Park Planning & Stewardship Division
Park and Trail Planning Section

Master Plan Update for the Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park

M-NCPCC Montgomery Parks
Staff Draft Presentation
July 17, 2014
Montgomery County Planning Board
Purpose of the Master Plan Update

- Determine the Updated Vision for the Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park
- Determine the final location for the Ovid Hazen Wells Carousel (temporarily located in Wheaton Regional Park)
- Develop a list of supporting buildings, infrastructure and amenities needed to support the carousel
- Explore options for the future Clarksburg Community Recreation and Aquatics Center in the park location
- Develop a park connection to other public facilities in the area including Cedar Grove Elementary School and Damascus Recreational Park
- Expand the existing trail system
- Develop recommendations for the uses of the two historic properties within the park – the Ned Watkins and Oliver Watkins Houses
- Develop a Preliminary Program of Requirements (PPOR) for the central and eastern area of the park that would include and complement the strategic plan for the Red Wiggler Community Farm
Guiding Documents

- 1994 Clarksburg Master Plan and Hyattstown Special Study Area
- 1995 Master Plan for Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park
- 2002 Red Wiggler Farm Partnership Agreement
- 2008 Countywide Park Trails Plan
Location

Regional Parks
- Little Bennett
- Black Hill

Recreational Parks
- Ovid Hazen Wells
- Damascus
- Ridge Road
- Goshen

Special Park
- Dowden’s Ordinary

Local Parks

Neighborhood Parks

Urban Parks
The Park Today
The Park Today – 3 distinct areas
The Park Today

Active Recreation Area

- 2 soccer fields
- 1 baseball field
- 2 softball fields
- 1 group picnic area with 3 picnic shelters that accommodate 100 people each
- 1 large playground
- Portable restrooms provided from April through October
- Looped hard surfaced trails
- Parking for 285 cars
The Park Today

Central Area

- The historic Ned Watkins House, where Ovid and Hallie lived, is now a park rental house
- A historic bank barn
- Historic outbuildings – corn crib, smokehouse
- An existing pond
- A gravel entry drive
- Agricultural fields

Ned Watkins House

*Constructed in 1892 for Ned Watkins, a farmer from Cedar Grove.*

*Ovid and Hallie Wells moved here in 1952.*

*The property is currently rented.*

*The building is designated as individual resources on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation with an associated historic environmental setting of 11 acres.*
The Park Today

Eastern Area

- The historic Oliver Watkins House
- A historic bank barn
- A gravel entry drive
- Reforestation Area
- The Red Wiggler Community Farm
  - Staff Offices
  - The Solar House Office and Residence
  - Organic Food Gardens

Oliver Watkins House

The house was built by Oliver Watkins, a store keeper in Cedar Grove in 1851 before his marriage. It was later updated in the 1870’s.

The house is currently vacant.

The building is designated as an individual resources on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation with an associated historic environmental setting of 2.6 acres.
Where is Cedar Grove?

Part of the Clarksburg District

- Cedar Grove began as the store and residence of Oliver T. Watkins.
- It is a rural crossroads community.
Where is Cedar Grove?

The Park consists of two farms formerly owned by brothers Oliver T. and Edward Watkins
Oliver Talmadge Watkins (1828-1894)

- 1876-1880: Average value of improvements in Cedar Grove, $377
- 1876-1880: Value of improvements owned by Oliver T. Watkins, $1200

A substantial portion of this value came from his mercantile operations, but he also had several outbuildings including a bank barn and smokehouse.
Edward “Ned” King Watkins (1837-1913)

- A two-story cross gabled vernacular Victorian frame house, built in 1892
- The farm includes a bank barn, smokehouse, chicken house, and corncrib

The Historic Ned Watkins house - above
A copy of Ned and Sophronia Watkins’ marriage certificate - right
Cedar Grove

- At least 37, predominantly male, head of household
- 127 Children, 18 and under, including 2 sets of twins. Many older sons are farm laborers
- 201 White residents
- 23 African American residents
- Average age of farm owner was 43.6 years old

Pictured: Hezekiah Barber and Family
Occupations

- **Blacksmiths**: John T. Majors, George Miles
- **Wheelwright**: George Miles
- **Undertaker**: George Miles
- **Carpenter**: F. M. Waters, Zach Page
- **General Merchandise**: O. T. Watkins
- **Postmaster**: O.T. Watkins
- **Squire**: Joseph Sibley
- **Teacher**: William Bowman
- **Farmers**: Appleby, Baker, Barber, Baxter, Beall, Bowman, Brewer, Burns, Darby, Dickins, Gue, Harris, Hilton, King, Leaman, Lewis, Matthews, Miles, Neel, Nicholson, Page, Poole, Pugh, Purdum, Riggs, Sibley, Snyder, Thomas, Thompson, Waters, Watkins, Williams, Windsor, Woodfield, Young

*Pictured: B.F. Watkins, brother of Oliver T. and Edward*
Honey

- Six farm owners produced 305 lbs. of honey in Cedar Grove
Trees

Orchard (top)
- Average of 2.4 acres
- Average of 68 fruit bearing trees
- Average production 309 - *apples only*

