

Proposed Master Plan Text Amendment

The following revisions to the Woodstock Master Plan text are proposed:

Page 3, Paragraph 1

The ~~772~~ ~~813~~*-acre Woodstock Equestrian Park is located off of Maryland Route 28 north of Beallsville, in the northwest corner of Montgomery County, Maryland (*figure 1, page 2*). The property consists of rolling agricultural fields, natural forests and streams. The land is currently crop farmed. The 418-acre parcel located on the west side of MD Route 28 was donated to the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1999 by Mr. Hermen Greenberg for the specific purpose of equestrian activities and directions that M-NCPPC "...in accepting this gift of real estate agrees to memorialize Moritz Greenberg and will formally name the property in his honor as the Moritz Greenberg Equestrian Center." In 2004 M-NCPPC purchased an additional 78.74-acre parcel which had been subdivided into three lots. The western portion of the property, approximately 50 acres was added to the existing park. The front buildable portions of the lots were to be resold.

Page 8, Major Community Concerns

The Plan addresses community concerns over increased traffic on rustic roads and large events at the park.

In accordance with the County's Master Plan of Highways and the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan, The Woodstock Equestrian Park Master Plan recommends locating the primary entrances to the park on a major state road to allow for improved public access and to minimize additional traffic on adjacent rustic roads. Future events at the park will be modeled after existing area equestrian events for guidance on maximum size and number of participants.

Page 9, The Moritz Greenberg Equestrian Center

A key feature of the Plan is the Moritz Greenberg Equestrian Center. Located on the western side of Route 28, this side of the park offers the potential for a first class equestrian eventing area with rolling terrain and breath taking views of Sugarloaf Mountain. The Phase I improvements allow equestrian trail riders and carriage drivers easy access from Route 28 to trailer parking and the trail system. The trails will take riders on a tour of the natural beauty of the park and provide views of the historic Lloyd Jones House c. 1800-1900, Seneca Stone Barn c. 1800, along Wasche Road- an exceptional rustic road, and eventually to the C & O Canal trail system. An alternate site for a future indoor arena is shown in this area of the park. A determination on the most appropriate location for the indoor arena will be made after additional engineering studies are completed and with the input of the Friends of Woodstock and the community.

Page 9, The Dr. William Rickman Equestrian Center

The main site for immediate and future development is at the Dr. William Rickman Equestrian Center located on the eastern side of Route 28. This site offers the ability to integrate new facilities into the historic setting of the Brewer Farm. Public access is ideally located off of Route 28 and future development of public infrastructure is more likely in this location based on the existence of a well, septic field and utility lines. A competition ring can be nicely tucked away in a natural amphitheatre behind the historic setting and provide for future event seating. Placement of facilities far into the property will also help in the reduction of noise. The agricultural field to the north of the Brewer Farm is large enough to accommodate a full-sized polo field. A smaller agricultural field to the south of the Brewer Farm is ideally situated for an indoor arena and outdoor schooling ring. The rear agricultural fields and steep terrain offer future opportunities for cross-country training and access to the regional trail system. The regional trail system will take trail riders south to the Rickman Farm Horse Park, a future therapeutic riding facility and equine rescue operation, to destinations south of Seneca State Park and north to Sugarloaf Mountains' miles of existing equestrian trails.

Future locations of rings and the polo field should be sited back from the road and possibly behind the historic Brewer Farm to retain the agricultural setting along the property frontage and entry into the park. Flexibility in the siting of all future facilities is necessary until additional engineering studies and an overall development plan can be completed to determine the most appropriate location.

Page 10, Entrances

Maryland Route 28 bisects the park and both public entrances are off this two-lane state highway classified as a country arterial and scenic byway. The main park entrance will be at the Dr. William Rickman Equestrian Center and ~~use the historic Brewer Farm~~ a new driveway will be constructed to access the parking lot and trail amenities. Entrance improvements along Route 28 will be necessary to widen the existing entrance and to provide accel/decal lanes as required by the state. A new entry wall will enlarge the existing entrance wall. The Brewer Farm ~~will~~ is proposed to be adapted for use as an information and welcoming center. Parking will be provided behind the historic buildings for ten to twenty horse trailers in Phase I and overflow parking can be provided in adjacent fields. Parking will not be allowed along Route 28 or on adjacent rural rustic roads. Historic markers and trail maps will be provided at the main entrance.

