

DRAFT

Minutes of Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group

June 10, 2010 Meeting

The Stakeholder Advisory Group (“Group”) convened at the Fort Ward Museum at its announced meeting time of 7:00 p.m. Members and City Management and Staff present included:

Charles Ziegler
Frances Terrell
Adrienne Terrell Washington
Richard Brune
Robert Moir
Linda Ries
Carol Griglione
James Spengler (Parks and Recreation)
Laura Durham (Parks and Recreation)
Susan Cumbey (Office of Historic Alexandria – Fort Ward)
Wally Owen (Office of Historic Alexandria – Fort Ward)
Lance Mallamo (Office of Historic Alexandria)
Sharon Annear (Staff for Councilwoman Alicia Hughes)

While formal attendance of observers was not taken, the following observers were identified as being present at the meeting:

Mr. Thad Dilley, Marlboro Estates Resident
Mr. Dennis Carroll, Marlboro Estates Resident

In the absence for Chairman Tom Fulton in celebration of his birthday, Vice Chairman Charles Ziegler called the meeting to order. The meeting expressed best wishes to Chairman Fulton on his birthday.

The agenda circulated earlier by Chairman Fulton was approved. Approval of the minutes of the prior meeting was deferred, pending a quorum.

Old Business

Sub-Committee Reports

Linda Ries reported on an early May walk around Ft. Ward Park to note some concerns expressed at earlier public meetings , observing both natural resources and park facilities. Ms. Ries suggested that it may be appropriate to put in a trail in certain areas of the park to emphasize its historical and cultural features. Ms. Ries noted the presence in the maintenance

yard area of Japanese knotweed that should be removed. She also observed that Mr. Rich Baier's presentation at the last meeting of the Group contained many good ideas with regard to addressing the drainage problems. Ms. Ries noted that the arbor memorial area is in disrepair, compacted soil in a number of areas, and recommended the management of trees and, where appropriate, removal of trees that are diseased or dead. She also recommended the mapping of the park indicating those areas most devoted to recreation and those retaining a more natural aspect as a possibly useful tool of analysis of park resources. Ms. Ries also noted that the "no-mowing" policy had helped significantly in controlling erosion, but that there are areas of erosion still persisting that might be affecting some of the cultural resources of the park.

Mr. Bob Moir said that his sub-committee on recreation will work closely with Parks and Recreation to continue to limit damage to other parts of Ft. Ward Park. His sub-committee will make recommendations concerning the dog park, and for improving the playground area.

Adrienne Washington referred to herself as a "sub-committee of one," but stated that she would work closely with the Ft. Ward History Working Group, which has come up with a good deal of information. Ms. Washington discussed progress on the preparation of interpretive signs for the park, and suggested that a dramatic presentation set in Menokin might be presented in the Ft. Ward amphitheater.

Frances Terrell reported on the progress of oral history interviews with descendents of residents of "the Fort. Ms. Terrell is looking into ways that the African-American post-Civil War presence at Ft. Ward can be made better known.

A speaker noted that as the Oakland Baptist Church cemetery is the only part of Ft. Ward Park not on the National Register of Historic Places, inclusion of the cemetery on the Register should be sought, and it was generally agreed that this is a good idea. The speaker also recommended appropriate signage for the cemetery area.

"No-Mowing" Policy

Chairman Ziegler asked for views on the results so far of the "no-mowing" policy. Linda Ries responded that in certain areas the policy has been of benefit. However, in a few areas, she has observed that the policy permits a proliferation of weeds, and wondered how best to address this problem.

James Spengler of Parks and Recreation noted that on his arrival in Alexandria he heard that Parks and Recreation had a tendency to act too unilaterally. He noted that under his administration he had instituted a policy of collaboration and cooperation with the community, but he noted that this inevitably lengthens the decision process. Mr. Spengler reported that the previous week Parks and Recreation met on site with staff from the Office of Historic Alexandria and reached agreement, from a staff standpoint, on the mowing policy, particularly with regard to the upcoming archaeological work. He also noted that the "no-mowing" policy is not called "meadow management." Mr. Spengler stated that over time, the results in the meadow management areas should be an improvement in the ability of the soil to absorb moisture, thus reducing runoff. He also reported that the meadow management policy is monitored, in terms of what is growing, on a monthly basis by qualified staff. Mr. Spengler also reported that, in

agreement with Pamela Cressey, the maintenance yard will be mowed until such time as the archaeological study is completed, after which the mowing policy will be adjusted as necessary. Mr. Spengler reported that the City Arborist had noted a significant number of damaged trees in the cemetery area, and that he planned to hold a community meeting to determine how best to proceed. He also said that staff naturalists have noted a large difference in the wildlife between the mowed and non-mowed areas. This has created a beneficial “edge” between forest and meadow areas. A short question and answer period followed.

New Business

Given the relatively sparse attendance at the meeting , it was decided to table the discussion of the Ft. Ward Master Plan and Mr. Spengler’s “Road Map for Change.”

A quorum having been attained, the Minutes of the May 25, 2010 meeting were adopted with the addition of the names of Alfonso Terrell (Minister, Oakland Baptist Church) and Lena Rainey (Trustee, Oakland Baptist Church) as observers. The name “Bob Mohr” was corrected to “Bob Moir” (Member, Stakeholder Advisory Group).

The Group adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Group will be on Tuesday, June 22, 2010, at the Museum, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Ziegler, Acting Secretary