Forest Products (below)
- 17 cords average amount of wood cut
- $41 average value
Ovid Hazen Wells (1894-1956)

- 1918: Moved from Tennessee to Washington, D.C.
- 10 years as White House security – now known as Secret Service (right)
- 1940: bought the farm to begin his retirement
- 1952: made the farm his permanent residence
- Member of the Valley Star Lodge of Masons
- Attended the Salem Methodist Church in Cedar Grove
- Obituary listed him as a “prominent farmer” in Cedar Grove
The Carousel

New Smithsonian Carousel Delights Youngsters on Mall

By Claude Korewski
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Smithsonian's latest addition to its musical instruments exhibit is one you can ride. It is a carousel which qualified as a genuine instrument because of its band organ heart.

But to the kids who pay 35 cents a ride it was just a case of a merry-go-round by any other name. When a mother started explaining its exhibitional importance, little Thomas just bolted for the ticket window.

There mustachioed carousel concessionaire, Jim Wells, pulled out a ticket from a Christmas cookie tin and escorted the rider to his mount and strapped him in.

The belts are Wells' only compromise with the original equipment. Otherwise the machine looks very much like it did when it was made in 1922. The Wurlitzer machine is located in front of the Smithsonian's original building on Jefferson Drive sw. It can spin 48 children on its horses, dogs, pigs, and assorted fowl.

If the kids get bored with the ride, they can always look at the 1922 pinata painted on the awning over the engine housing.

Or they can listen to the band organ which comps and bangs during each ride. Restored by Wells, the old organ looks like a Rube Goldberg collection of connecting plastic tubes, wooden pipes, and bellows.

It can play ten tunes to an automatic, self-reversing roll. Each roll costs $1.

Wells said yesterday he would like to see the merry-go-round become a regular feature of the Mall and hopes its present summer experimental run is successful.

1967 Washington Post article
Opportunities

The existing rolling agricultural fields and historic settings make it possible to respect the wishes of the Wells to have this area maintained as a permanent open space, and park and recreation area for public benefit.
Potential Site Constraints

- The stream and wetland crossings
- The street crossings
- The available water and sewer infrastructure
What we have heard you want so far …

The Carousel – this is a given and required by the deed

The top 5 requests

1. The future Clarksburg Recreation and Aquatics Center including senior center - 27
2. Maintain natural areas - 15
3. More play areas with more equipment - 13
4. Disc – Frisbee golf - 13
5. A splash park – 11

Additional Amenities Requested

- Outdoor spaces for events and open (purposeful) green space
- More organic farming areas like Red Wiggler Farm
- More trails – allow for a 5k route
- More picnic areas with barbeque grills
- Dog park
- Community gardens
- Basketball courts/tennis courts
- A cricket field
Proposed Plan Recommendations
Active Recreation Area

The Vision

To have a unique and attractive family destination area. A place where people of all ages want to come and spend an entire day.

Preliminary Program of Requirements

- Supporting structures for the carousel
  - The round house
  - A building to accommodate ticket sales, restrooms and meeting rooms for birthday parties, etc.
  - Connection to water and sewer and electricity
- A larger, themed play area including activities for Teens
- A splash pad or similar unique synergy creating amenity
Active Recreation Area

Preliminary Program of Requirements (continued)

- Terraced seating lounge and additional picnic areas
- Food concession areas
- Community Open Space
- Dog Park
- Sledding Hill
- Connection to the Ovid Hazen Wells Trail
- Additional parking for 270 cars
- A maintenance area – 2500 sq. ft.
  - A 30’ x 55’ building, a 20’ x 45’ fence enclosure sited so maintenance vehicles do not need to traverse a public parking lot. This area should be able to function without interruption to visitors.
Ovid Hazen Wells Carousel

Supporting infrastructure

- The carousel round house
- A building to accommodate ticket sales
- Restrooms and meeting rooms suitable for birthday parties, etc.
Active Recreation Area

Teen Play Area
Active Recreation Area

Splash Pad
Active Recreation Area

Food Concessions and Additional Picnic Areas
Active Recreation Area

Sledding Hill/Open Green Space Areas
Active Recreation Area

Lounge Terrace
Active Recreation Area

Dog Park
Active Recreation Area

11.98 acres Proposed Parkland

- Additional parkland for park amenities such as a cricket field, basketball/tennis courts, etc.
- Should be included as a site to study for the future Clarksburg Community Recreation and Aquatics Center.
Central Area

1. Reforestation Buffer
2. Watkins Historic Area
3. Meadow and Natural Surface Trails
4. Ovid Hazen Wells Park Trail with self-guided interpretation
Watkins Historic Area

The Vision – to create a unique event area using the historic Ned Watkins House and the surrounding historic structures. The house will be the central event venue and is envisioned to host events for 150 – 200 guests such as weddings, graduations, farm to table fund raisers and organic food cooking demonstrations.

