



ARLINGTON COUNTY
SPORTS COMMISSION
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 414
Arlington, Virginia 22201



January 31, 2018

The Honorable Katie Cristol
Chairman
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Ms. Cristol,

I am pleased to provide the 2017 annual report on the activities of the Sports Commission and the Aquatics Committee. The Sports Commission serves as a conduit for information about sports and physical fitness programs among community organizations, agencies of the County government, and the Board. The Aquatics Committee serves as a conduit for information about aquatic programs between and among community organizations, including Arlington's several aquatic recreational and competitive associations, and the county government and Arlington Public Schools as they relate to the operations and use of county pools.

As Arlington's population grows, our public land and facilities are increasingly taxed to adequately serve the community. Our advisory bodies are often at the center of contentious discussions about how to best use our fields and sports facilities. The Sports Commission is constantly thinking about ways to improve sports capacity in creative ways that promote collaborative uses across a range of constituents. We strive to serve the Board and the broader Arlington community by engaging in open, constructive dialogue to help identify viable, sustainable solutions to our capacity challenges.

If you or the other Board members have any feedback or questions about the content of this annual report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shirley Brothwell".

On behalf of the Sports Commission and Aquatics Committee
Shirley Brothwell, Chair
Sports Commission

Cc: Christian Dorsey
Libby Garvey
Erik Gutshall
John Vihstadt

Arlington Sports Commission 2017 Annual Report

Summary

During 2017, the Sports Commission was involved in a number of county processes in both official and voluntary capacities. Through its participation in processes like the Williamsburg Field Working Group, the update to the Public Spaces Master Plan, and the Four Mile Run Valley Working Group, the Commission brings a community-wide, multi-sport perspective to county efforts with near- and long-term impacts. Due to the growing demand for field space, a primary focus in 2017 was the preservation, efficient use, and improvement of outdoor fields. The Commission looks for opportunities to promote investment in Arlington's sports amenities and supported Arlington Sports Foundation efforts to facilitate community-driven investment in synthetic turf for the Gunston Middle School softball field. This project will add hundreds of new playable hours and much-needed flexibility to a key field asset. The Commission continues to work closely with DPR to help ensure that Arlington's fields are fairly shared among new and existing sport user groups and primarily benefit Arlington residents. Finally, the Commission welcomed progress on several key projects, including approval of a design for the Long Bridge Park Aquatics and Fitness Center, the expansion of gymnastics space at Barcroft Community Center, and the completion of improvements to one of the diamond fields at Bluemont Park.

Structure and Membership

The Sports Commission started out the year at full strength, but lost several members during 2017.¹ Getting back to full strength is a priority for 2018. Commission members during 2017 included: John Bacon, Shirley Brothwell, Heather Coccozza (departed June 2017), Sherry Kohan, Reggie Kouba (departed September 2017), Drew Murray, Jessica Paska, Larry Robertson (departed September 2017), Steve Severn, David Tornquist, Patricia Trapanese, and Justin Wilt. The Commission's primary DPR staff liaison is Josh Colman. Debbie DeFranco serves as the group's liaison to Arlington Public Schools.

Heather Coccozza served as the Commission Chair from January through June 2017. Shirley Brothwell was designated as Chair in July 2017.

At its July 2017 meeting, the Commission agreed there would be value in having a Vice Chair to help manage the group's increasing workload. The Commission sought the Board's approval, and in September, Justin Wilt was named Vice Chair.

The Commission has two subsidiary bodies: the Aquatics Committee and the Arlington Youth Baseball Authority (AYBA).² The Aquatics Committee's 2017 activities are described on page 7.

¹ The Sports Commission is chartered to have 13 members appointed by the County Board, one of whom serves as Chair.

² The Aquatics Committee reports to the County Board (through the Sports Commission) and the School Board. It makes recommendations on the adequacy and efficiency of aquatic-related programs and facilities, engages stakeholders, and serves as a conduit for information about aquatics programs. The AYBA is charged with improving

The Sports Commission meets monthly throughout the year (except in August), generally on the 4th Thursday of each month. In 2017, the Commission met 11 times at the Langston-Brown Community Center. Commission meetings are open to the public, and past attendance by the public suggests that members of the community are interested in Sports Commission business.

