



ARLINGTON COUNTY
SPORTS COMMISSION
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 414
Arlington, Virginia 22201



January 27, 2019

The Honorable Christian Dorsey
Chairman
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Dorsey,

I am pleased to provide 2018 annual reports on the activities of the Sports Commission and the Aquatics Committee. The Sports Commission serves as a conduit for information about sports and physical fitness programs among community organizations, agencies of the County government, and the Board. The Aquatics Committee serves as a conduit for information about aquatic programs between and among community organizations, including Arlington's several aquatic recreational and competitive associations, and the county government and Arlington Public Schools as they relate to the operations and use of county pools.

If you or the other Board members have any feedback or questions about the content of these reports, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shirley Brothwell".

On behalf of the Sports Commission and Aquatics Committee
Shirley Brothwell, Chair
Sports Commission

Cc: County Board Members
Cynthia Hilton, Aquatics Committee Chair
Bill Ross, Park and Recreation Commission Chair

Arlington Sports Commission 2018 Annual Report

Summary

Over the last few years, the Sports Commission has engaged in discussions to better define its work objectives and priorities. The Commission's 2018 Annual Plan identified four areas of focus:

1. **Recreational Facilities, Facility Capacity, and Related Issues** (i.e., work to improve rectangular and diamond field condition, availability and efficient use and develop a better understanding of current and unmet demand for indoor facilities);
2. **Underserved Groups and Communities** (i.e. expand sports opportunities for the underserved youth population and understand the sports needs of the differently-abled community);
3. **Improving Commission Networks** (i.e., increase engagement with other advisory Commissions); and
4. **Ongoing Projects** (i.e., continue and complete existing work).

The Commission made good progress on many of its planned activities. Some of these activities will be rolled over into the 2019 Annual Plan.

Structure and Membership

Membership was a priority for the Commission in 2018. After a period of being understaffed during 2017 and much of 2018, the Sports Commission ended the year at full strength. Commission members during 2018 included: John Bacon, Shirley Brothwell, Janet Eichers, Matt Galan (joined December 2018), Sherry Kohan, Drew Murray, Jessica Deegan-Paska, Dave Maher (joined October 2018), Steve Severn, Corey Simples, George Thompson (joined December 2018), David Tornquist, Patricia Trapanese (departed August 2018), and Justin Wilt. Shirley Brothwell served as the Commission Chair in 2018. Justin Wilt was the Vice Chair.

The Commission has three subsidiary bodies: the Aquatics Committee, the Arlington Youth Baseball Authority, and the Diamond Field Fund Committee.¹

Participation in Work Groups, Committees, and Other Processes

In 2018, the Sports Commission was an official member of the following groups:

- Four Mile Run Valley (4MRV) Working Group

¹ The Aquatics Committee reports independently to the School Board and through the Sports Commission to the County Board on issues related to the adequacy and efficiency of aquatic-related programs and facilities. The Arlington Youth Baseball Authority is charged with improving the baseball experience for ballplayers ages 12 & under, focusing specifically on making progress toward the consolidation of two league-run youth baseball programs. The Diamond Field Fund Committee consults with diamond field users to identify projects that should be funded using diamond field user fees.

- Jennie Dean Park Committee (a sub-group of the 4MRV Working Group)
- POPS Advisory Committee
- Long Bridge Aquatics and Fitness Center Fee Working Group
- Greenbrier Operations Committee

The Commission also voluntarily monitored the following processes:

- Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC)/Building Level Planning Committee project on the New Elementary School at Reed
- Career Center Working Group
- Madison Manor Park Renovations

Recognizing the important role that many planning projects, particularly APS projects, play in efficiently providing sports and recreational capacity, the Sports Commission sought to be named as an official member of the Reed School project and the Career Center Working Group. Unfortunately, these requests were not granted. We also asked the County Board in 2017 for a permanent seat on the PFRC, but the Board declined, stating that the Commission could be added to specific PFRC projects when warranted. The Commission will continue to seek official involvement in any planning project that involves or could involve sports and recreational facilities and programming.

Issues Addressed in 2018

A. Completed Projects

- **4MRV:** On September 22 and November 17, 2018, the County Board adopted, respectively, a 4MRV Parks Master Plan and Area Plan. The plans were the culmination of more than two years of community input and meetings by the Four Mile Run Working Group.²
- **Underserved Youth:** For several years, the Commission has been taking steps to promote more sports activities for under-served youth at some of Arlington’s middle and elementary schools. Through collaboration with the Out-of-School-Time Commission and the APS Extended Day program, the Commission successfully facilitated a free, after-school futsal program in March at Randolph Elementary School that reached about 30 students.
- **Diamond Field Fund:** With Commission endorsement and funding taken from diamond field user fees, a storage shed was installed at Greenbrier Park to provide year-round storage of field maintenance equipment and supplies. Also, construction began for the redevelopment of the Gunston diamond field, which was supported with \$190,000 from the Diamond Field Fund.
- **Rectangular Field Group:** The Commission worked to create a semi-structured rectangular field group to improve communication among these field users and improve their understanding of County-wide developments that may affect them. Efforts to create a similar structure for diamond field users have occurred, but this structure is presently outside of the Commission’s purview.
- **Reed School:** The Commission added its support to those of neighbors and other constituents in

