DISSENTING STATEMENT TO THE SALONA TASK FORCE REPORT

JOEL E. STILLMAN

SALONA PARK TASK FORCE MEMBER REPRESENTING MCLEAN YOUTH ATHLETICS, INC.

June 4, 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Salona Task Force issued the Salona Task Force Report to the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) and the Board of Supervisors on December 18, 2013. Based on the failure of the Task Force to faithfully fulfil its mission as well as the inability to voice alternative views within the report, this Dissenting Statement is offered by Mclean Youth Athletics (MYA). Our objective is to provide a full and transparent report to FCPA, the Board of Supervisors and the community on the findings of the Task Force that reflect a more inclusive view of the needs and wants of the Mclean community.

The mission of the Salona Task Force, as stated on the FCPA website, is:

"The Task Force will serve as an advisory body. Its members will represent a wide range of public interests. The Task Force shall expand on efforts to bring the diverse ideas and perspectives of the community into the park planning process. The Task Force ***shall reach out to the community and interested groups to solicit and develop recommendations*** *that can be incorporated into the Master Plan. The recommendations adopted by the Task Force* ***shall seek to reflect the consensus of the community*** *and be consistent with the conservation easement and the financial investment made by the Board of Supervisors and the FCPA."(Emphasis added)*

MYA views this mission as our guideposts on to how to conduct ourselves, how to solicit input from the broadest reach of our community and how to accurately and openly reflect those findings in the Task Force Report that was recently issued. We find that the Task Force has failed in meeting the mission's guideposts as presented:

- The Salona Task Force did not conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Salona Task Force mission as stated above.
- The Salona Task Force Report is disingenuous and incomplete as it does not accurately reflect information collected from the community with respect to the needs and desires of the community.
- The Task Force Report is misleading and incomplete as it omits relevant and reliable documentation received by the Salona Task Force from the community with respect to the needs and desires of the community.

McLean Youth Athletics serves as a sport centric umbrella organization that serves the needs and desires related to youth sports for over 7,500 participants in the Mclean area. We have acted faithfully and diligently throughout the Task Force process in representing our membership and the taxpayers of Fairfax County and we have actively participated in the process through a representative on the Task Force, attendance at Task Force Meetings and the Task Force community meeting. Our membership is well aware of the lack of respect from the Task Force who has acted to silence our voices throughout the process.

It is obvious from all that follows that the Task Force Report is biased at a minimum and borders on false and misleading given that it does not include a significant amount of relevant information gathered from the community.

What follows is a more transparent view of what the Task Force found and how it chose to not to reflect those findings in the Task Force Report.

I - THE TASK FORCE REPORT IS MISLEADING AND INACCURATE

The mission clearly states the purpose of the Task Force was to solicit input from the community regarding their interests for Salona Park. While the Task Force invited certain groups from the community to present to the group, the Task Force Report omitted important and significant content from the results of the communication received from these presentations. In addition, the Task Force has consistently refused to receive comments from the community outside of these presentations and in situations where they have received feedback they have intentionally omitted it from the Task Force Report. This appears to be an intentional effort on the part of the Task Force to suppress the opinions and feedback of select parts of the community. The Task Force Report as written is inconsistent with the mission of the Task Force and lacking in the expression of fundamental facts and knowledge gained by the Task Force.

The minutes of the January 2014 Task Force meeting reflect MYA's vote against approval of the Task Force Report as issued because the Report omitted the vital feedback obtained from the community supporting uses not included in the recommendations made by the Task Force.

Throughout the process the Task Force suppressed all efforts to allow the community to openly participate in the process by denying recommendations by Task Force members to establish a website, email box or other mechanisms to provide input regarding their needs and wants for Salona Park. In fact, a proposal from MYA to establish processes or mechanisms to allow community input was rejected by the Task Force.

The process of the Task Force reflects the inappropriateness of the Task Force Report itself. For example, the minutes of many meetings were repeatedly edited and changed to not reflect statements and ideas presented that fell outside of what the Task Force was interested in hearing. This issue culminated in the final Task Force meeting where meeting minutes did not reflect statements made by the MYA member. The MYA member comments were supported by written statements provided to the Task Force from two members of the public attending the meeting yet were still suppressed and not included in the minutes. Further evidence of

suppression of opinion was evidenced by the Task Force rejection of a motion to allow the inclusion of concurring or dissenting statements along with the Task Force Report. As such, the MYA representative to the Task Force is compelled to issue this Dissenting Statement separately.

Following is a list of reasons as to why the Task Force Report is disingenuous, misleading and inaccurate.

1. The Task Force Report represents the Task Force member's personal opinions rather than what the community wants and needs.

    a. The report speaks to the **opinion of what Task Force members want** for Salona as opposed to what it has found out over the course of its deliberations as to **what the community wants**. The Report completely ignores the expressed desires of a large segment of the community regarding the inclusion of athletic fields in Salona Park.
    b. Minutes from the Task Force meetings show deliberations whether the Report should reflect the **opinions** of the Task Force members or reflect the needs and wants of the community for uses at Salona Park. It is clear from the Task Force Report that it reflects their personal opinion and not what the community wants.
    c. It does not present a "consensus" of the community as mandated in its mission statement. If it is believed by the Task Force that there is no consensus then all wants and desires of the community should be reported in the report without coming to a conclusion.
    d. The Task Force Report therefore is not inclusive as intended by the Mission Statement and is thus inaccurate and misleading and should be revised to include information obtained from the community.

