

## Sparrow Pond Community Meeting – March 14, 2019, Carlin Hall

### Meeting Summary

Staff provided a presentation reviewing the history and background of the pond, current conditions, the proposed concept plans, and the public process and considerations. The staff presentation is available on the project website. Questions from the meeting attendees and answers are summarized below.

#### Questions and Answers

What surface will be used for the maintenance area? Will it be pervious?

- *Grasscrete will be used for the surface. It has a natural look and is pervious, allowing water to flow through to soak into the ground below.*

How frequent will the pond be maintained after the restoration? Will the restored pond fill with sediment?

- *The sediment forebay will help to trap sediment in between maintenance. Precise maintenance projections and schedules will be set as part of the design process. We anticipate and plan to maintain more frequently.*

Will the hillslope above the pond be replanted? The understory is sparse.

- *The hillslope above the pond is not currently part of the scope of work. Deer browse may be part of the reason for the sparse understory.*

How will residents access or view the pond? This question included two perspectives. (1) Can you provide more/better viewing access to the pond? (2) Can you restrict access to the pond with a gate or fence across the maintenance access so that visitors do not damage the valuable habitat?

- *We are working to balance these interests and both provide environmental education and protect wildlife habitat through this project.*

As part of the maintenance, will there be invasive control?

- *Yes, invasive plant control will be part of the maintenance plan.*

As part of the process of reviewing the bicycle plan, one commenter mentioned that there are plans to widen and light trails. The damage of light pollution to the wildlife we are trying to attract and protect with all these other measures would be significant. Could the county consider having a “dark” or “lights out” area along the section of the trail near the pond?

- *We reached out to our colleagues in planning so that they are aware of the habitat value of Sparrow Pond. They also confirmed that any new lighting projects would need to go through a public engagement process.*

There is a lot of floatable trash that comes downstream. Is there any way to prevent trash from entering the pond area?

- *Yes, we are considering including a trash rack as part of the design.*

Will there be plant or animals rescues before construction?

- *We are looking at plant and animal rescues in coordination with and advised by Parks. Parks staff mentioned that considerations would include how long they could be held and screening the animals carefully for diseases.*

Will the platform be affected?

- *In the current design, no. If that were to change, we would replace it with something equivalent.*

Will there be a commitment to maintenance in terms of funds and schedule?

- *Yes. By having this become a stormwater project used as part of our stormwater permit, we are committing to continue to maintain this area.*

Will trees be removed as part of the project? Please limit or avoid removal of mature trees.

- *The design will take this input into account. Any trees of a certain size that need to be removed will be replaced according to Arlington standards, typically at least 1:1.*

What will be the impact on the residents right next to the pond?

- *The construction will likely be noisy during the daytime and may be disruptive. We do not yet know which pond neighbors we may need easements from.*

Will the sediment removed from the pond (and excavated as part of the jack and bore operation) be tested for PCBs and heavy metals?

- *Yes, the sediment removed will be tested for PCBs and contaminants as part of the disposal process.*

Can you use this project and process as an environmental education opportunity with tours, etc.? Please provide continued communication throughout construction about the phases that are taking place. Consider adding more educational signs to provide environmental education.

- *Yes, we can provide continued communication throughout construction. Parks staff mentioned that the area is used extensively for camps. To hold tours during construction, safety would be an important concern, but we can consider it.*

### **Comments and Suggestions**

*The following comments have been recorded and will be included to the extent possible as part of the process:*

- Please do not allow contaminated material to be brought on site, including construction equipment, fill, riprap, etc. There has been evidence of knotweed being spread into new areas that way. Consider writing it into the contract.
- Suggested habitat improvement – wood duck boxes, other habitat structures. Park Authority staff mentioned that there are scout groups ready to create structures for habitat.
- Consider timing of construction with breeding cycles. Many song sparrows use the pond.

- Consider adding no new impervious surfaces and partnering with NVRPA to pilot use of pervious surface for trail.
- In the past, trash, in particular food trash, from construction sites (i.e. during construction) has been a source of human-wildlife conflict. Please make sure the contractor avoids this by cleaning up the site every day.