



MEMORANDUM

TO: Heidi Sussman, M-NCPPC

FROM: Molly Guenzer, LSG
703-821-2045 x110

DATE: March 1, 2010

PROJECT: Seneca Crossing Facility Plan
LSG JOB NO. 28041.02

RE: Meeting Minutes, Community Meeting #1, February 18, 2010

Present from the design team and M-NCPPC:

Heidi Sussman, M-NCPPC
Donald Brew, M-NCPPC Park Police
Wendy Hanley, M-NCPPC
Art Nelligan, M-NCPPC
Kim Paniati, M-NCPPC
Clare Runkles, M-NCPPC

Mark Gionet, LSG
Molly Guenzer, LSG
Dipti Gadgil, LSG
Mel Willis, Burgess and Niple
Matt Rescott, Staughan Environmental

Also see attached sign-in sheets.

1. The meeting convened at approximately 7:15 p.m. at the Upcounty Government Center. Over fifty community members attended.
2. Heidi Sussman opened the meeting by greeting all attendees, introducing the design team and Parks staff, summarizing the mission and projects of the Parks Division, and giving a brief description of the site and its context. She stated that the site was acquired for use as parkland by M-NCPPC in 1988 from Winchester Homes, the developer of the neighborhood now known as Cedar Valley. Heidi explained that the developer graded the site into three plateaus; that each plateau borders Brink Road and is approximately level with Brink Road; and that the future park was always envisioned to be accessed from Brink Road. She proceeded to describe the sides of the plateaus as steeply sloped except on the Brink Road frontage, including some steep slopes on the south sides, facing the neighborhood. Man-made drainage ways run between the plateaus, drop down to flow at the base of the plateaus along the site's southern boundary, and empty into a storm-water management area near the site's frontage along Seneca Forest Circle.
3. Mark Gionet described the Facility Plan process, defined a "local park", and described the site in detail. His presentation was supported by powerpoint graphics.
4. Matt Rescott presented the findings of the Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD). He repeated that the site is almost entirely engineered so there are few (if any) natural features. Matt said that in general the site is divided into three level open plateaus along Brink Road, divided by drainage-ways and bordered by steep slopes toward the south border of the park. These slopes drop down to man-made drainage-ways that exist all along this south side of the park, flowing into a storm water management area, which drains into an existing stream located entirely off-site. There are no wetlands on the site. Matt reported that there is one forest stand in the northwest corner of the site, apparently the result of a reforestation project; it is in poor health

with a great deal of invasive species. He mentioned that the remainder of existing trees on site are also apparent reforestation now in poor condition. There are no significant trees on-site.

5. Mel Willis spoke about SWM issues for this project and possible solutions. He stated that the park project would not alter drainage patterns on the site or downstream. He assured attendees that the project would not result in new or additional runoff into their back yards. There was a question from the audience concerning flooding from the drainage swale behind the 3rd house east of the stormwater pond. Mr. Willis stated that drainage will improve, since stormwater will be designed to infiltrate into the ground via bio-retention swales instead of flowing overland towards houses.
6. Mel Willis discussed transportation and access issues. He described roadway improvements completed a few years ago, including additional lanes and median improvements on Brink Road and sidewalk improvements along Brink Road. Brink Road currently has two existing median cuts, whose location will determine the placement of vehicular entrances to the park. There is also an existing curb cut from Seneca Crossing Drive into the west parcel of the park, but its usefulness is uncertain. If vehicular access to this area is required, and if the existing curb cut in this location does not meet sight distance requirements, a new curb cut located elsewhere would be needed.
7. Mark Gionet discussed typical considerations which shape a facility plan. He described a "three-legged stool" of fundamental questions for the plan: What will the site support? What does the community want? And what are the planning goals for the area? He summarized possible program elements for the park and presented four illustrative concepts showing possible arrangements of facilities typical for a local park. He also explained that, as a local park, Seneca Crossing would be for day use only and would not be lighted.
8. The meeting split up into five small groups for a twenty-minute brainstorming exercise. The meeting as a whole then re-convened and one member of each group presented the group's findings. (For results see attachment.)
9. The meeting closed with an impromptu speech by Officer Donald Brew, asking the public to contact the Park Police if they suspected any improper activity in any parks.
10. Members of the audience posed the following questions during various parts of the presentation. *Answers from the design team and M-NCPPC staff are shown in italics.*
 - Will the existing stream on site be preserved?
It is a man-made drainage way and will be retained.
 - Will the existing vegetation on site be preserved?
There is no significant vegetation in the site interior, and any important trees providing screening along the property lines will be preserved. Buffer landscaping will also be added all along the southern border of the park, between the park and the neighborhood.
 - Where will the main entrance into the park be located - on Brink Road or on Seneca Crossing Drive?
The main entrance(s) will be from Brink Road at one or both existing curb cut(s). It is possible that a secondary vehicular entrance will provide access from Seneca Crossing Drive into the smaller separate area of the park, if needed.