Participation in Work Groups, Committees, and Other Processes

The Sports Commission carries out its advisory role in part through official participation in county-established working groups, committees, and task forces. During 2017, the Sports Commission was an official member of the following groups:

- Four Mile Run Valley Working Group
- Greenbrier Operations Committee
- Long Bridge Park Advisory Committee
- Public Spaces Master Plan Working Group
- Williamsburg Field Working Group
- Sports Users Field Allocation Advisory Group

The Commission also voluntarily monitors other processes where it does not have an official role in order to stay informed of any developments that may warrant further attention. During 2017, Commission members monitored processes, received briefings, and attended meetings on a range of topics and initiatives, including:

- Park and Recreation Commission; identify areas of common interest
- Joint Facilities Advisory Committee's sub-committee meetings on the Buck and Carlin Springs properties
- Park planning (Benjamin Banneker, Madison Manor, South Park, Stratford Park)
- Washington/Kirkwood General Land Use Plan
- George Washington University baseball clubhouse and batting cages
- Aquatics Committee activities and position statements
- Out-of-School-Time Advisory Council efforts to examine ways to improve sports participation among underserved youth population
- Youth league presentations on outreach to underserved youth
- Arlington County Tennis Association; condition and availability of public courts
- Arlington High School Rifle Program; need for a permanent home

Issues Addressed in 2017

A. Completed Projects

Several important projects that the Commission was involved in wrapped up or reached important milestones in 2017.

the baseball experience for ballplayers ages 12 & under, focusing specifically on making progress toward the consolidation of two league-run youth baseball programs.

- Williamsburg Field Working Group (WFWG) - Two Sports Commission members participated in the WFWG that was examining a proposal to add lights to two rectangular synthetic turf fields. The Commission supports adding lights wherever feasible because this helps expand playable hours and favored adding lights at Williamsburg due to its proximity to a large number of rectangular field users. The Commission also supported various mitigation steps and recommended the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding between DPR and the community to document operating parameters and a Friends of Williamsburg Field group to help monitor and enforce those parameters. The County Manager's recommendation to the Board included both of these mitigation measures.
- Expansion at Barcroft Community Center – The Commission supported efforts to convert the Barcroft Community Center gymnasium to full-time gymnastics use and further supported expediting the timetable for conversion. The new space opened in 2017. We supported this project because the recreational and competitive gymnastics program had significantly outgrown the available space.
- Bluemont Field #3 – The Commission supported the County Manager's recommendation to remove portions of baseline fencing to make the field available for community use when not scheduled for permitted use. We recommended that DPR closely monitor field condition for the first year of use, including through more frequent Field Rover visits. We further recommended that DPR work with the County Manager and the Board to ensure DPR's field maintenance budget is sufficient to adequately maintain the county's outdoor athletic fields.
- Gunston Middle School softball field – The Commission supported efforts by the Arlington Sports Foundation to raise private funds to cover the cost of using synthetic turf instead of natural grass for this field's planned renovation. The Commission recommended authorizing transferring \$190,000 from the Diamond Field Fund to this project. The Board authorized the County Manager to use such funds and to further accept \$180,000 from the Arlington Sports Foundation to fund the synthetic turf.
- Storage facility at Greenbrier Park – The Commission recommended authorizing using \$33,000 from the Diamond Field Fund to build a storage facility at Greenbrier Park to store field maintenance equipment for the diamond fields. The facility was completed in 2017.

B. Ongoing Projects

Much of the Commission's work in 2017 focused on the improvement and preservation of county fields, understanding whether these facilities are being used in the most effective way possible, and helping manage long-term demand issues.

- The Commission has been an active participant in the Planning Our Public Spaces process, providing commentary on the draft plan, particularly the methodology behind the proposed service standards upon which future expansion decisions will be based. The Commission has informally examined differences between the age distribution of the county's population and the age distribution of respondents to DPR's public space needs survey.

- The Commission was represented on the Four Mile Run Valley Working Group, where it advocated for the preservation of all existing sports amenities and the addition of fitness and small sport amenities and unprogrammed green spaces. The Commission also strongly advocated that the DPR-acquired properties in the Jennie Dean Park planning area west of Nelson Street should be used for sports and recreational purposes.
- The Commission was asked to work with DPR and sport user groups to further improve DPR's new field allocation policy by making recommendations on residency requirements and new sport user group requirements. The process resulted in recommendations to help prioritize among new user applicants, ensure county assets are used predominantly by county residents, and ease new users into existing use patterns with minimal disruption.
- The Commission collected data from sport user groups to analyze field use practices (particularly density of use, i.e., number of players using the fields during practices) to determine whether density can be increased without degrading the quality of the user's experience. One goal is to determine if fields can be used more intensely, thus increasing overall capacity without needing to develop more facilities. The Commission also sought input from respective sports' governing bodies to compare any "national" practice standards to Arlington practice formats and determine if any Arlington sports groups are already enduring more dense practice environments than are commonly suggested (i.e., practices in Arlington may already be denser due to current facility limitations).
- The Commission looks for ways to make even small additions to field inventory. In that regard, it made inquiries into whether the concrete courts at the Washington-Lee High School parking garage (currently used for futsal and other county programs) could be converted to a synthetic turf playing field. The facility is owned/governed by the Virginia Department of Transportation. Inquiry is ongoing.
- As part of the Joint Facility Advisory Committee's deliberations on the Buck and Carlin Springs properties, the Commission advocated that one of the two properties should include a new playing field.
- The Commission's Diamond Field Fund Committee engages regularly with the diamond field user groups to identify potential projects. In addition to the two projects cited above, the Committee recommended a third project to install a new concrete pad at the Greenbrier batting cage. The project was accepted but ultimately cancelled because it could not be completed within the approved funding allocation.
- One Commission member worked with the Out-of-School-Time Commission (OST) to better understand how sports fit into the other after school activity options for students in Arlington County. A member of the OST Commission, Jennifer Endo, also presented to the Sports Commission educating the commission on the barriers that keep the underserved from accessing sports opportunities in the county. Jennifer also prepared a summary for all commission members "Making it Easy for Youth to Participate in Sports – Best Practices," which was distributed to the commission members and their organizations.

