

**REPORT
OF
VIRGINIA AVENUE PARK STAKEHOLDERS MEETING
*January 23, 2019***

Welcome and Introductions

Participants: Will Sullivan, John Manley, Jenni Lancaster, Katie Rotramel (HRA), Scott Kratz, Jim Tanious (NCC), Jeanette Irwin, Maddy McPhee (Casey Trees), Marlon Smoker (Jacobs Eng), Kyle Ohlson (DDOT), Deborah Hanlon, and Kirsten Oldenburg

Updates on Park Renovations

- CSX—According to an email received from Brandon Knapp of CSX on 1/22:

“We are just about wrapped in VA Ave. Park. However, there are a couple of remaining items we are working on: Water Service – The fountains are installed and we are working with DC Water to provide water service. We’ve been told that they should have it in service sometime this week. Lighting – The poles are installed and have temporary heads on them to provide lighting. The permanent heads are scheduled to be installed next week. Other than the water service, I believe the Dog Park should be ready to open.

We’ve seeded the park area a couple of times, but due to the weather there has been limited growth. We have our temporary construction fencing around the area and I would suggest we keep it up until the Spring when we will reseed and get some better growth and stabilization.”

Marlon Smoker and Kyle Ohlson informed the group that there is a 2-year warranty on landscaping. And, suggested that they will ask CSX to organize a walk through of the Park soon.

- DPR—A DPR representative was not present at the meeting to provide an update
- Casey Trees—Maddy McPhee said she is working with CSX and DPR. The Arbor Day Foundation donation to the Park will cover eliminating invasive trees and shrubs and leveling the small mounds as well as planting trees. The foundation wants the work to be completed by June 2019

Organizing the VA Dog Park

Will Sullivan (and Anna Sandoval) have taken the lead in setting up a group of volunteers to manage the Dog Park. Will said that they have held an organizing meeting and will be meeting again to formulate by-laws as required by DPR. Dog Park gate is unlocked and the area is being used. The VA Dog Park group has to take on the daily maintenance of the park including pay for trash and poop bags, hoses, cleaning fluid and locking and unlocking the park. The group will be seeking donations but expect DPR to supply a “starter kit.”

Will reported that a fence has a 10-inch gap that dogs could get under. Marlon said they will inform CSX of this problem.

Update on the VA Community Garden

Jenni Lancaster and John Manley, both Community Garden volunteers, said that the Garden was established in 2004 and currently has about 60 plots and a waiting list for them. CSX had installed a curb cut/ramp off 9th Street into the Garden. There currently is a problem of standing water. The situation will be monitored over time to determine if it is due to the CSX grading in the area north of the garden and the lack of grass thereon.

Proposal to Add a Kid's Playground.

Jim Tanious described the history of the National Community Church (NCC) from its beginnings of holding Sunday services in the Union Station movie theater. The church now owns the Miracle Theater on Barracks Row where it holds services and has purchased the Navy Car Barn (aka Blue Castle) historic building between 7th and 8th on M Street SE. They are currently renovating the one-story annex at 7th & M to add a large theater space and will be renovating the building's 7th & L corner to add a Child Development Center (CDC).

Under the Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) CDC regulations, NCC must provide an outdoor play space of about 2,400 square feet and have proposed to DPR that this be situated in VA Park. NCC will donate the cost of the playground and DPR will design and install it. Cost of maintenance will apparently be the responsibility of DPR.

Meeting participants discussed various locations for the playground using an illustrative map provided by Brent Sisco of DPR showing the amount of space that 2,500 would consume. Most suggested locations generated some negative feedback. Kirsten said she would be talking with the residents on the 900 block of Potomac Avenue, which is the southern end of the Park. When the Park was designed one objective was to situate areas that would generate noise away from the southern edge or, in the case, of the dog park, off to the east of the residential block.

Possible loss of \$80K granted by the CSX Mitigation Fund in 2017

On behalf of VA Park, Kirsten explained that she applied to the CSX Mitigation Fund in 2017 for \$109,021 for renovation of the non-CSX portion of the Park and for various needs such as benches. The Fund committee granted \$83,480 but NSCP charged a 10% fee for the use of its 501c3, reducing the award to \$75,132.

The Fund award required the signing of an MOU with NSCP, the administrator of the fund. But this could not be executed as there was no place at the time to deposit the funds nor an established organization to accept the funds for the use indicated. Kirsten worked with NSCP to figure out a way to expend the funds. CSX was not able to do so as they had no authority to work outside the LOD. Setting up an agreement with a CSX subcontractor proved impossible because we would have to pay for engineering drawings and obtain all the required permits. Now NSCP is requesting that this matter be resolved by the end of January or NSCP will consider using the funds for others.

Election of FVAP Officers and Directors

Members at the meeting voted unanimously to elect the following as officers: Kirsten Oldenburg, President; Deborah Hanlon, Secretary; and John Manley, Treasurer. And, voted unanimously to elect the following as Directors: Katie Rotramel, Michael Stevens (Capitol Riverfront BID), Jenni Lancaster (Community Garden), and Will Sullivan (Dog Park).

The next step is to gain 501c3 status for FVAP. Kirsten told the members that she and Deborah Hanlon have already started the process; Step 1 was to register FVAP as a corporation with DC DCRA. This cost a fee of \$80 and was paid by Deborah (who expects FVAP to pay her back \$70 with \$10 applied as her initiation and annual membership). The IRS filing fee will cost about \$290. Thus, FVAP needs to raise about \$400 to continue the process. Since this amount equals 40 new FVAP members at \$10 each, Kirsten suggested that all current members ask their friends to join.

As of the end of the meeting, FVAP had 11 members who have paid the \$5 initiation fee (\$55). Six of them have paid the annual dues of \$5 (\$30) for a total of \$85.

The meeting was concluded about 830pm