard located at 600 East Monroe Ave. (adjacent to Simpson Park). The meeting will be held on Thursday, July 22, at 7 p.m. at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Avenue.

City staff and the developer will address recent public comments and answer questions on the project. Persons who are unable to attend the community meeting can send written comments to the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Attention: Roger Blakeley, 1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria, VA 22314, or e-mail roger.blakeley@alexandriava.gov.

The City of Alexandria is committed to compliance with the City's Human Rights Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act. For additional information regarding the meeting and to request a reasonable accommodation or materials in an alternative format, call Roger Blakeley at 703.746.5495 (TTY 703.838.4902) or e-mail roger.blakeley@alexandriava.gov.

Excerpts from the Proclamation by the City of Alexandria recognizing National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month that Directly Support Running Tracks.

WHEREAS, participating in physical activity is important to children and teens...
and...

“WHEREAS ...Organizations...are working to decrease childhood obesity... through a range of efforts, including...greater opportunities for physical activity.”

City organization who should , but have not, spoken out about the need for a running track in the City of Alexandria: Youth Policy Commission, Commission on Aging, Commission on Persons With Disabilities, Commission for Women, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Early Childhood Commission, Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, Public Health Advisory Commission,