

# Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

## The Office of Historic Alexandria

### Fort Ward Park Issues Community Meeting

7:00 PM

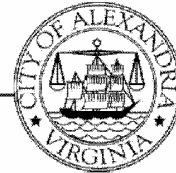
March 18, 2009

T.C. Williams High School



# News Release

Latest press release  
from March 9



City of Alexandria, VA

City Hall, 301 King St. Room 3500, Alexandria, VA 22314

## News Release

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 12, 2009  
PIO#078-09/jlh

### **For More Information, Contact:**

Jennifer Harris, Communications Officer  
703.838.5078 or [Jennifer.harris@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Jennifer.harris@alexandriava.gov)

### **City of Alexandria Schedules Community Meeting to Present Draft Action Plan on Fort Ward Park**

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and the Office of Historic Alexandria invite the public to attend the third community meeting regarding a draft action plan to address community concerns about current facilities and operations at Fort Ward Park, located at 4301 West Braddock Road. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18 at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria of T. C. Williams High School, 3330 King St.

City staff will present findings generated from the two previous meetings, and the public will have the opportunity to comment on the draft action plan. Residents unable to attend the meeting can view the presentation online beginning Thursday, March 19, and may submit written comments to the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Attention: Laura Durham, 1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria, VA 22314, or by e-mailing [laura.durham@alexandriava.gov](mailto:laura.durham@alexandriava.gov). The deadline for written comments is Friday, March 27.

The City of Alexandria is committed to compliance with the City's Human Rights Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act. To request a reasonable accommodation or to request materials in an alternative format, please call Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, at 703.838.5095, ext. 350 (TTY 703.838.4902), or e-mail [laura.durham@alexandriava.gov](mailto:laura.durham@alexandriava.gov).

[www.alexandriava.gov](http://www.alexandriava.gov)

# Purpose

- ▶ Seek input from community on issues, ideas and suggestions that will help determine future park improvements.
- ▶ Use ideas generated from meetings to review community and user concerns, and to prioritize a draft action plan for park improvements.
- ▶ Send written comments until March 27:  
Dept. of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities,  
Attention: Laura Durham  
1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria, VA 22314  
Email: [laura.durham@alexandriava.gov](mailto:laura.durham@alexandriava.gov)

