



POPS Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

May 03, 2017

6:30pm-9:00pm

Courthouse Plaza

In attendance:

POPS Advisory Committee

- Caroline Haynes, Park and Recreation Commission
- Jane Rudolph, Department of Parks and Recreation
- Dean Amel, Urban Forestry Commission
- Claire O’Dea, E2C2
- Lisa Grandle, Department of Parks and Recreation
- Elizabeth Gearin, Park and Recreation Commission
- Jane Siegel, Planning Commission
- Heather Coccozza, Sports Commission
- Leo Sarli, Arlington Commission for the Arts (Alternate)

Absent:

- Janet Kopenhaver, Arlington Commission for the Arts
- Jim Feaster, NCAC
- Carrie Johnson, At Large
- William Gillen, APS

Department of Parks and Recreation Staff:

- Erik Beach
- Irena Lazic



Summary:

On May 3, 2017, WRT and DPR facilitated a meeting with the POPS Advisory Committee to discuss the following topics: level of service, dog parks and dog runs, synthetic turf fields, field lighting, and unprogrammed spaces.

Level of Service

WRT presented a refresher on the level of service methodology used in the PSMP to develop both population-based and access standards. A few recommended population-based standards had been lowered since the last presentation. Committee members felt this was a valid strategy, as there are necessary trade-offs given the County's space-constrained nature, and that this reality should be explained in the text of the document.

Synthetic Turf Fields and Field Lighting

DPR presented fiscal and maintenance benefits of synthetic fields. Committee members agreed that these should be included in the document in order to bolster the County's new policies.

Staff clarified that all synthetic fields that get built or converted will also be outfitted with lighting, in order to maximize the benefits of the substantial investment of installing a synthetic playing field. Staff also pointed out that while some grass fields will be converted to synthetic in order to extend play time and field resilience, some fields that are currently permit-only will be converted to permit-takes-priority, expanding community use.

The Committee agreed the plan will need to include a statement acknowledging the issue of community impact from field lighting and pledging to utilize the most appropriate technology to mitigate impacts as much as possible. A similar statement will also be included concerning synthetic turf field technology and materials. Members acknowledged that these statements should not bind the County to one particular technology, as the industries are constantly changing and improving.

Dog Parks and Dog Runs

The Committee discussed the proposed adjustments to existing dog park standards and the new standards for smaller dog runs set forth in the plan. Staff clarified that while dog parks are not currently allowed on private property, the County is looking to adjust regulations to allow private developers to provide small dog runs.

Unprogrammed Spaces

The Committee agreed that referring to these spaces as "casual use spaces" is more accurate than the term "unprogrammed spaces." Members were also positive about the recommended ways to amplify the importance of creating and preserving these spaces by elevating it to an action of its own, adding a sidebar, and highlighting it as a priority recommendation. Members recognized the difficulty of trying to



map these spaces so as to perform a level of service analysis on them, since there is not yet a clear definition and since there are no existing benchmarks (in terms of acreage per population, for example) for casual use spaces against which to measure Arlington. It was suggested that this is an opportunity to create a benchmark and measure the County's future progress against it.

The examples of casual use spaces provided by Committee members before the meeting tended to fit into the following categories: general park spaces, wooded areas, plazas and esplanades, school grounds, and fields. Some members stressed that because these are fairly distinct types of spaces and not easy to substitute one for another, it could be difficult to perform a level of service analysis on them as if they were the same type of space. Some members were wary of too narrowly or explicitly defining casual use spaces, suggesting it is better defined by what types of activities occur there, rather than how it is designed.

Other ideas that were discussed were creating a concept analogous to the "percent for art" requirement, which elevates public art as an important element of the public realm, and the potential to crowdsource ideas from Arlington residents about what constitutes a casual use space.