Page 13, Woodstock Equestrian Trails

The proposed 9 mile trail network within the park follows to the greatest extent possible existing informal trails. The trails are located to the perimeter of the working farm fields to minimize disruption of agricultural activities. As much as possible the trails offer views of historic sites in the park. Avoiding sensitive environmental features played an important role in defining the trail system. For the most part trail crossings are shown at places where horses can ford the stream

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without additional structures. Only ~~one~~ four bridge crossings of a stream are anticipated. Because of the special park designation as equestrian, the trails are being recommended for hiking and equestrian use only. The trails can accommodate most equestrian uses such as carriage driving, fox chasing, portions of an endurance riding or competitive riding course (need minimum of 25 miles), and will primarily be used for recreational riding.

Page 23, Future Phases Recommendations

This phase will have to be determined in concert with the *Friends of Woodstock* since private contributions and grants will largely determine the timing of funding for additional development beyond Phase I. The location of future facilities will be determined based on input from the *Friends of Woodstock*, surrounding community, and as more accurate engineering information becomes available.

- * The acreage identified is approximate. The exact size of the lots to be resold and the additional parkland will be determined.

Strike through denotes text to be deleted
Underlining denotes added text

PLEASE REFER TO THE WOODSTOCK EQUESTRIAN PARK MASTER PLAN, APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD IN JANUARY 2002. A COPY OF THE MASTER PLAN WAS ATTACHED TO THE STAFF DRAFT COPY OF THIS REPORT THAT WAS ISSUED ON 2/6/04.

THE MASTER PLAN IS ALSO AVAILABLE ON THE M-NCPPC WEBSITE AT: MC-MNCPPC.ORG

**WOODSTOCK EQUESTRIAN PARK
PUBLIC MEETING ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT
TO THE MASTER PLAN
FEBRUARY 3, 2004
Owens Local Park**

Staff Attendance: Linda Komes, Bill Mooney, Bill Gries, Ellen Masciocchi, Doug Alexander, Jim McMahon, Cheryl Winter, another Park Police Officer, and Ken Nicholls from the Parks Foundation.

Bill Mooney, Public/Private Partnership Coordinator for Montgomery Parks, stated the purpose of the meeting and introduced Commission staff. He asked everyone in the audience of around 30 citizens to introduce themselves. He explained that master plans are guidelines, and the first phase is underway.

Linda Komes, Project Manager for Woodstock, provided an update on construction progress since the previous community meeting in late October. Engineering has been completed on the trails, and permits for installing the bridges have been submitted. The bridges, where trails cross streams, will be ordered over the next several months. The work on the trails will be completed this Summer. Most of the trails are existing and are being modified and improved for equestrian use. The Rickman parking lot is almost finished. The target date for the park opening is now Fall 2004. The next task the Friends Group needs to complete is a lease or agreement with the Commission for working on the park and providing programs, events, etc. This will steer the next phases of development and work in carrying-out the opportunities afforded by the Master Plan. Types of forthcoming decisions to be made are:

- Defining the role of the Friends Group in managing and maintaining the park and their role in future tasks, including fundraising
- Evaluating alternate sites for the location of various facilities
- Defining the order of development
- Determining who maintains which facilities

Linda explained the proposed amendment to the Master Plan. When the park is complete, there will be approximately 16 miles of equestrian trails, including four bridged stream crossings, and two parking lots. Ten horsetrainers will be able to park in the lot on the Rickman side and 20 on the Greenberg side. This is the first phase of the Master Plan.

The proposed amendment will not undo the master plan, but make it better. In 1999 the Commission received the land from the Greenbergs, except for 4 perc'd lots – 3 along Rt. 28 and one panhandle-lot behind them. M-NCPPC bought the 36 ac. Panhandle-lot in 1999. Mr. Greenberg has now decided to sell the three remaining lots. The Commission would like to purchase the three lots and thinks it can be done without additional cost to the taxpayer. Since these are 3 buildable lots, the intent is to retain the rear portions that contain the stream and it's buffers, and sell off the buildable portion located along MD 28, to recoup the money spent on the purchase. A 365 ac. park takes a long time to develop. The decisions in the master plan were made with the best information at hand at that time. Any other changes and this amendment are subject to a public hearing at the time of consideration. No parking lot is planned for the Washe Rd. trail entrance, in order to protect the two historic sites, yet still allow visits.

Bill Gries, Acquisition Specialist, spoke in detail about the proposed acquisition and it's benefits. Mr. Greenberg gave us 325 ac., and we bought 36 acres, even though we wanted to obtain the land in the three lots, at the time he didn't want to sell. Mr. Greenberg's 3 lots were excluded from the deal to give land to the Parks. He wanted to perc and create a subdivision before deciding to give us the land. A stream bisects the lots and is a natural divide. The western portion is more suitable to be part of the park.