² The Commission wrote letters to the Planning Commission and County Board and spoke before both bodies on the 4MRV Park Master Plan and Area Plan.

favor of designing the Reed School expansion in a way that preserved as much field and green space as possible at this location, which the adopted design accomplishes.³

- **Comments on the budget and CIP:** The Commission supported the County Manager's 2019 budget, suggesting potential areas for additional revenue or cost-cutting. We also provided comments on the 2019-2028 Capital Improvement Plan, where we support continued investment in Arlington's sports facilities by sticking to planned maintenance/replacement schedules and completing planned projects.⁴
- **Improving Networks:** The Commission expanded its connections to the Planning Commission and the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) through more interaction with Commission chairs and by naming a permanent liaison to the PRC. The Commission also expanded its outreach to County Board members.

B. Ongoing Projects

- **POPS:** The Commission continued to receive updates and provide input for the development of a final Public Spaces Master Plan. The Commission supports the overall draft plan and applauds the development of a parks and fields inventory as well as the criteria rating system for evaluating grass-to-turf conversions and lighting fields. We have commented that the draft should provide a better understanding of growth in field sports participation and be more transparent about the practical and fiscal limitations on meeting the proposed LOS for rectangular and diamond fields.⁵
- **Diamond Field Fund:** The Diamond Field Fund Committee continues to examine ways to improve the batting cages at Greenbrier Park. This project was approved for 2018 but had to be postponed when anticipated costs exceeded the amount the Committee was prepared to allocate to the project.
- **Long Bridge Fees:** The Commission continues to serve as a member of the Long Bridge Facility Fees Working Group.
- **Aquatics Committee:** The Commission continues to examine its relationship with the Aquatics Committee and seek ways to improve coordination and communication between the two groups. It received a presentation on the Committee's cost recovery model, which it will forward to the Board in 2019 with commentary.

C. Other Briefings and Updates

Throughout 2018, the Commission received a number of briefings and updates on a wide range of topics, including:

- **County and APS Projects:** Reed School Design, Career Center Working Group, Stratford Park Improvement Project, Gunston Softball Field Replacement Project, Virginia Highlands Park

³ The Commission wrote a letter to the County Board and School Board advocating for a design that preserved the largest amount of field and recreational space at this location.

⁴ The Commission wrote letters and spoke to the County Board on the budget and the CIP and participated in budget conversations with the County Manager.

⁵ The Commission provided written comments on the final draft Public Spaces Master Plan.

(removing fencing from softball fields), Madison Manor Park, Long Bridge Aquatics & Fitness Center

- **Facilities Operations and Maintenance:** Budget Overview, CIP Update, Field Classification Changes (unlocking fields to provide community access), Long Bridge Fee Committee, Field Allocation Policy, Diamond Field Fund Updates, Aquatics Committee Cost Recovery Working Group
- **Sports Programming and Access:** Use of Indoor Spaces (presentation from DPR covering facility information and amenities, scheduling practices and policies, indoor sports programs, and upcoming projects of interest), Rental Leagues (information on leagues that rent field space), Pickleball Presentation (Brian Kuehn, Helen White)
- **Other Topics:** Safe Whistles Coalition and Introduction of Legislation (protecting sports umpires from verbal abuse)

Arlington Aquatics Committee 2018 Activities⁶

Purpose

The Arlington Aquatics Committee (AC) is a joint committee of the Arlington County Board and the School Board. The AC is charged with ensuring community engagement in the operation and use of the Arlington indoor swimming pools located within the three high schools (hereafter known as the “pools”) and with making recommendations, as needed, on behalf of users to the County Board, through the Sports Commission (SC), and to the School Board.

Structure and Membership

The AC is comprised of ten members (five appointed by the County Board and five appointed by the School Board). The AC has a County Board (DPR) staff liaison, Jennifer Lainhart, and a School Board (APS) staff liaison, Helena Machado.

As the year opened, the County Board members of the Committee included Donald Hesse (Chair), Anna Necheles, Diane Romanek, Marilyn Judson, and Janet Eichers (SC Liaison). The School Board members were Cynthia Hilton (Vice-Chair), Guy Land, MacKenzie Kearney, Kristi Sawert, and Ron Kampeas. In November, Mr. Hesse’s two-year term as chair ended. Ms. Hilton was appointed as Chair and Ms. Judson was appointed as Vice-Chair. During the year, the term of Ms. Romanek ended and Ms. Necheles resigned. The following were selected to fill these DPR vacancies: Ljudmila Mladenovic (vice Necheles), and Howard Seamens has been proposed to fill the second vacancy.

Meetings

The AC met nine times in 2018. The AC continued the practice of rotating meetings between the County’s three high school-based pools. One meeting was held at the new APS Syphax facility. During these meetings, public comment was received on several issues (in no order of importance):

- Difficulties with the electronic timing systems used at the pools during meets, training of staff, and how equipment is maintained. The AC asked APS staff to address these concerns and backup plans in the case of failures.
- Mid-Day Parking at Yorktown (YHS). Better enforcement and signage requested.
- Concerns about APS’s FY 2019 proposal to raise fees paid by community swimmers by 5 percent to help cover pool operations and maintenance (O&M) expenses, while other user groups pay nothing.
- Support for the Cost-Recovery Working Group (CRWG) recommendations. (See following.)

