

Parks Committee

November 7, 2014 Presentation Information

PL4PG: 10,000 Signatures

10,000 people from all around the DC area signed a petition asking that Arlington provide more affordable housing. That deserves to be taken seriously.

BUT it should not have justified dropping all other priorities for our public lands. It should not have justified amnesia among our elected decision makers about decades of citizen involvement and staff planning on the use of public lands.

How did that happen?

Source (evaluation of the PL4PG policy by civic activist Suzanne Sundberg)

PL4PG: Of Course It's About Parks

Site Park Involved?

Tier 1

Rosslyn Highlands Park Y
Courthouse Square and Plaza An intended and needed park
North Woodbury Park Y
Gables North Rolfe Street An intended and needed park

Tier 2

Fire Station 8 (Salt Dome) Y
Edison Complex No, But POOR use of a school.
Lubber Run Park Y
Adjacent to Jennie Dean Y

Schools Tier

Wilson School Y
Thomas Jefferson Y, in the initial proposal
Career Center ?

Arlington County Parks Investment Dropping

Arlington Land Acquisition Funding

1995 to 2004 - about 4 million dollars per year

2005 to 2014 - about 2 million dollars per year

Source: C2 memo of June 3, 2014, from the Arlington Department of Parks and Recreation to John Vistadt (*see also an analysis of the history of park planning and investment by park advocate Duke Banks*)

Arlingtonians Speak Out Against Construction of Housing, etc, in their Parks

Recently, Arlington requested public comment on County government's new "Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines." County leadership reviewed the comments and concluded: "many commenters agree with these goals and practices."

In contrast to the official analysis, a volunteer evaluation found the following:

"On the question of using parks, park land and/or community centers for affordable housing, the comments were overwhelmingly opposed. For example, of the 150 comments that mentioned Lubber Run and/or the Lubber Run Community Center (identified as a "Tier 2" site in the County Manager's May 14 report), more than 90% of the comments were opposed to using it for affordable housing. Similarly, more than 95% of comments that expressed an opinion on Jennie Dean park were opposed to using it to accommodate housing.

More generally, about 95% of commenters who expressed an opinion about using parks for housing were opposed to the idea (*emphasis added*)."

Source: Analysis of the 600 comments received by Arlington County in response to the County's "Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines."
(Analysis by civic activist Max Lyons).

What can I Do? Advocate for Parks !

At the December meeting CivFed will vote on several resolutions responsive to the current threats to our public green spaces. The Parks Committee has authored one of those resolutions. We hope you like it. **SEND FOUR DELEGATES** from your neighborhood to vote for the resolution(s) that most represent your neighborhood's needs and vision.

Other ideas:

Tell the County Board that development of parks is off the table.

Tell APS to act in compliance with public expectations that they are stewards, not exploiters, of our green spaces. Here for a miserable example of current APS practice is a photo of recent construction at Ashlawn where APS cut down a grove of trees, and let the bare earth erode into the Four Mile Run. What a lesson for Arlington's children!

Finally, and most importantly — work with your neighbors, don't throw them under the bus. Don't accept plans that pit neighborhoods against each other: one neighborhood wins / one neighborhood loses. Instead strive for outcomes that work for all your fellow Arlingtonians