- Where will the drop-off areas be located?
The design team said they will study this issue as part of the facility planning process.
- Where will parking be located?
The design team said they will study this issue as part of the facility planning process, but it will be accessed directly from Brink Road.
- When was the property acquired? What is the history of the site? What was there before its current state?
The design team said that the property was acquired in 1998 from Winchester Homes as part of their proffer to build the adjacent neighborhood, now called Cedar Valley. The parcel has been slated for use as a local park since before the land transfer, and Winchester rough-graded the site to its current form in order to facilitate subsequent park development, including construction of sports fields. MNCPPC staff said that the grading filled the park site with excavation from the neighborhood construction, and the site may have been pasture land prior to grading by Winchester Homes.
- Does the site have any historical significance and if so how will that influence the design?
MNCPPC staff reported that the site has no historical significance.
- When will the park be built?
Mark Gionet explained that the current facility plan project will constitute only about 30% of the overall design process. At the earliest, construction of the park could start in five years.

11. The following comments were also received from the public over the course of the meeting:

- The project should include reforestation especially adjacent to houses.
- A traffic study should be conducted of traffic along Brink Road.
- There are already too many vehicles, from outside the neighborhood, going too fast, along Seneca Crossing Drive. Drivers use Seneca Crossing Drive to cut through the neighborhood (from Rt. 355 to Brink Road thus avoiding Ridge Road). This is a hazard to pedestrians including children from inside the neighborhood.
- Several attendees expressed concerns about conflicts between pedestrian and vehicular circulation within the park.
- Many attendees stressed the need for adequate parking to be included within the park.
- Little or no pedestrian access should be provided from Seneca Forest Circle into the park. Otherwise park visitors will park on the residential streets, instead of in the park, and take all the parking spaces.
- The elementary school should be used for overflow parking.
- The elementary school should not be used for overflow parking.
- Park noise that can be heard from the neighborhood should be kept to a minimum.
- Noisy elements such as tennis courts, playing fields, and parking should be located away from the neighborhood.
- The park should have amenities such as water fountains, bike stands, and benches.

- The park should provide restroom facilities.
- The landscaping at the park should be well-maintained.
- The facility should be well-lit at night. Mark Gionet and Heidi Sussman explained that local parks do not operate at night and the only lighting might be the minimum required for security.
- The park should be well-policed, possibly with its own dedicated officer, to prevent graffiti, vandalism, and other illicit activities such as have occurred at the elementary school.
- When was the property acquired?

12. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Attachments:
Breakout Group Results
Sign-in Sheets

**Seneca Crossing Local Park Facility Plan
Community Meeting #1
February 18, 2010**

BREAKOUT GROUP RESULTS

ALL RESPONSES BY GROUP

GROUP 1		
RANK	VOTES	COMMENT
1	15	Cricket (not multi-purpose field)
2	7	Discourage parking in neighborhood
2	7	Tennis
3	5	Buffer landscaping between homes (lots)
4	3	Skate Park
4	3	No pedestrian connection to neighborhood
4	3	No Baseball
4	3	Restroom Facility
4	3	Walking & biking trails in natural surroundings & landscaped areas
4	3	No Soccer
5	2	No dogs on playgrounds
5	2	Playground for tots and school aged kids
	1	Water fountain
	1	Yes Soccer
	1	Two parking entrances from Brink Road
	1	Adequate internal parking for facilities
	1	Consider cost of maintenance
	1	Pool
	1	Good policing
		Operating Budget + Key
		No dog area
		Trash Pick Up
		Trail Connections to Ridge Rd. Park & Black Hills Regional Park
		Safe Vehicular Access
		Emergency Phone Booths
		Adequate distance / separation of park elements from houses
		Restore to natural conditions
		Good Signage
		Dog Poo Cans - good Poo management

GROUP 2		
RANK	VOTES	COMMENT
1	24	Cricket Field
2	9	Bike path/trail
3	7	Football Field
4	5	Real rugby field with real goal posts
5	4	Many Tennis Courts
5	4	Maintain pleasant and wide buffer between park activities and homes
5	4	Address issues of traffic and speeding
5	4	Adequate parking/no parking in neighborhood for sports leagues/no major pedestrian access from neighborhood
	3	Water fountain and restrooms
	2	Children's play area (tot lot)
	2	Minimal/no added noise to homes
	1	No dog park - one at Ridge Road
	1	Reforestation
	1	No bright lighting - open in daylight only
	1	Basketball Court
	1	No playground due to vandalism problem
	1	No overflow parking at elementary school
	1	Address security issues (vandalism, drug use, loitering/night use)
	1	Consider impact of specific park activities on nearby housing prices
	1	Indoor activity hall/clubhouse/community center
		Picnic area/informal gathering
		Picnic shelters/larger gathering
		Consider program elements from standpoint of needs analysis
		Lacrosse Field
		Rain gardens
		Park should contribute to school academic performance/improvement

**Seneca Crossing Local Park Facility Plan
Community Meeting #1
February 18, 2010**

BREAKOUT GROUP RESULTS

ALL RESPONSES BY GROUP (continued)

