



Event: WHEATON CLARIDGE LOCAL PARK COMMUNITY MEETING

Purpose: Renovation Project Review

Date: May 12, 2015

Time: 7:00 pm

Montgomery Parks Project Manager: Brian Lewandowski, brian.lewandowski@montgomeryparks.org

Attendees:

M-NCPPC Montgomery County Department of Parks:

Bill Tyler, Parks Division Chief, MC Parks - Southern Parks

Kristi Williams, Division Chief, MC Parks – Public Affairs and Community Partnerships

Michael Ma, Acting Chief of Park Department, MC Parks - Park Development Division

Brian Lewandowski, Project Manager, Engineer, MC Parks - Park Development Division

Ching Fang Chen, Landscape Architect, MC Parks - Park Development Division

Alex Girr-Borrayo, Public Outreach Specialist, Public Affairs and Community Partnerships

John Boyd, Park Manager, MC Parks – Southern Wheaton Region

Cornelia Sarvey, Water Quality Manager, MC Parks - Southern Region Parks

M-NCPPC Montgomery County Department of Planning:

Amy Lindsey, Planner Coordinator, Area 2 Planning Division

Agenda:

- Review previous concept plan
- Present revised plan
 - More open space
 - Upgrades to basketball court
 - Parking
 - Playground
- Q&A

Background:

Wheaton Claridge Local Park, established before 1959, was developed between two creeks and sits on over 20 acres of mature forest. In February, 2014, initial review presented to community consisting of playground renovation and bridge replacement only. Public interest resulted in second meeting to follow up with community on project status.

- Community concerns
 - Lack of visibility/ open space
 - Better storm water management
 - Playground upgrade
 - ADA Access
 - ADA Parking
 - Basketball court
- Park Concerns
 - Numerous people choice trails
 - Upgrading stream buffers
 - Preserving existing forest
 - Meeting a POR
 - Total cost
 - Ideal timeline

Goals to achieve

- Bridge
 - Initial bridge would be renovated to an overlook and sitting area
 - A “new” bridge will become maintenance and ADA access to building, playground, and basketball

- Resurface basketball court and fencing
- Develop woodland nature play area behind the building
- Maintain community open space in front of the building
- Defined sanctioned natural surface trails
- Provide safe shared use access with vehicles from Claridge Road into park for pedestrian and cyclist
- Trail ways will be identified signed and marked. Natural surface with short gravel transitions at roadway connections to identify entrances which will be maintained and operated by parks
- Signage will be developed on Veirs Mill Road to better identify park
- Upgrade lighting and electrical system
 - Transformer and underground line for more consistent support and fewer outages
 - Lighting on entrance and drive way to park for safety and efficiency
- Storm water management
 - Reestablish naturalized wetland area near parking lot, enhancing stream buffer with native plants to treat impervious water runoff and promote stream health.
 - Stabilizing stream
 - 10 years ago MCDEP recommended stream stabilization opportunities for restoration caused by upstream untreated runoff and constructed stream restoration project in Wheaton Claridge Park
 - Additional stream bank improvements through a pollution prevention funding may be incorporated as a small separate project
- Non-native invasive
 - Targeting three areas of removing non-native invasive
 - Stream area
 - Adjacent to picnic area
 - At playground
 - Community involvement is encouraged through the Volunteer Services Department and Weed Warrior Program
 - Go to parksvolunteers.org to get more information and sign-up to help
- Woodland play area
 - Forest playground themed for 2-5 yr old and 5-12 yr old
 - Music play around stream overlook bridge
 - Woodland Trail Nature Play
 - Providing informal and creative elements for imaginative play
- Existing open space in environmental constrained area
 - Establish area into long term, self-sustainable, more naturalized area
 - Renovate as a meadow to attract birds, insects, and wildlife
 - Interpretive naturalist opportunity
 - Implement various amenities including bird houses, park benches
 - Providing stepping stone path and seating
- Picnic area
 - Develop a community or family gathering
 - Renovate existing fireplace structure and provide ADA access
 - Implement amenities including picnic tables and grill
- Next Steps:
 - Timeline
 - Design plan and permits Summer 2015-Summer 2016
 - Pending funding availability start construction in FY-17
- Construction will be done in parts, as funding is available through M-NCPPC Parks Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement (PLAR) funding sources
 - East side of project construction costs (\$800K - \$1mil)
 - West side of project construction costs (\$600K- \$800K)
- Playground is main priority

Public Comments:

- Clarifying development of natural surface trail
 - Snow removal maintenance will not be coordinated on natural surface trails
 - North and east side (from Broadview spur off of school property access path)
 - Best forest habitat. Existence of those trails can impact the wildlife habitat
 - Recommendation to not build this part of natural surface trail
 - Other comments recommended to keep this part of natural surface trail
- Invasive species are in more than three areas targeted and should be reviewed
- Parking for disabled too far
 - Recommend to review and bring closer
 - Provide for vehicular drop-off/pick-up at building during permitted events
- Stream Water testing
 - Any type of testing would need to be requested to Montgomery County Department of Environmental Planning (MCDEP)
- Playground
 - Concern of “natural playground” will take away from “natural play” since there are great resources already in park
 - Clarification on what is Recharge
 - Open graded stone gravel for drainage below wood fiber surfacing
 - Rock Hop Activity (safety concern) type of rock and injury concern
- Request for electricity at basketball court for lights at court during evening hours
 - Inquiry to also provide night use of basketball court to PAB rental
- Adult exercise equipment
 - Requested by citizen and pointed out that this was in previous concept
- Question on the purpose of moving the trails away from the stream
 - Concern that stream experience will be lost vs the sustainability of the trail
- Overall consensus very supportive of the plan
- How can community rally for support and get the park project funded and construction expedited
 - Contact Planning Board Chair Casey Anderson through the commissioners’ office at MCP-Chair@MNCPPC-mc.org and advocate for support
 - Email Kristi.williams@montgomeryparks.org to coordinating an advocacy group
 - Comment or speak at future Public CIP Forums on behalf of the Wheaton Claridge Local Park renovation project or provide online comments at MontgomeryParks.org website
 - Contact your Montgomery County Council members and advocate for support
- Request that presentation to be posted on line for community review

Other Informational Comment:

- Stream has a name; Joseph’s Run