

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 4, 2016

TO: CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: KARL MORITZ, DIRECTOR,
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

SUBJECT: REVISIONS TO DOCKET ITEM #5: SUP#2015-0128,
4800 BRENMAN PARK DRIVE

This memo contains revisions to the staff report for Docket Item #5 (SUP#2015-0128) which are attached as a separate page and includes an image and caption (Figure 2) depicting the proposed expansion and lighting fixture locations, as well as Parking and the Zoning/Master Plan Designation analysis. This information was inadvertently omitted during publication. The attached page is to be inserted after the Proposal section on page 5 and before the Staff Analysis on page 6 of the staff report.

Staff recommends approval of SUP#2015-0128 subject to the following revisions and to the SUP conditions that appear in the staff report.



Figure 2: Footprint of proposed dog park expansion surrounded by a fence. Light locations identified with circles.

PARKING

The park includes 151 parking spaces to accommodate park activities and complies with zoning.

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The subject property is located in the CDD#9 zone that designates the property for park use. The Eisenhower West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan supports the park use and includes a proposal to enhance park connections by linking Ben Brenman Park to Clermont Natural Park with a bike and pedestrian bridge over the Norfolk Southern rail tracks.

Comments on April 5 Planning Commission Docket Item 5 - Ben Brenman Dog Park Lights & Expansion

Additional Materials

SUP2015-0128

4800 Brenman Park Dr

Arthur Impastato <aimpastato@earthlink.net>

Fri 4/1/2016 3:44 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

Cc: Dana Wedeles <Dana.Wedeles@alexandriava.gov>;

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

I am writing to urge that the Planning Commission consider prioritizing the use of funds for park improvements. As most of you may be aware, parks like Ewald Park are desperately in need of improvements and it is used to a much greater degree than the dog park at Ben Brenman Park. In fact, the dog park in Ben Brenman Park is one of two dog parks within easy walking distance of my house. I do not believe it makes sense to spend a total of \$97,500 on a dog park when City funds are limited and when people already have access to two dog parks in close proximity to each other.

At the February 23 City Council legislative meeting, it was noted that Ewald was one of the parks needing "complete renovations." It was also noted by Ms. Wedeles that officials consider six factors in determining how to prioritize funding park projects: safety; community feedback and the results of needs assessments taken in 2011 and 2013; the life span of existing amenities; the potential for private funding sources; the level of impact on users; and the relationship to other nearby projects. Under these six guidelines and the statement that Ewald Park is in need of complete renovation, it is very difficult for me to comprehend how we came to the conclusion that spending almost \$100,000 for one of two dog parks that are within walking distance of each other is a wise expenditure of money.

I urge you to put this money to better use such as renovating Ewald Park.

Thank you,

Arthur "Sash" Impastato
239 Medlock Lane
Alexandria, VA 22304

Please Approve Special Use Permit #2015-0128

Additional Materials
SUP2015-0128
4800 Brenman Park Dr

Ali Ahmad <ali.ahmad@gmail.com>

Tue 4/5/2016 1:18 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

Cc: Dana Wedeles <Dana.Wedeles@alexandriava.gov>;

Dear Planning Commission:

I am writing to reiterate my support for the installation of safety lights and the expansion of the dog park at Ben Brenman Park. I have read through the material made available in the staff briefing packet, including the comments from my fellow neighbors. I think you'll see from reading those emails and from the comments at the March 3, 2016 public meeting that support for the improvements is both broad and well-considered. As the staff reports notes, this has been a high priority for dog park users for years. Furthermore, it's a key safety concern which needs to be addressed.

While no comments in opposition were made publicly at the March 3rd public meeting, I see a small number of comments submitted in opposition to you today. I truly respect my neighbors who do not share my opinion, but I think the two distinct criticisms I've read, 1) noise and light pollution and 2) cost and priority of park funds, are a bit out of context.

In regards to noise and light pollution, there is no action that would reduce noise and light at Ben Brenman Park in the evenings currently up for consideration. As I mentioned in my comments at the March 3rd meeting, I live very close to the dog park and of course I live very close to other Ben Brenman Park amenities, including lighted sports fields. There are a lot of lights in Ben Brenman Park already, and the marginal increase of higher quality more directed light-pollution reducing lights will not appreciably change the experience of being a park neighbor. However, it will appreciably and positively change the user experience in the dog park and the park altogether.

As far as noise from the park goes, existing permitted uses like league team sports are much louder and have more associated automobile traffic. Furthermore, being able to use the dog park later would likely reduce nuisance barking as dogs who do not otherwise have yards to play in Cameron Station will have a place to go with their owners to burn off energy before bed.

In essence, quiet and darkness are not on the table. Nor should they be, as Ben Brenman is a wonderfully well used very active park and there are naturally costs associated to the incredible benefits those of us who live so close to a park enjoy.

Additionally, the concerns expressed about the budget implications are relevant. However, the improvements are already funded. For the benefit they bring to park users they are relatively inexpensive. Improving existing amenities to increase their utility is a prudent use of taxpayer money. More importantly, a denial of this SUP on grounds that the money can be spent better elsewhere offers no guarantee on other priorities in the West End.

Thank you for your service to our community on the Planning Commission and in the many other public roles you hold.

Respectfully,
Ali Ahmad
230 South Jenkins Street
Alexandria, VA 22304

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