

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission
Draft

Summary of July 24, 2017 Meeting
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Azalea Conference Room

Members Present: Christine Ng, John Seymour, Claire O’Dea, John Bloom, Irwin Kim, Adanna Woodson, Mike Mesmer, Kimberley Fedinatz, Gabriel Thoumi

Members Absent: Mike Hanna, Scott Dicke, Sarah Meservey,

Guests: Marta Layseca, Suzanne Sundburg, Liz Kirby, Daniel Lopez, Larry Suiters, Roy Gamses, Gail Harrison, Nedim Kirimca, Eric Lotke, Kurt Louis, Caroline Haynes

Staff Present: Adam Segel-Moss, Lisa Grandle, Matt Pfeiffer, Laura Lazour, June Locker

1. Williamsburg Lighting Presentation– Robin Leonard (DPR)

Liz Kirby, Daniel Lopez, Larry Suiters, Gail Harrison, Nadim Kirimca, Roy Gamses Daniel Lopez, and Kurt Louis provided public comment on the Williamsburg Lighting Process and County staff recommendation. Most commenters were neighborhood residents and also members of the Williamsburg Lights Working Group. Representatives of the Arlington Soccer Association and other sports user groups also attended and provided comments. Some residents provided written comments which are attached at the end of these meeting minutes. Resident comments included issues regarding:

Process leading up to the Work Group process was flawed because residents had been assured repeatedly that lights would not be installed;

No comprehensive analysis of all possible lighted and unlighted fields has occurred;

No EA has been completed, despite the requests of the Work Group and E2C2;

The need for additional sports fields in North Arlington is unclear from the data;

Environmental impacts to wildlife have not been assessed fully;

Impacts to human health from bright LED lights have not been assessed fully;

Concern about Musco’s sole-source contract with the County and its role in counseling the County on lighting issues.

Photometrics have not been provided as requested, because Musco claims much of its data is proprietary;

Light color concern and health effects

Tree impacts from installation activities

Traffic Impacts from increased use of the fields

Noise from field use, given the exemption of DPR fields from the County noise ordinance;

Light technology is evolving quickly and may improve with time;
Lights proposed may be different than actual installed technology;
If this field is lighted then it means anything in Arlington may be lighted; and
All of the lighting designs require a significant increase in permissible structure height and a variance from County zoning limits;
Sports users also provided comments, including
Arlington has a rapidly growing soccer population and limited field availability;
Relatively few lighted fields exist in North Arlington compared with South Arlington;
Many travel players live in N. Arlington but travel to S. Arlington; and
Reasonable mitigation measures can be introduced to address neighbor concerns.

Staff (Robin Leonard of DPR and others) presented on the County analysis and Manager Recommendations. Staff reviewed the history, development, and ultimate work product of the Work Group. Staff also detailed the robust process that occurred to engage residents and create an opportunity for consensus. No consensus was reached, however, and the Open to Lighting and Opposed to Lighting positions were reviewed. The Public Spaces Master Plan Policy was also reviewed to provide background as to why lights were being discussed for this site.

Following the comment period, John Seymour revised the draft E2C2 letter based on Commission input. The draft letter provides suggestions and identifies technical issues that remain unresolved. Some of these issues include Commission concern about the absence of an EA, projected levels of glare that appear to exceed acceptable industry standards, unresolved potential health risks from the proposed LED lights, noise concerns from nighttime use of the fields, and the absence of technical data from Musco that would help to better understand likely lighting effects. The draft does not take a position on the ultimate issue. The neighbors and Work Group do not have information to confirm actual photometric calculations.

The Commission discussed how they lack a comprehensive vision of where lights are needed in the County and what sites might be most appropriate. John Seymour noted that the Opposed to Lighting report attempts to list “neutral criteria” to help the County identify sites County-wide that are appropriate and inappropriate for field lighting. The POPs draft also identifies some criteria to weigh in evaluating candidate fields.

The Commission discussed that lights will be an inconvenience regardless as compared to current conditions, but the main question was whether there was enough mitigation to make this work in the Williamsburg neighborhood.

Ultimately residents feel that the light effects can't be mitigated. All of the lighting iterations that have been prepared by Musco, would not, they maintain, be suitable for LZ1 dark residential communities. It was noted that adverse effects extend beyond direct lighting effects such as glare and potential health impacts. Other impacts of concern include

transportation congestion, a needed waiver of long-standing zoning limits, excessive noise, tree impacts, and more.

Irwin Kim asked if staff feels that the lights meet clear Dark Sky IESNA specs. Staff do feel that it meets the specs. Residents don't feel it meets the threshold. Irwin noted the importance of this divergence. Both parties have the same information and different perspectives of quantitative data. In particular, the neighbors' lighting expert concluded that the "best case" design continued to violate acceptable standards for glare and that projected light spill levels could not be verified given the data provided.

Gabriel asked how this can be resolved. Staff noted that they've focused on mitigation. Staff were given a charge to determine whether potential lighting effects could be mitigated sufficiently to "protect the character of the neighborhood and provide a reasonable quality of life" to the neighbors. Staff feel as though they have provided a multitude of options that would lessen the impacts and mitigate lighting on the neighborhood. The Community is not in agreement with staff and feel that lights are not appropriate for this site, many questions remain unanswered, photometric data has not been provided, and no County-wide comprehensive process occurred to justify the placement of lights at Williamsburg.

The Commission discussed how to deal with the pending draft. The Commission discussed the importance of making sure the letter provides useful guidance to the County Board. For that reason, the Commission will revisit the letter at the August meeting. This will allow the Commission to weigh further the content of the letter, message to the Board, and possible recommendations.

2. Lubber Run Discussion and Letter Review

Suzanne Sundburg, Marta Layseca, and Eric Lotke all provided public comment. Ms. Sundburg noted that there are water issues on the site that haven't been taken into account in the design. She noted Ashlawn as an example of a project that wasn't managed well and should be learned from. She noted that 109 trees are proposed to be removed. It was clear that the design team could move this project more to the north and east to save higher value trees and maintain more wooded area. She expressed that if the Commission decides to push back the project may still be amended.

Eric Lotke provided written comments in advance to the commission his comments are attached at the end of these meeting minutes.

Marta Layseca noted that she was astonished at the speed of this project compared to the Williamsburg Lighting process. She noted concerns about the park impacts, boardwalk, and overall design.

Adanna Woodson provided an update on the Lubber Run project.

Christine asked why this project came together so quickly as compared to other projects. Staff noted that most other projects are by Use Permit. This project was set to track with the CIP process. There was also an extensive process to work on the scope of the project prior to inception. The scope was crafted based on specific County needs that needed to be accommodated at this site. This was a process that started in the spring of 2015.

Gabriel noted frustration about repeated projects that express a commitment to solar and then have it removed at the last minute due to budget issues. Claire agreed and noted that this may be helpful as a separate letter to really make this point to the Board.

The Commission reviewed the draft letter and decided to revise it further based on discussion. No vote occurred. The final draft letter will be reviewed and approved at the August 28 meeting.

3. Meeting Summary Review – June

Approved

4. Old/New Business

Christine noted that the Commission is still working to fill outstanding positions.

Claire noted that the POPS process will be discussed at the August meeting due to time constraints. She noted continued concern about the lack of focus on open space and unprogrammed space.