# Community Meetings

- ▶ Group Discussions
- ▶ Priority Exercise



# Community Meeting Findings

## Fort Ward Park Priorities and Issues Identified by Community

HISTORIC/CULTURAL USES	#	PARK OPERATIONS	#	ACTIVE RECREATIONAL USES	#	PASSIVE/CASUAL USES	#	ENVIRONMENTAL/NATURAL RESOURCES	#	OTHER	#
<b>1. African American History</b>		<b>1. Maintenance Facility</b>		<b>1. Picnics</b>		<b>1. Pedestrian Uses</b>		<b>1. Arboretum</b>		<b>1. Park Planning</b>	
a) Signage of historical African American community, historic markers	19	a) Move maintenance yard, but do not replace w/ additional picnic or public access area	8	a) Noise- Noise problems with picnics, parties. Prohibit/ban amplified sound.	41	a) Maintain walking/running paths	6	a) Re-establish arboretum at Fort Ward as part of master plan	10	a) Develop Mission Statement	10
b) Restoration of community graves and artifacts	15	b) Regular cleaning and upkeep. Additional screening and buffer.	4	b) Alcohol- prohibit/ban alcohol /ABC permits	17	b) Walking Park is a plus	3	b) Master plan for Arboretum--include education and plant collections	12	b) Empower Working Group/Committee. ID short /long term goals, managed growth/stewardship	9
c) Exhibit for museum	15	c) Gravesites located inside yard, overlaps w/ yard, does facility need to be moved?	3	c) Overcrowding--control, reduce picnics, reservations, group size-no large groups.	15	c) Pedestrian/vehicular are shared-- safety concerns. Have a pedestrian only 'loop'	3	<b>2. Trees and Landscaping</b>		c) Postpone facilities plan until master plan complete	6
d) African American History--Input and Research	11	d) Programming for Nursery--Now and when its gone	2	d) Limit/eliminate picnics in areas adjacent to residents	5	d) Identify walking and driving road	2	a) Replant trees lost to attrition	6	d) Rebalance use. ID how Park is used/under/ over utilized areas, prioritize use- passive/active	6
		e) Nursery used as staging than for growing.	1	e) Noise abatement w/ adequate staffing on weekends	4	e) Sidewalks	1	b) Trees/arboretum are non-existent	5	e) Communications w/ Public- Open Comm. w/ neigh.	5
<b>2. Identification of Historic Areas</b>		<b>2. Rehabilitate Restrooms</b>	14	f) Temporarily stop/reduce picnics to assess needs and to allow areas to regenerate	2	<b>2. Parking availability for casual use</b>	6	c) Azalea beds, festival	6	f) No changes in Park without public process or input, esp. adjacent neighborhoods	4
a) Grave sites, Pre-post Civil War, African American History, Regional significance, others	17			g) Increase reservation fees	1	<b>3. Other</b>		d) Tree work, maintain existing azaleas, plants	3	<b>2. Volunteer Ideas</b>	
b) Identify w/ signage- visible and clear	11	a) Security for Park	5	h) Requirements for reservations-Alexandria residents/non-residents	1	a) More Historical emphasis	3	e) Document trees/historic trees	1	a) Users take home their own trash -- "leave no trace"	5
c) Identify areas/gravesites through research, GPS	8	b) Closing times/Gates	3	<b>2. Parking/Vehicles</b>		b) More passive use	2	<b>3. Drainage</b>		b) Coordinate volunteer corp. for park	2
<b>3. Market/ Promote "Park Story"/ History</b>		c) Police	1	a) Parking issues--spillover into adjacent neighborhoods from events/picnics	7			a) Drainage along east property line/throughout park	4	c) Community Service Plan	1
a) Recognize historic significance of site. Valuable levels within park.	10			b) Vehicular traffic--eliminate vehicles or relocate?	4			b) No more paving, impervious surfaces	4	d) Adopt a Garden to beautify	1
b) Tours: African American Community, Oral History, Walking Tour, Cell Phone technology	8	<b>4. Communications/Assistance</b>		c) Control access into park	4			c) Utilize stormwater as irrigation around loop	1	e) Users donate time	1
c) Begin planning, preparations for 150th Anniversary of the Civil War.	2	a) Who do you go to? What is the process for contacting authorities?	4	d) No additional parking	2					<b>3. Misc.</b>	
d) Appoint a committee to begin short/long term interpretive plan for 150th Civil War Anniv.	3	b) Staff not on duty to help with concerns/ needs	2	<b>3. Special Events</b>						a) Drug Use/ Crime, Rats/Vermin, Parking (and speeding) for St. S./St. A.	3
e) History needs to be more accessible	1	<b>5. Cemeteries/Gravesites</b>		a) I large events, such as Jazz Festival- not historic, negative impact, unrelated to history	4					b) Pay Phone on Westside	3
f) Interpretive program	1	a) Damage to grave sites	3	<b>4. Facilities</b>						c) Park is a regional attraction and community asset	1
<b>4. Interpretive Trail-- of cultural, natural, Af. American resources</b>	16	b) Better maintenance of Cemetery	2	a) No additional pavilions	5					d) Utility survey needed	1
		c) Vegetative Screening	1	b) Lighting--lights are on and park is empty	3						
<b>5. Resource Management</b>		<b>6. Park Amenities</b>		c) Rehab/Upgrade Amphitheatre	1						
a) Preserve history in museum. Concerns about flooding in basement.	3	a) Site amenities/furnishings should be appropriate for a historic area.	4	d) Electrical Outlets for Special Events (controlled)	1						
b) Message to "respect park and its' resources" ( Picnic users)	3	b) No Loud signage, etc..	3	<b>5. Management</b>							
c) Assess if historic and cultural resources are compatible w/recreation use	2	<b>7. Other Maintenance/Operations</b>		a) Determine max. limit to balance use and historic resources	3						
d) Mission Statement to define Parks historical purpose/importance.	2	a) Leaf blower noise--why are leaves picked up?	1								
e) Go back to the original concept of park-historic with azalea beds, passive uses.	2	b) Incorporate green practices in maintenance	1								
		c) City vehicles take up visitor parking spaces	1								
		d) Do not increase parking.	1								

☐ Immediate & Short term actions  
# #of responses from priority exercise

Dated 3/18/09

# Historical/Cultural Uses

- ▶ African American History of Park
- ▶ Identification of Historic Areas
- ▶ Promotion of Park History
- ▶ Interpretive Trail
- ▶ Resource Management



# Park Operation Uses

- ▶ Maintenance Facility
- ▶ Rehabilitate Restrooms
- ▶ Security
- ▶ Communications/Assistance
- ▶ Cemeteries/Gravesites
- ▶ Park Amenities
- ▶ Other Maintenance/Operations

# Active Recreational Uses

- ▶ Picnics
- ▶ Parking/Vehicles
- ▶ Special Events
- ▶ Facilities
- ▶ Management



# Passive/Casual Uses

- ▶ Pedestrian Paths
- ▶ Parking availability for casual use

# Environmental/Natural Resources

- ▶ Arboretum
- ▶ Trees and Landscaping
- ▶ Drainage

# Other Issues

- ▶ Park Planning
- ▶ Volunteer Ideas
- ▶ Miscellaneous Concerns: drug use, crime, rats, pay phones, utilities.

