



Boulevard Manor Civic Association

August 13, 2016

Libby Garvey, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., #300
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Bluemont Park baseball field renovation

Dear Chair Garvey,

We, the Board of Directors of the Boulevard Manor Civic Association, join the Bluemont Civic Association in asking the County Board to rescind its decision to build a permanent, fully-fenced-in baseball diamond at Bluemont Park until the project can be thoroughly vetted by the adjacent communities and the relevant advisory commissions. Permanently fencing off over a quarter of the open field at Bluemont Park is a drastic action that deserves the full “Arlington Way” treatment. In violation of the “Arlington Way,” the decision was made with no input from the community and was hidden on the County Board’s Consent Agenda with no notice to the County Board of the drastic change it proposed making to Bluemont Park.

Our Civic Association first heard of a proposal to improve Bluemont field number 3 when we got a cryptic notice of a meeting to “learn about planned field renovations.” The text of the notice, in its entirety, follows:

Join County Staff to learn about planned field renovations at Bluemont Park and the Ashlawn School Safe Streets trail connection. The project includes full replacement of athletic field #3 and installation of a Safe Routes to School trail connector. Project scope includes sod, new irrigation, site circulation, fencing, backstops, bleachers, batting cage, site furnishings, signage, ADA accessibility improvements, and drainage. Open House begins at 6:30 p.m. at Ashlawn Elementary School. For additional information contact Josh Serck 703-228-7141 or email him at jserck@...

“Fencing” was buried in the paragraph and was far too vague to alert a reader that staff planned to fence off a quarter of the green space at Bluemont Park. The notice included a diagram with print so fine that it would have taken a magnifying glass to read it. In short, notice of such a drastic planned alteration to Bluemont Park was so grossly inadequate as to be non-existent.

One person from our neighborhood who attended the meeting noted the presence of a lot of baseball families, but did not hear staff announce or highlight the proposal to

enclose the field fully with chain link fencing. He did not, therefore, know at the end of the meeting that this was the plan. Nor was our neighborhood notified of the Consent Agenda item on the County Board's July meeting. From our reading of the staff report, the extent of the fencing was reflected only in the diagram, not in the text. As a result, we had no notice of the implications of staff's proposal until notified by Bluemont Civic Association.

We believe that a thorough analysis of this proposal requires, first and foremost, an examination of alternative locations in Arlington for fully enclosing a baseball field that will not destroy one of the longest, publicly available green vistas in the County. Myriad other issues must be considered as well, but this one appears to have been completely overlooked by staff.

We can understand the desire to improve the playing field at the park on the part of the baseball community. Certainly drainage must be addressed. There may be issues of conflicting use of the baseball area during practices and games, but we are certain that far less disruptive solutions exist but were not evaluated.

Thank you for your attention and we look forward to hearing from you soon,


Phil Klingelhofer

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