

Williamsburg Field Site Evaluation Work Group Charge

Adopted July 21, 2015

Amended July 19, 2016

Background:

In September 2013, the Arlington County Board requested the County Manager initiate a Williamsburg Field Site Evaluation Work Group (WFWG) **“to lead a robust community process to evaluate whether or not to light the Williamsburg synthetic fields.”** The Board directed that:

“Included in that evaluation, although not limited to these topics, shall be whether the environmental, noise and light spillage impacts of, for the first time, lighting one or two fields at Williamsburg can be mitigated sufficiently to preserve the character of the neighborhood and provide a reasonable quality of life to the nearest neighbors – both those whose property abuts the Williamsburg property and those who live across N. 36th street from the site. The members of the Working Group shall be appointed by the County Board and include, at a minimum, near neighbors, the Rock Spring Civic Association, appropriate County commissions and school and recreation field users. The working group shall conclude its work by June of 2016 in order to allow full and appropriate review of any recommendations prior to consideration of the lights question as part of the scheduled Williamsburg Use Permit Review at the September 2016 County Board meeting.

Proposed Timeline:

- County Board appoints WFWG members - July 2015.
- WFWG initial meeting July - August 2015.
- WFWG and staff establish full meeting schedule - September 2015.
- WFWG hiatus effective April 21 and will reconvene in September 2016.
- **Staff will finalize Fact Finding requests discussed in April 21 meeting with County Board Liaison to the WFWG, Christian Dorsey; WFWG Chairman Erik Gutshall; WFWG representatives and County staff support. Those fact finding requests will be completed and posted three weeks prior to the WFWG reconvening in September (April through July) August date TBD once Chairman sets meeting dates**
- **WFWG will commence evaluation of all information received and observation of the new Synthetic turf field operations – August 2016.**
- **WFWG meetings resume September 2016**
- WFWG to draft and Review recommendations – October 2016
- WFWG prepare DRAFT report – November 2016
- WFWG to present report to relevant commissions – December 2016
- County Board to hold a Work Session to review and discuss WFWG report – January 2017
- WFWG to review and finalize recommendations – January 2017
- County Board to review Williamsburg Use Permit at February 2017 County Board meeting to consider the option to add lights to one or both synthetic turf fields.

Work Group Composition:

- Chair – member of the Planning Commission (1)
- Sports Commission – at large representative (1)
- Parks and Recreation Commission – at large representative (1)
- E2C2 –at large representative (1)
- Rock Spring Civic Association – at large representative (1)
- Williamsburg Civic Association – at large representation (1)
- Yorktown Civic Association – at large representation (1)
- Residents whose property abuts the field (3)
- Residents whose property is across the street from the field (3)
- Arlington Soccer Association representative (1)
- Women’s soccer representative (1)
- Coed soccer representative (1)
- PTA representative (either Elementary or Middle School) (1)

The Chair of the work group will be appointed by the County Board. The Chair will work closely and collaboratively with staff to ensure that the evaluation process and recommendation are completed within the timeline that has been specified and that the County Board charge is fulfilled.

Staffing: County and APS staff will serve as the primary resources to the work group. A County staff project manager will work collaboratively with the Chair to facilitate the work group’s process. An interdepartmental staff team including County and APS staff will provide technical resources and information to include program data and research and analysis on expected noise and light effects associated with the Williamsburg synthetic field site.

Study Area Description: The Williamsburg fields are located on the campus of the Williamsburg Middle School and the new Discovery Elementary School. The fields are bounded by N. Harrison Street, 36th Street N., N. Kensington Street, 36th Road N., Kenilworth Street, two sections of Jefferson Street, and 37th Street N.

County Board Liaison: The County Board will appoint one of its members to serve as a liaison to this effort. Staff and the work group Chair will regularly update the County Manager and the County Board liaison on progress, discuss process issues, and keep the liaison informed on direction and policy issues.

Policy Guidance: The Work Group should consider existing County policies in the Noise Ordinance, Zoning Ordinance, Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) and any other relevant elements of the County’s Comprehensive Plan. In particular the 2005 PSMP discusses synthetic turf fields installation and lights in Appendix F. At the September 2013 County Board meeting when considering the Use Permit request for the Elementary School #1, the County Board determined that the sentence *“All synthetic grass conversion should have existing lighting or a plan for installing ‘dark sky’ lighting as a part of the synthetic grass installation”* in the PSMP is open to interpretation about whether lights are in fact required when installing synthetic turf. This discussion by the County Board should be taken into consideration by the WFWG when reviewing the PSMP and other policies.

Areas of Consideration for the Work Group:

Impacts to programs and uses:

- Impacts to current level of public services provided to County residents
- Analysis and mitigation of impacts on the surrounding neighborhood
- Opportunities to combine multiple priority programs and uses on the fields
- Hours of operations
- Compliance and enforcement of permitted use

Site considerations:

- Impacts to undisturbed natural areas
- Compatible with neighborhood context and surroundings
- Sufficient open/recreational space to support site uses and community needs

Fiscal and Timing Considerations:

- Added costs due to complicated construction, phasing, mitigation of impacts, and/or maintenance of existing county programs and uses
- Ability to complete a project within the necessary timeframe

Community Outreach: During the course of the field site evaluation, collaboration with the community will be a high priority and take a number of different forms. Staff will work with the Chair of the work group to develop a public information plan for review and adoption by the work group. A variety of communication tools will be used, including, but not limited to:

- Williamsburg Field Site Evaluation webpage on the County's website
- E-mail
- Press releases
- Public meeting notices
- Social media

Deliverables: The Work Group recommendations will be publicly available for at least 10 days prior to the work session with the County Board. County Board will give full and appropriate review of the recommendations in preparation for the Williamsburg Use Permit Review of the lighting options at the December 2016 County Board meeting.

Meetings: Staff will work with the WFWG Chair and membership to establish a meeting schedule and agendas