Recently Mr. Greenberg suggested we buy all three lots in order to retain the rear portion and then sell the buildable house sites. We anticipate those lots to be between 10-12 acres each. Two of the lots are currently 26 ac., and the third is 28. It should be an even cost, but there's no signed contract with Mr.

Greenberg until the master plan amendment process is further along. The Commission would be adding about 50 acres to the park and then selling 3 recorded premium house lots. If the acquired lots are in the RTD Zone, you need 25 ac. within the farm area before you can sell lots off at a minimum of 40,000 sq. ft. with a residential perc.

Linda stressed that the amendment is the purchase of 3 parcels, selling of 3 buildable lots and providing an alternative location/site for the arena at the master plan level. Whether or not the arena is constructed on the Rickman or the Greenberg side will be determined at a later time upon gaining more engineering information. Phase I implementation continues with the money available now from the State Grant. Adding 78 acres at little or no cost to a 765 ac. park is a bonus. The acquisition needs to be adopted as part of the master plan before we can buy the lots and settle a contract.

Question: Is the perc on the panhandle lot a commercial perc or a residential perc? The perc is a residential perc. If the Health Dept. requires a commercial perc before we decide completely on the potential of using the 4th lot as the alternate site of the indoor arena, then we'll have to deal with it. If its determined that it is preferable to locate the indoor arena there, and a commercial perc is not available, we could always opt for a self-contained system that would require being pumped out. The size of the required septic field will depends on the anticipated capacity of the arena.

Question: Are the lots recorded? Yes, and under RDT, the lots do not have to be 25 ac. Mr. Greenberg thoroughly perced his property. Of all the land Mr. Greenberg owned, including the lots along West Hunter Road, only 6 percs were found. The percs are on the front parts of the lots that would be sold for development. The lots are recorded and the perc site approved through the Health Department. Bill feels we don't need to re-perc to be sure.

Comment: Mr. Rickman did try to perc his side of the property as well and there are a lot of holes still evident on the property. A man at the meeting stated that he lived on the Rickman property in the 1960's and there was a septic system in place on the site at that time. He doesn't recall where it was located. After he moved away, the house was burned by the local Fire Co. for training.

On February 12th, a request will be made to the Planning Board to release a Staff Draft of this Amendment proposal and to request a public hearing date on March 18th. Testimony will only be taken during the public hearing on March 18th. Written testimony may also be sent to the Chairman during this 30-day commentary period.

Someone asked the cost of acquiring the 3 lots. Bill cannot say due to not having a signed contract at this time. They're still negotiating. The asking price is more than fair and expected. It will be public information upon signing the contract. Another asked about the Advanced Land Acquisition Revolving Fund (ALARF), which will cover the costs of the purchase outside of the CIP acquisition program. That fund will be reimbursed upon sale of the 3 buildable lots.

Question: Do we know the time and effort involved by the Master Plan Advisory Committee to determine the site of the facilities on the Master Plan? That group determined that the arena will be easier to police and maintain at that location on the Rickman side. Now you want to consider the other side of the road, which will provide a greater impact on the neighbors.

Bill Mooney commented that Phase 2 is an "open book" now. The arena could end up where it's currently sited on the Master Plan, or engineering could say that it cannot be put there. The Friends Group will need to look at this possibility and also provide their input on the traffic pattern.

Comment: Likes the idea of the stream in the park and not in the residential area.

Question: Why is there an alternate site for the arena? There's greater impact on the residents contiguous to the property being considered. Since there is an approved master plan site for the arena, why put it on a site most are opposed to?

Bill Mooney replied that the second site relates to the fields in that area. The consultants and Capt. Phillips say that could be an *alternate* site over there.

A Friends Group member said that Emergency Medical Services preferred that if there are both indoor and outdoor arenas, they should be located on the same side of the road. We'll see the trails first, then the outdoor arena on the Rickman side, so it doesn't make sense to split the 2 arenas on different sides of the road.

Someone else commented, there's no reason why you don't expand the park.

Linda mentioned that no decision about the alternate arena site will be made tonight or even needs to be in this Plan. The decision could be given to the Planning Board to acquire the land and not put where the alternate site is.

Someone mentioned that the perc'd area is on the corner of the panhandle-lot.