2. The Task Force Report omits large amounts of information collected from the community regarding proposed uses for Salona Park.

    a. Petitions were submitted to the Task Force with over **2,500 signatures supporting two rectangular unlit grass fields as permitted in the Easement Agreement.** No mention of these petitions is included in the Task Force Report.
    b. The Task Force organized a community meeting at the McLean Community Center to solicit feedback from the community. Comment cards were submitted to the Task Force by over 500 attendees that indicated **63% of the respondents favored athletic fields or athletic fields with other uses** at Salona Park. Only 11% of respondents indicated opposition to fields at Salona Park. The Task Force Report makes no mention of the feedback received from the community or reference to the community event at all.
    c. The Task Force Report states that there is no funding from Fairfax County for Salona Park and then goes into possible contributions from the community for all uses except athletic fields. The Task Force Report fails to mention that the McLean Youth Athletic groups presented to the Task Force that they would fund the construction of the two non-lit grass fields.

3. Every group that presented to the Task Force is discussed and quoted frequently but there is no discussion of the MYA presentation and proposal for fields that maintain the rural nature of the property by designing and constructing the fields as follows:

    a. Design and construct the fields to fit within the existing open space while retaining the existing hedge groves
    b. Do not install any permanent goals on the fields
    c. Do not install any permanent spectator bleachers on the fields
    d. Do not install any player benches on the fields
    e. Do install any lines on the fields
    f. Limit the use of the fields to the younger age groups which have the most demand as a result of lost fields at the elementary schools in the Mclean area and limit usage to 4-7 pm during the week and 9am -6pm on Saturday. Permits will only be issued for usage at that time which allows Salona Park to be utilized for other uses on Sunday and throughout the week during school hours for educational purposes.

4. The Task Force Report accommodates almost every idea presented to the Task Force except the athletic fields that are supported by the community.

5. Although the Task Force Report indicates that there is no room for athletic fields it enumerates numerous other uses that taken together would appear to be impossible to accommodate. The Report states that "given what we now know about the conditions of Salona it cannot accommodate a parking lot for athletic fields" but then suggests a parking lot for other uses.

6. Although there is a discussion of the perceived negative environmental effects of a grass athletic field (so called fertilizer problems, run off problems, etc.), there is not the same discussion for farming or other uses.

7. The Task Force Report asserts that the "character and public perception of the property as a natural and historic landmark would fundamentally change with the construction of athletic fields and their active use. This assertion is incorrect and irrelevant for the following reasons:

    a. There are numerous athletic fields and activities near the Washington Monument and other historic landmarks. No one has claimed that these activities ruin or diminish the historic relevance of the monuments around them.
    b. The Bull Run Park in the Manassas Battlefield has a significant number of athletics field yet the character of the venue has not diminished.
    c. The athletic fields as proposed are as natural as you can get. The MYA proposal for athletics fields at Salona goes further than the specifications in the Easement and contemplates no permanent lines, no permanent goals, no bleachers, and no player benches.

d. The assertion is irrelevant because the easement specifically contemplated active uses by allowing for the construction of athletic fields. The property was intended to be used for not only cultural and historic purposes but in conjunction with active uses on athletic fields.

8. The Task Force Report makes no mention nor provides any discussion of

   a. The fact that specific dimensions and requirements for the athletic fields are written in the Easement Agreement
   b. Public comments at the time of the creation of the Easement Agreement supported use of athletic fields at Salona park
   c. The purchase price paid by the County contemplated this use.

9. The need for and the availability of existing athletic fields is inaccurately portrayed.

   a. Citation for the number of turf fields in the Dranesville District is misleading because it includes areas far outside of McLean.

      i. In 2005 there was 1 synthetic field and today there are 6 synthetic fields in McLean plus 2 others at the high schools (Mclean and Langley). Mclean Youth sports have limited access to the fields at Mclean High School and no access to the field at Langley High School. The installation of a synthetic surface on existing fields does not in fact increase playing time and only provides for un-interrupted use due to inclement weather.
      ii. The significant loss of fields in the Mclean area is not offset by the installation of synthetic turf on existing fields. During the past 4 years the Mclean community has experienced permanent loss of 8 unlit natural grass fields as a result of the construction of county facilities on these fields. During the past 10 years no new fields have been added in the Mclean area.
      iii. The other fields mentioned are in Herndon and Reston which MYA does not and cannot use.

   b. MYA outdoor youth sports have almost doubled in the past 10 years as girls sports have increased in popularity.
      i. Soccer 3,250
      ii. Lacrosse 1,000
      iii. Field Hockey 80
      iv. Track 400
      v. Rugby 60