⁶ Approved by the AC 16 JAN 2019.

- Lack of equity between the amount of time provided for mid-day swim at YHS as compared to other high school pools.
- Hot water concerns at the YHS pool in the showers.
- A request for fee discounts for military personnel.
- Adding water polo to the aquatic program.

Participation in Work Groups, Committees, and Other Processes

- **Sports Commission:** Ms. Eichers regularly updated the AC on aquatics-related matters before the SC. The AC presented its cost-recovery recommendations at the Commission's November 29th meeting. (See following.)
- **Career Center Expansion:** The AC supports the inclusion of an aquatics facility within the footprint of all Arlington neighborhood high schools. Ms. Hilton attended meetings of the Career Center Working Group (CCWG) to advocate for such a facility at the expanded Career Center school if it eventually would be used as a neighborhood school, and she presented this position to the School Board during public comment on the CIP on May 17th. The growing demand for aquatics space to serve the surrounding community and the educational needs of students justifies the request. Busing high school students to other pools is not a practical or acceptable alternative. Ms. Sawart, a member of the CCWG, kept the AC apprised of developments, and addressed the County Board on October 4th at the request of the CCWG chair.
- **Ed Center Reuse:** Ms. Hilton was appointed to the Ed Center Building Level Planning Committee as a representative of the aquatics community. Issues of concern were the need to preserve dedicated parking for use by aquatics and planetarium patrons, and the need to expand common use areas like the media center, cafeteria, gym, auditorium, music/art space, and the pool to accommodate the needs of the additional 500-600 student-load. Recommendations do include dedicated parking. The new Ed Center facility lacks the space for most common use educational amenities, including pool space.
- **FY 2019 Budget Process:** Both Mr. Hesse and Ms. Hilton participated in key County and School Board meetings for stakeholders in preparation for the FY 2019 budget. The budget proposal included increases in O&M fees, which are paid by community swimmers and renters, that were not consistent with criteria the AC had developed in 2014 to assess the need for such increases. At the same time, the DPR annual "transfer" of tax funds to cover O&M costs attributable to County swimmers has not increased since FY 2010, although participation and space usage by DPR programs has increased. In place of the annual public forum, the AC distributed a survey to County swimmers (via email, Web-site posting, and paper notice at pools) to gather citizen input on the proposed fee increase. The survey generated 18 pages of comment and strong opposition to imposing O&M fee increases on community swimmers when no O&M fees were collected from DPR team/class registrants.

- Cost-Recovery Working Group:** The AC created a CRWG to recommend a framework for recovering O&M costs that would be fair to all users, simple for patrons to understand, repeatable for staff to implement, and transparent and accountable for the public. The CRWG’s recommended framework is based on the O&M cost incurred by an individual “splash”, or pool entry. This metric provides a common denominator that is equitable, logical and manageable for determining how to distribute operating costs across all user groups. Ms. Hilton, Ms. Romanek, and Mr. Kampeas were members. The recommendations were approved by the AC and were distributed to the School Board and the SC for distribution to the County Board on November 12, 2018. Subsequently, the SC invited the AC to present its recommendation to the SC on November 29th. Ms. Eichers and Ms. Hilton made the presentation.
- Long Bridge Park Aquatics Center (LBP):** The AC has no official advisory role for the LBP, although two members, Ms. Judson and Ms. MacKenzie, were invited to serve on the Long Bridge Aquatic and Fitness Center Fee Working Group. Ms. Hilton was invited to present information on the AC’s cost-recovery efforts at the Working Group’s April 23rd meeting.

Other Issues Addressed in 2018

In addition to the issues noted above, the AC submitted recommendations to update the AC’s Charter to comply with the latest format recommended for Arlington County advisory groups. The revisions also substantively changed the Charter by reducing duration of terms of member appointments from three to two years. There are no term limits imposed in the Charter.

The AC also supported security enhancements to the pool entrance at Yorktown High School. The AC successfully advocated for the temporary removal of two handicapped parking spaces in the parking lot adjunct to the W-L pool near the Ed Center main entrance during the period that the Ed Center parking lot is used for bus parking until the new Ed Center school is opened.

Finally, the AC is staying abreast of staff efforts to revise the 2009 APS/DPR Aquatics MOA.

2018 Communications⁷

Statement/Letter	To/Date
Input on the FY 2019 Budget	County Board/School Board Letters, 3/13/2018 and 4/3/2018 School Board/County Board Statements, 3/22/2018 and 4/19/2018
Letter on Inclusion of Aquatic Facilities at Neighborhood High Schools	County Board/School Board Letter, 5/24, 2018 School Board Statement, 5/17/2018 County Board Statement, 10/4/2018
O&M Cost-Recovery	County Board/School Board Letters, 11/12/2018 and 11/28/2018

⁷ AC Letters to the County Board are submitted to the Sports Commission for distribution.