

Park Hills Civic Association General Meeting – Summary

May 20, 2015

Silver Spring International Middle School

Minutes taken by Elsie Heyrman Klumpner, Acting Secretary

The quarterly meeting of the Park Hills Civic Association was held on Wednesday, May 20, 2015 at the Silver Spring International Middle School.

The speakers were Jill Ortman-Fouse, Montgomery County Board of Education, Kathleen Dearstine, Landscape Architect, Montgomery County Department of Parks, and Brian Lewandowski, Montgomery County Department of Parks

Also attending were Dave Asche, Legislative Aide to Montgomery County Councilmember Tom Hucker, and Debbie Spielberg, Legislative Aide to Montgomery County Councilmember Marc Elrich.

There was no regular business meeting.

Dale Drive Neighborhood Park.

Kathy Dearstine and Brian Lewandowski of the Montgomery County Parks Department briefed Association members on the status of the Dale Drive Neighborhood Park Playground project.

They noted that while plans for the playground and its equipment had been finalized in light of neighbor's comments and suggestions, completion of the playground project would be delayed because of storm water management issues on the park site. There was no date for the playground project completion.

Because tremendous amounts of storm water from Hartford Avenue and Dale Drive ran directly through parking lot and the playground site, the Parks Department needed to extensive modifications to the parking lot and the areas surrounding the playground to reduce the velocity of the storm water so it would not damage the playground , nearby fields and Sligo Creek.

There are plans to construct an asphalt berm near Dale Drive to shunt the water towards a to-be-constructed storm water capture pool and drainage ditch leading to Sligo Creek. The size of the parking lot would be reduced to limit the impervious surface. The Parks Department would protect and preserve as many trees on the site as possible, although two trees had been identified as been potentially dangerous to park users and would be removed. The parking lot and the new playground site would be ADA-compliant, and a new grill would be added to the park. A safe rubberized material—not ground up tires—would be used on the playground. It was suggested the members visit the Willard Avenue neighborhood park near River Road in Chevy Chase to see what the new Dale Drive park might look like.

In answers to member's questions, Kathy Dearstine said that, because of the drainage issues, consideration had been given to moving the playground closer to Dale Drive, behind the Parks-

owned property located there. She also indicated that the Parks Department might be able to install an exercise station for adults somewhere in the park area, but not on the playground site.

Montgomery County Public Schools.

Jill Ortman-Fouse, was elected to her first four-year term as an At-Large Member of the Montgomery County Board of Education on November 4, 2014. She is a member of the Board's Strategic Planning and Special Populations committees.

Ortman-Fouse introduced herself and invited questions from the audience. In response to questions she discussed the following issues: the mandate of the Board of Education, including reviewing policies and voting on the selection of a Superintendent. Other issues currently facing the Board of Education are: zero tolerance policy for gun possession by students; new policies being considered relating to the "school to prison" issue; reducing suspensions for bad behavior vs. reengaging the students in productive activity; retraining of teachers to deal with conflict and disruptions constructively; the lack of adequate physical activity for students (all agree that physical activity aids learning in classroom); punishment should not involve withholding recess; the lack of funds for sports activities; and insufficient number of school busses.

Commenting on the search for a new Superintendent of Schools, she said that Larry Bowers will be Acting Superintendent for now. He's been in the system for 37 years and understands well the fiscal matters of the Board of Education. The search for a permanent Superintendent was not successful for a variety of reasons. A new search will begin Fall 2015

She discussed some of the challenges facing the Montgomery County Schools: huge ESOL population; twenty-thousand students live below the poverty line; the achievement gap is a big challenge; trying to reduce impact of time spent teaching to the standard tests; less funding; and lack of space - there are 400 portable classrooms in use right now.

PHCA Treasurer's Report - May, 2015

Activity:

- 1) Current Monument Bank Balance: \$791.11
- 2) Paypal Usage: total 17 dues payments
- 3) Personal check: total 7 dues payments

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm

Submitted by Elsie Heyrman Klumpner