10. Contrary to the report's assertion, Langley Fork is not a substitute for Salona because the field shortage experienced in Mclean requires fields at both locations to help offset the shortage. This in no way meets the demand and needs of the youth community as noted in the County's assessment of field needs in the Mclean area.

a. Langley Fork and Salona are the only two open spaces available for athletic fields.
b. The proposed Master Plan at Langley Fork is only a plan, it is not guaranteed. There are significant traffic and parking issues associated with the plan at Langley Fork and there is significant neighborhood resistance there similar to what has transpired at Salona Park.
c. The National Park Service must prepare an environmental impact study and assess the impact of the plan on the local community and traffic will most likely be a significant issue. This means that potentially only 2 fields are approved which does not provide any additional net time to the Mclean youth.
d. Appraisals must be made to make sure the swap is equal and in the likely event the two properties are not balanced in value one party will need to make a financial contribution to the other.
e. The local neighborhood community opposition has already reached out to the National Park Service in an attempt to express their concerns and desires to have the land exchange and Master Plan for Langley Fork abandoned. Thus it cannot be reasonable assured that the plan for Langley Fork will move forward in its current form.

II - THE SALONA TASK FORCE REPORT IS CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT, TERMS AND STATED PURPOSE OF THE EASEMENT AGREEMENT.

McLean Youth Athletics, Inc. agrees with and supports many of the cultural, historical, and environmental recommendations, as well as, the need to address neighborhood traffic and safety concerns that are in the Task Force Report. However, the Task Force Report is fundamentally flawed and disingenuous and its recommendations are not consistent with the original spirit and intent of the terms of the Open Space and Conservation Easement for the Salona Agreement (hereinafter "Easement Agreement").

In 2005 the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors entered an agreement with the DuVal family to acquire an easement on approximately 41 acres of land owned by the DuVal family in exchange for $16 million of Fairfax County taxpayer money. This transaction represented the most expensive land transaction in Fairfax County government history up to that date.

The Easement Agreement provides for specific permitted and non-permitted active recreation uses on up to 10 of the 41 acres at Salona. As described in section 3.9 of the Easement Agreement, in great detail, the permitted recreational uses include two rectangular natural grass athletic fields (maximum size 230' x 360' and 265' x 420') and related support facilities. The specific details pertaining to the construction of athletic fields stated in the Easement supports the fact that fields were one of the primary uses intended for Salona Park.

This is further supported by public statements by two Fairfax County government officials regarding the acquisition of the easement.

County Supervisor John Foust explained to the community at a Fairfax County Park Authority public forum held on November 17, 2010 that although it was always intended that the ultimate uses for the property would be determined by the community through the Park Authority's master planning process, "**The opportunity to deliver two playing fields to McLean was a key factor in the Board of Supervisors agreeing to purchase this very, very expensive property."**

Similarly, Kevin Fay, Dranesville District representative to the Fairfax County Park Authority Board at the time of the purchase, said during a televised NBC interview, "**I was in the room. It was stated by the County Executive that this deal would not happen unless there were athletic fields as part of the arrangement."**

The Task Force Report, however, makes only a passing reference to the Conservation Easement's original content citing the inclusion of athletic fields and the specific details regarding their construction and makes no reference to public official comments. It is clear, based on these public statements and the terms and condition of the Easement Agreement, that playing fields were an essential part of the plan for Salona Park and one of the critical justifications for the County's commitment to pay the Duval family the sum of $16 million. Accordingly, the only option is to include the construction of the athletic fields at Salona Park.

III- MYA'S RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the research of the Task Force, the intent of the Easement, expressed words from public officials and the needs and wants from the community, it is the recommendation of MYA that the Park Authority proceed forward with the Draft Master Plan with slight modifications as follows:

1. Eliminate the playground and picnic area.
2. Eliminate the dog park.
3. Include an approximate 5,000 square foot building to be used for educational opportunities for the community based on the unique natural environmental features and historical and cultural aspects of Salona Park.
4. Include areas for agriculture and educational pursuits.
5. Include adult exercise stations (including senior citizen stations) located along the network of trails.
6. Eliminate any permanent goals and related structures to the athletic fields (except to maintain a small structure to house the irrigation system needed for the natural grass athletic fields) thus maintaining the rural and rustic nature of Salona.
7. Build the two athletic fields consistent with the new RPA at Salona Park. See Exhibit A.

Summary

Mclean Youth Athletics thanks Supervisor Foust for including us in the Salona Park Task Force. Over the past two years of participation on the Task Force we are troubled by the process that was followed, the suppression of the voice of the community and ultimately the distortions within the Task Force Report that was issued. We ask that the report as issued should be rejected or that at minimum our Dissenting Statement be included in the report.

Respectively Submitted,

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Joel E. Stillman, President
McLean Youth Athletics
Salona Park Task Force Member

EXHIBIT 1


4000 Sq Ft Education Center
Dolley Madison Blvd.
Buchanan St
Parking Lot
Field 210 X 360
Field 180 X 360
Kurtz Rd
Oaniel Rd
Salona House
SALONA PARK
CONCEPTUAL LAYOUT
0 150 300
Feet
DRAFT Aug 2013