# Possible Immediate Actions

- ▶ Staff/Community working group
- ▶ Phased plan for relocation of maintenance facility
- ▶ Community notification of park and nursery operations
- ▶ Two-week moratorium on rentals, with longer term reductions in site availability
- ▶ Controlled access available for grave sites
- ▶ Signage and enforcement of “no alcohol” and “no amplified noise” without permit policies
- ▶ Early April walking tours w/working group and public



# FORT WARD PARK TODAY



Sports Field  
and Tennis  
Courts

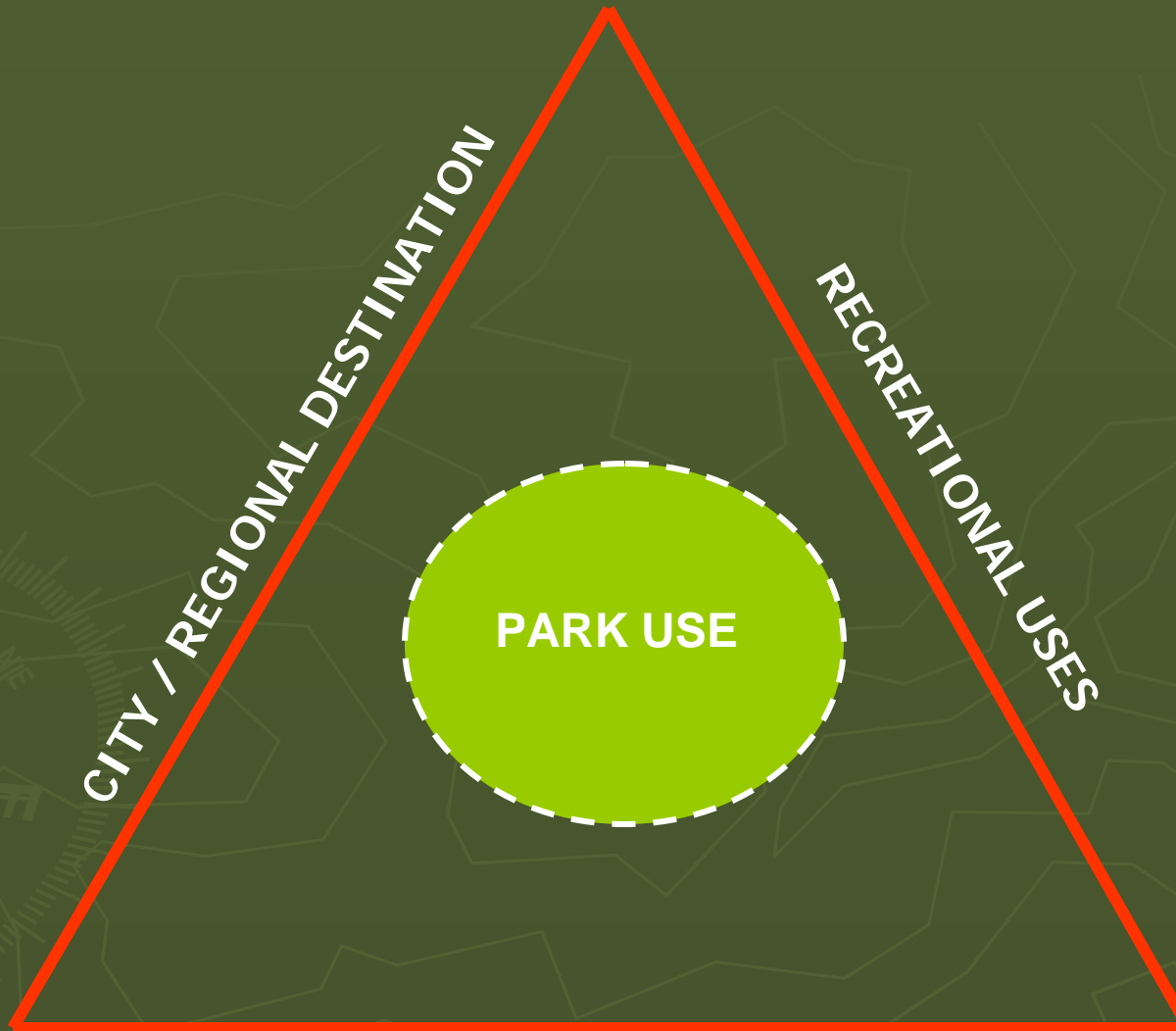
VAN DORN STREET

St. Stephens / St.  
Agnes School

WEST BRADDOCK ROAD



# Balancing User Needs



# Fort Ward Improvements Process

## Short Term Goals

- ▶ Define Park Uses
- ▶ Identify Challenges
- ▶ **Initiate Interim Resolutions**

## Long Term Goals

- ▶ Balance User Needs
- ▶ Future Master Planning Consideration



▶ Send written comments until March 27 to:

Dept. of Recreation, Parks & Cultural  
Activities

Attention: Laura Durham

1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria, VA 22314

E-mail: [laura.durham@alexandriava.gov](mailto:laura.durham@alexandriava.gov)