



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 4, 2017

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of the Cameron Run Park Public Planning Process to Identify Potential Alternative Future Use(s) of the Cameron Run Regional Park Site.

ISSUE: Consideration of the Cameron Run Park Public Planning Process to identify potential alternative future use(s) of the Cameron Run Regional Park site.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Endorse the proposed Cameron Run Park Public Planning Process (Attachment 1); and
2. Authorize the City Manager to direct the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) to proceed with the proposed Planning Process.

BACKGROUND: In the fall of 2014, RPCA informed the Park & Recreation Commission of the desire by NOVA Parks to extend its current lease at the Cameron Run Regional Park property by 40 years. On January 15, 2015, the Commission approved the Cameron Run Recreational Area Coordinated Park and Open Space Plan. This plan, took into account the current and future needs of City residents, as identified in a needs assessment conducted by RPCA and public comment. The Commission also recommended that City Council not extend NOVA Parks' lease at that time.

In the first half of 2016, the City resumed discussions with NOVA Parks on a lease extension for the Cameron Run Regional Park and scheduled a City Council Public Hearing on the lease extension. On Saturday, June 18, 2016, Alexandria City Council held a public hearing to receive input on a request by the Northern Virginia Park Authority (NOVA Parks) to issue a new (replacement) lease for the Cameron Run Regional Park for a period of twenty (20) years ending in 2036. The current lease between the City and the NOVA Parks expires in 2021.

City Council deferred action and directed staff to develop a planning process, to consider alternative uses at the park, and to bring that process back to Council for consideration.

DISCUSSION: RPCA staff, in coordination with the Park and Recreation Commission, outlined a public process to identify potential alternative future use of the Cameron Run Regional Park site (Attachment 2). The Park & Recreation Commission endorsed the planning process on July 21, 2016 following a Commission Public Hearing on June 23, 2016.

On August 23, 2016, RPCA issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to seek consultant services to develop, recommend and implement a Public Planning Process and provide alternative Conceptual Plan(s) for the NOVA Parks Cameron Run Regional Park site. The City subsequently executed a contract with Michael Baker International for planning services.

On December 15, 2016, the Park & Recreation Commission endorsed the Cameron Run Park Public Planning Plan as developed by RPCA in coordination with Michael Baker International with the following four considerations (Attachment 3) (which are responded to after each consideration):

1. Clarify whether City entities (for example, ACPS) should or should not be identified as stakeholders in the planning process, which is currently scoped to focus on recreational needs and not other City needs;

Although Alexandria Public Schools is not listed as a primary stakeholder, staff recognizes, should this property become available for alternative use and management, that priorities other than park and recreation uses will be suggested. An integral part of the public engagement process will be to identify clear expectations of potential uses based on the site's constraints. Constraints include, and are not limited to, storm water management, established resource protection areas (RPAs), parking and traffic.

2. Consider giving express guidance that public meetings occur at a variety of locations and at least one time other than a weekday evening so as to ensure participation by a variety of citizens, not just those who can make weekday evening meetings at City Hall;

Meetings will occur at a variety of locations, and at least one meeting will occur not on a weekday evening.

3. Emphasize, as the Commission has done, the importance of straight talk about finances, including not only budget constraints but also the constraints imposed by essentially rent-free lease terms; and

The discussions of finances and the fiscal value of lease terms will be clear.

4. Consider giving express guidance that the planning document review implementation options, such as phasing, co-location, and partnerships with private and non-profit organizations.

The concept(s) provided for consideration will include economic analysis and cost estimating. Recognizing the fiscal constraints the City is facing, the concepts will identify phasing options and alternative funding sources for implementation.

FISCAL IMPACT: \$175,000 from the Open Space Capital Improvement account to fund the cost of consultant support.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Cameron Run Regional Park Planning Process

2. August 24, 2016 Memorandum to City Council
3. Park & Recreation Commission Endorsement and Considerations
4. Cameron Run Regional Park Planning Process Presentation

STAFF:

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