The Planning Board approved the concept of acquiring the three lots and selling off the buildable lots.

Jane commented that the master plan group presented a viable plan of work for the community – they worked hard, and now you're ready to change it. Jane Hunter mentioned that the community consists of those attending the meeting or neighbors. What will be the impact of lighting at the alternate site? There's no insight -- people who worked on the master plan discussed lessening the impact on the neighbors – loud speakers, traffic and lights impact lives. Everyone compromised. Joe Muldoon wanted the polo field along Washe Rd., but agreed to the other side. How close to the stream valley is the arena? Reply – not within the buffer required of at least 100 feet. Bill Mooney commented that these are valid points to take into account.

Tracy Morgan – The streambed is a natural dividing line and is easy to know where the park stops. Now as it is, we don't know where the park boundary is, its in the middle of a field. The stream is a natural barrier to not cross and provides a good corridor to wind along. She had hoped for an underpass to connect the two sides of the park and now that may be in doubt or may not happen in the near future, unless there is funding in the next decade. Whether the two sides eventually connect or never connect, is part of the work in progress.

Laura Van Etten – Staff needs to decide now if they are going to leave off the arena's alternate site on the amendment.

Jim Evans – Did the State review the work for the driveway access on the Rickman side? Yes, we have a State Access Permit. The entrance is only partially finished. There will be a shortened decal lane and no accel lane in the first phase as the State did not require M-NCPPC to move any existing utility poles. Linda replied that perhaps eventually in a future phase, an acceleration lane may be added, along with more parking spaces. Someone commented that it's difficult getting some of the horsetrailer through the gates. Linda countered that the turning radius for a tractor trailer was used in the design.

Someone asked whether they will continue the agricultural practices on the land? Linda said that she will need to talk to Property Management about it. The agricultural leases under negotiation now.

Someone else asked about deer control/management in the Park. Jim McMahon replied that Woodstock hasn't been considered yet for inclusion in the deer management program. The State hasn't conducted a Flee Report -- aerial photography with infra-red cameras – of this area. At some point in the future they will, and we will implement the deer management program. Someone said they ate \$15,000 of sweet corn this last Summer. Jim will talk to Rob Gibbs.

With only 10 trailer spaces in the one lot, what will happen when it's full? Will a "Lot Full" sign be posted? Linda replied that there is overflow parking on the grass. When more facilities are added in the future, more parking spaces may be added. The master plan recommends at the ultimate build-out, 25 trailers in the parking lot on the Rickman side, with overflow in the grass for special events.

Linda reminded folks that this is a low-key equestrian park for the community.

Question: On page 14, the trail dead-ends near the cemetery. Isn't it supposed to loop back up? The same situation is at Hunter Rd. Doesn't that need to loop? Linda replied that those are trail access points for the community along West Hunter Rd. We'll look at the different solutions.

Jane Hunter – When we develop the master plan facilities, are funds received from rents going back into the Park? Linda – no, it goes into the general fund. Bill Mooney added that with a MOU or a lease, part of or the entire park could be rented for a nominal fee. There still could be future leases with farmers, those maintaining the facilities, etc. If you have problems with maintenance, call Jim McMahon. For various emergencies – hunting, trespassing, crime, etc. -- call Park Police.

Someone mentioned that the Wasche Rd. entrance has no parking lot, and the master plan didn't provide an access there at all. We want access there, but no parking lot. The police said it's difficult to manage, if the facilities are spread throughout the park. The citizen asked what happens when the farmer can't get in to farm the property due to all the parked trailers at the entrance? Linda doesn't anticipate that much volume at that entrance to see the historic sites. Another is opposed to the Wasche Rd. entrance being open except for those with farming leases and emergency vehicles.

Linda mentioned that the two cultural resources will have a crushed stone trail to provide handicapped access to the two historic sites. Someone said we're opening the park and the community to lots of problems, once the land is open and anyone can go in. As Linda reiterated, there's no parking lot off Wasche, which is a gravel road with a grassy shoulder where you can pull off. The trails are not intended for bike use. Those riding bikes can park them and then walk in to look at the historic sites. We're not talking about signage along the road – just interpretative signage at the historic sites.

Tracy Morgan wanted assurance that ATVs and dirt bikes are not allowed in the park. Yes, there a problem in all the parks.

Bill Mooney wrapped everything up noting that most signaled their concern over the alternate location for the arena.

Pricilla Huffman then announced to the Friends Group and the community that the first trail clearing will occur on Sat. Feb. 14th, with parking on the Greenberg side.