GROUP 3		
RANK	VOTES	COMMENT
1	22	Cricket Field
2	14	Field support facilities
ROLLED UP	10	- Restrooms, vending machines, spectator seating, covered shelter
	3	- Drinking fountain
	1	- Picnic pavilion with grills & tables / gazebo / structured gathering space
3	5	Indoor Basketball Court
4	4	Adequate on-site parking - no parking on neighborhood streets - parking on Brink Road is okay
5	3	Tennis Courts
	2	Children's Play Area - separate toddler & older kids play areas
	2	Stormwater management/grading so that yards won't be flooded
	2	Shade trees (including around the cricket field) and landscaping
	1	Well maintained fields
		Pavilion for cricket where players can gather in bad weather
		Shelter for cricket players
		Walking Trails & bike trails
		Bleachers / Spectator Seating at playing fields
		Restrooms for Cricket
		Gazebo
		Soda machines/ vending machines
		Rectangular field (football or soccer)

GROUP 4		
RANK	VOTES	COMMENT
1	40	Cricket Field for team play - Teams from Mid-Atlantic Area - Cricket batting cages
2	4	Natural Bike Trails
3	3	Natural Tree Area - walk
4	1	Rugby Field
		Playground - nature oriented
		Tennis Courts
		Sand Volleyball court
		Adequate restrooms
		Don't close neighborhood access from Brink Rd. to Seneca Crossing Drive

GROUP 5		
RANK	VOTES	COMMENT
1	33	Cricket Field: 150 yd. diameter; 30+ parking spaces; longest games are 4 hrs; Batting Cage - can be w/in field; Bleachers; Not multi-use field
2	13	No Park - undeveloped open space - mowed
3	6	Walking/bike trails - soft surface
4	2	Rugby Field - rectangular field - could be multi-use
4	2	Discourage parking in the neighborhood and access to the park from the neighborhood
5	1	Traffic Study
5	1	Playground - up to 8 yrs. Old or 30 kids - Tots and Older Kids
5	1	Tennis Courts - lighted
5	1	Facilities - Restrooms
5	1	Rec Center - indoor
		Shelter for party/picnic
		Ample Parking - so no spillover into residential area
		Minimize pedestrian/vehicle conflicts
		Reforestation - could be buffer
		No Diamond Fields

**Seneca Crossing Local Park Facility Plan
Community Meeting #1
February 18, 2010**

BREAKOUT GROUP RESULTS

WINNING RESPONSES, BY GROUP

GROUP 1		
RANK	VOTES	COMMENT
1	15	Cricket (not multi-purpose field)
2	7	Discourage parking in neighborhood
2	7	Tennis
3	5	Buffer landscaping between homes (lots)
4	3	Skate Park
4	3	No pedestrian connection to neighborhood
4	3	No Baseball
4	3	Restroom Facility
4	3	Walking & biking trails in natural surroundings & landscaped areas
4	3	No Soccer
5	2	No dogs on playgrounds
5	2	Playground - tots and school aged

GROUP 2		
RANK	VOTES	COMMENT
1	24	Cricket Field
2	9	Bike path/trail
3	7	Football Field
4	5	Real rugby field with real goal posts
5	4	Many Tennis Courts
5	4	Maintain pleasant and wide buffer between park activities and homes
5	4	Address issues of traffic and speeding
5	4	Adequate parking/no parking in neighborhood for sports leagues/no major pedestrian access from neighborhood

GROUP 3		
RANK	VOTES	COMMENT
1	22	Cricket Field
2	14	Field support facilities - Restrooms, vending machines, spectator seating, covered shelter, drinking fountain, pavilion and picnicking
3	5	Indoor Basketball Court
4	4	Adequate on-site parking - no parking on neighborhood streets - parking on Brink Road is okay
5	3	Tennis Courts

GROUP 4		
RANK	VOTES	COMMENT
1	40	Cricket Field for team play - Teams from Mid-Atlantic Area - Cricket batting cages
2	4	Natural Bike Trails
3	3	Natural Tree Area - walk
4	1	Rugby Field
5		N/A

GROUP 5		
RANK	VOTES	COMMENT
1	33	Cricket Field: 150 yd. diameter; 30+ parking spaces; longest games are 4 hrs; Batting Cage - can be w/in field; Bleachers; Not multi-use field
2	13	No Park - undeveloped open space - mowed
3	6	Walking/bike trails - soft surface
4	2	Rugby Field - rectangular field - could be multi-use
4	2	Discourage parking in the neighborhood and access to the park from the neighborhood
5	1	Traffic Study
5	1	Playground - up to 8 yrs. Old or 30 kids - Tots and Older Kids
5	1	Tennis Courts - lighted
5	1	Facilities - Restrooms
5	1	Rec Center - indoor

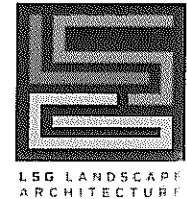
SIGN-IN SHEET
 SENECA CROSSING LOCAL PARK
 Public Workshop



February 18, 2010
 7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.
 Up-County Government Center

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SIGN-IN SHEET
 SENECA CROSSING LOCAL PARK
 Public Workshop



February 18, 2010
 7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.
 Up-County Government Center

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SIGN-IN SHEET
 SENECA CROSSING LOCAL PARK
 Public Workshop



February 18, 2010
 7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.
 Up-County Government Center

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