- The Commission received periodic updates about the Long Bridge Park plan. Commission members reviewed and commented on the various pool designs and supported the design recommended by the County Manager.

Communication

The Sports Commission provided formal input and communication to the Board, County Manager, or other entities on a range of topics in 2017.

Statement/Letter	To/Date	Outcome
Stratford Middle School Athletic Field/Use Permit – considering modifying the plans to allow for a full-sized rectangular field	County Board 3/6/17	No apparent revisions being considered.
Input on the FY 18 Budget – allocate DPR feasibility study funds to identify a possible location for an indoor sports athletic center, convert temporary gymnastics and aquatics staff positions to permanent, and allocate funds to leave Yorktown restrooms open during the winter	County Manager 3/19/17	Temporary staff positions were converted to permanent status. No progress on feasibility study for an athletic center or funding Yorktown restrooms.
Position on Lighting Williamsburg Fields – light the fields but add appropriate mitigation including an MOA between DPR and the neighborhood and a Friends of Williamsburg Field group to help improve communication	County Board 6/7/17	The County Board directed DPR to study ways to add field capacity in north Arlington.
Membership to the PFRC – request for a permanent Sports Commission role on the Public Facilities Review Commission	County Board 6/27/17	Request was denied; Sports Commission is encouraged to identify individual projects where its participation would be useful.
Benjamin Banneker Park – in support of the proposed park redesign plans	County Board 11/26/17	Framework plan adopted by Board.
Joint PRC/SC Letter to the 4MRVWG – Park and Recreation and Sports Commission joint commentary on the Four Mile Run Valley Working Group’s deliberations	Working Group 11/28/17	4MRVWG agreed to discuss the letter at a subsequent meeting.

Arlington Aquatics Committee 2017 Activities

Structure and Membership

The Arlington Aquatics Committee is composed of ten members (five appointed by the Arlington County Board and five appointed by the Arlington Public Schools (APS) Board). Members of the Committee include Donald Hesse, Chair (DPR selected), Cynthia Hilton Vice-Chair (APS selected), Guy Land (APS selected), MacKenzie Kearney (APS selected), Anna Necheles (DPR selected), Diane Romanek (DPR selected), Marilyn Judson (DPR selected), Janet Eichers (DPR selected), Kristi Sawert (APS selected), and Ron Kampeas (APS selected).

The committee has a DPR staff liaison, Jennifer Lainhart, and an APS staff liaison, Helena Machado. Erik Vandemeulebroecke (County Board appointed representative) ended his term in 2017 and was replaced by Marilyn Judson. Two new School Board representatives (Kristi Sawert and Ron Kampeas) were appointed in 2017.

The Arlington Aquatics Committee met eight times in 2017 (three times at the Washington and Lee pool, three times at the Wakefield pool and two times at the Yorktown pool). Committee members also met at the November 28 Arlington County Board meeting.

Participation in Work Groups, Committees, and Other Processes

The Vice Chair of the committee attended meetings concerning plans for development of new high school spaces. The Chair attended key stakeholder meetings in preparation for the FY 2019 budget.

Issues Addressed in 2017

The committee provided recommendations to the APS Director of Aquatics Management for changes or modifications to the existing Pool Rules and Regulations. The committee began its review and update of the current Joint Aquatics Committed Charter to comply with the latest Arlington County Advisory Group Charter format.

Communication

Statement/Letter	To/Date
Input on the FY 18 Budget	County Board & School Board
Long Bridge Aquatics and Fitness Center	County Board 11/28/17