

Friends of Royal Lake (FORL)
Community Meeting
Laurel Ridge Elementary
February 27, 2019
7pm

1. Paul Gross welcomed everyone and showed the map of our Royal Lake parks. He mentioned the history of FORL, including getting the exercise equipment replaced, and noting that FORL had drafted a Community Vision Plan for Royal Lake. He also made the distinction between some Friends groups (which are official 501-C-3 organizations) and FORL, which is a Park Volunteer Team within the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA).
2. Paul discussed the “FORL Priority List” which was handed out to all attendees. He noted the trail from Roberts to the lake needs improvement, and that the topic of a trail from Commonwealth to Lakeside Park has generated some controversy. It looks as though some of the broken-down wooden bridges will be replaced by culverts—as maintenance projects (not capital improvements).
3. FORL’s number one priority for a capital improvement is replacement of the bridge over Rabbit Branch. FORL will prioritize items based on community input and Kings Park West Civic Association input as well.
4. Crime note: An attendee noted that 2 gray sedans had recently pulled up to the park and the passengers had left their cars, dropped some bags, and also picked up some bags and returned to their cars. The police were called to investigate if this might be drug activity. Frank Cumberland noted that we should keep this kind of thing in mind as some voices in the community propose new paths from Commonwealth (and even Braddock) to Lakeside Park. While our neighbors can lock the gates to parking areas at night, we would be unable to stop drug dealers from walking into our park at night on pedestrian/paved paths, as has been discussed.
5. We wish to get a shade structure built in the picnic area at Lakeside Park. We would like more trees planted in the area between the picnic grounds and the baseball field. More benches are a possibility, and we have requested more trash cans. FCPA will take down the Junipers at some point. We’d like to see the paved Path from Richardson to the park repaved, as it has fallen into disrepair; an attendee suggested perhaps a wooden structure would work as well or better. There is the possibility of a loop or switchback replacing the LakePointe trail down to the lake, which is now heavily eroded.

6. There was further discussion of paving a trail from Commonwealth to Lakeside Park. Frank noted that the drop-down grades from Commonwealth to the forest floor are extremely steep, and we would likely see bike clubs hurtling down the asphalt at high speeds, just as our Charlie Brown soccer players and their siblings are walking up the pavement in the opposite direction. Paul said perhaps we should consider installing stairs.
7. We discussed improving the Braddock Nights area.
8. Paul noted the Roberts Road trail to the lake is mushy, especially in the portion of the trail nearest Roberts Road. Most of the rest of the trail is solid and in good shape. Paul noted that sometimes FCPA will reclassify an official trail into a "social trail."
9. James Walkinshaw, Candidate for Supervisor, was introduced to the gathering.
10. Sarah Lennon discussed the many handouts, including one which describes the 2020 Bond process, and noted that we can still add desired projects to our Priority List.

(At this point in the meeting (8pm), Mary Boyer took over note-taking for Frank Cumberland, who had to leave early.)

11. Dawn Dunning voiced concerns about Peterson's site development on Braddock and Roberts Rd. across from George Mason University. She had attended the Oak View meeting about it. She lives on Allenby Road and is worried about more traffic and storm water runoff. She said her backyard is like a swamp and doesn't want it to get worse. With cars idling on Robert's Road, the ozone levels increase in the summer and she worries how the air quality is affecting her family.
12. Amy Gould from the Braddock Land Use Committee discussed the Peterson proposal. The Peterson site is 10 acres and there were disagreements on the number of houses per acre. At first, 4.3 houses were debated but they needed 5 houses per acre to make it feasible. They will also save some old growth trees and build in storm water management. The county accepted the proposal because they didn't want George Mason University buying the land. The University didn't have to follow regulations regarding storm water, etc.
13. The Training Center did not have storm water management but Erickson, who is taking over that site, will provide it, in accordance with County ordinances.
14. New Website: Before the end of June, FORL will have a new website. A Robinson senior, Britney, is developing it but someone will have to take it over after that. Photography will be needed and Lynne Cline said she would send in some photos.

15. We were all encouraged to take the 5 question “Fairfax Countywide Strategic Plan” survey. Using those words will take you to a Fairfax County website and scrolling down, you will find “take a short survey” or use <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan/>
16. Mary Boyer explained how toxic nandina bush berries were to birds. The berries needed to be cut.
17. Paul Gross answered questions about the master plan. Kevin Hough stated, “We need more trash cans at the soccer field.” Paul explained how few trash containers were left and we were trying to get more.
18. Paul also explained that people want the trails to be as natural as possible. We will not have paved trails unless absolutely necessary in some spots.

Frank Cumberland
FORL Notetaker
With a much-appreciated assist from Mary Boyer!