Preliminary Program of Requirements

- Upgrade the Ned Watkins House and bank barn to be accessible
- Add a tent pad
- Add a prefab drop-in restroom facility
- Create additional parking for events
- Upgrade existing access road into the property
Central Area

Weddings, graduations, family gatherings
Central Area

Farm-to-table fundraisers and other events
Central Area

Retirement Parties
Central Area

Additional parking for events
Central Area

1. Reforestation Buffer
2. Watkins Historic Area
3. Meadow and Natural Surface Trails
4. Ovid Hazen Wells Trail with Self-guided Interpretation
Central Area

Longwood Gardens Meadow Garden

http://longwoodgardens.org/gardens/meadow-garden
Central Area

Longwood Gardens Meadow in summer

http://longwoodgardens.org/gardens/meadow-garden
Central Area

Longwood Gardens Meadow in fall

http://longwoodgardens.org/gardens/meadow-garden
Central Area

Natural Surface trails
Eastern Area

1. Edible Plantings
2. Edible Plantings
3. Reforestation
4. Solar House
5. Red Wiggler Farm
6. Home Food Garden Center
7. Community Garden
8. Ovid Hazen Wells Trail and Trailhead Parking
9. Wetland Overlook & Self-guided Interpretation
Proposed Plan Recommendations
Home Food Gardens and the Red Wiggler Farm

The Vision

To create a program that complements the Red Wiggler Community Farm strategic plan and that enables the Oliver Watkins Historic Area to become the site for a Home Food Gardens program.

For the Oliver Watkins Farm, the Vision is to capture the enthusiasm of and assist with sustaining the local food movement by developing a Home Food Gardens program which is designed to demonstrate the techniques and importance of growing fruits and vegetables in home gardens.

Home Food Gardens programs also focus on the advantages of home grown food and edible landscapes.
Oliver Watkins House

Preliminary Program of Requirements

- Complete build out for the interior of the Oliver Watkins House for classrooms and offices. Locate an area open to the public for historic interpretation of the house
- Upgrade the house and bank barn to be accessible
- Create additional parking for the program
- Upgrade the existing access road to the property
- Provide a community garden as a learning plot
- Provide community garden plots
- Install demonstration garden areas and interpretation
- Upgrade utilities to include WSSC water and sewer
- Install security and deer fence
- Install irrigation
- Build maintenance complex to support the facility
- Upgrade the main entrance to MD Rte. 27 Ridge Road
Expanded Trail System

The Vision

To create a major trail connector from Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park to other public amenities such as Little Bennett Regional Park, Black Hills Regional Park, and Clarksburg Town Center. The trail will also function as a connector within the park, linking the Active Recreation Area with the Central and Eastern Areas.

Preliminary Program of Requirements:

- Provide a trail wide enough for pedestrians, bikers and equestrians
- As much as possible, have trail alignment use existing stream crossings and stay out of environmental buffers
- Expand the greenway east towards Damascus Recreational Park for a trail connection using environmentally un-constrained lands
- Develop a trailhead and parking area along MD Rte. 27 Ridge Road
Eastern Area

Longwood Gardens Trail Bridge

http://longwoodgardens.org/gardens/meadow-garden
Eastern Area

1. Edible Plantings
2. Edible Plantings
3. Reforestation
4. Solar House
5. Red Wiggler Farm
6. Home Food Garden Center
7. Community Garden
8. Ovid Hazen Wells Trail and Trailhead Parking
9. Wetland Overlook & Self-guided Interpretation
## Park Master Plan Update Schedule

### Completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>DECEMBER 2013</td>
<td>Began staff meetings to review background.</td>
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<tr>
<td>JANUARY 27, 2014</td>
<td>Attended Clarksburg Civic Association Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEBRUARY 19, 2014</td>
<td>Attended UpCounty Recreation Advisory Board Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCH 29, 2014</td>
<td>Attended Clarksburg Kite Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>APRIL 28, 2014</td>
<td>Attended the UpCounty Citizens Advisory Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2014</td>
<td>Attended the Park Ridge HOA Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 22, 2014</td>
<td>Ovid Hazen Wells Park Master Plan - Issues and Outreach Report: Presented the issues heard to date from the public, the plan objectives, and the outreach strategy and date for the public meeting for the Planning Board to approve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 22, 2014</td>
<td>Attended the Arora Hills HOA meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 28, 2014</td>
<td>Public Meeting – Little Bennett Elementary School Cafeteria - 7:30 – 9:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUNE 16, 2014</td>
<td>Public Meeting – Arora Hills Community Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JULY 17, 2014</td>
<td>Staff Draft to the Planning Board</td>
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### Future Public Input Dates

- **30 day minimum review period for the public**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 2, 2014</td>
<td>Public Hearing at the Planning Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 2014</td>
<td>Worksession #1 with Planning Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 2014</td>
<td>Planning Board approves plan</td>
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</table>
Thank you!

**Recommended Action**

Approval to publish the Staff Draft for the purposes of a Planning Board Hearing to be scheduled on October 2, 2014
Figure 10 - 2008 Countywide Park Trails Plan, Seneca Greenway Trail Corridor