



NORTHWOOD NEWS

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Getting What We Want for North Four Corners Park

By Carole A. Barth

In September, Park and Planning released a revised set of options for North Four Corners Park. They have asked for public input by October 12th and plan to go back to the Planning Board in late November. The next opportunity for comment would be at the Planning Board meeting, but it is extremely unlikely that MNCPPC will change its decision. In other words, we need to strongly voice our concerns to the County Council (county.council@montgomerycounty.md.gov) and the County Executive (ocemail@montgomerycountymd.gov).

If you have not received a copy of the options, they are on the Parks website at www.mc-mncppc.org/silverspring/public_projects/four_corners_park.shtm.

The revised options are substantially different from what was presented at Park and Planning's June meeting. For example, there is a new alternative (Alternative 4) that contains no fields at all and which would reclassify the park from a neighborhood park to a local park. (Local parks supposedly serve more than one neighborhood but these designations are actually completely arbitrary.)

This new alternative goes farther than the one we presented four years ago. (Our plan kept the existing youth-only practice field at its current size with the goals removed.) As a Civic Association, we have not formally considered a no-field option.

Of course, we need not limit our choice to the alternatives as currently packaged by MNCPPC staff. We could, for example, say we'd like to keep the existing field as it is, have a "passive" park on the new parcel, and change the designation to local park. I think, however, what's most important is to advocate for what we want and clearly state what we don't want.

For four years we have said:

- We want minimal improvements on the new parcel to provide a family-friendly park which preserves the essential attractive character of the site.
- We want to keep the rolling hills and the 175-year-old walnut tree.
- We want to keep the large oak trees near the existing parking lot.
- We want to keep the rec center.
- We do not want a large soccer field anywhere in the

park.

- We do not want adult teams and/or large groups
(continued on page 3)

Next Meeting on 10/10/07

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Wednesday, 10 October 2007 at 7:30 p.m. at the North Four Corners Rec Center. The Rec Center is located at the end of Southwood Rd., just off Edgewood Dr. First item on the agenda will be election of new officers.

All residents of the Northwood-Four Corners-Forest Knolls area are invited to attend and express their views. Please note that only paid members of the NFCCA are eligible to vote. (Annual dues are \$10 per household and may be paid at the meeting.)■

OCTOBER						
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's hard to believe that Fall has rolled around again. (Of course the 80 degree temperature as I write may have something to do with my disbelief.) As a child, I always thought Fall was the best time to head outside for a good long ramble gathering flowers from the meadow and hickory nuts from the woods. I worry that fewer and fewer of today's children know this pleasure. In fact, children today spend an average of six hours a day with the computer and TV but less than four minutes a day in outside unstructured play.

As we continue the fight for North Four Corners Park (see article, page 1), it boggles me that the park planners put almost no value on such unstructured play. To them, a park is either devoted to organized sports (so-called "active recreation") or it is not being adequately used. They denigrate most nature-based pursuits as "passive recreation."

Is it passive to play pirate ship on a big rock? To catch and release fireflies, tadpoles, or crayfish? To hunt for and eat persimmons that have been gentled by the frost? To wish on a milkweed fairy? How about flying kites and climbing trees? Organized sports have a lot to offer, but my childhood would have been impoverished without these and a thousand more adventures.

But because they require no regulation equipment, organized leagues, or construction, these pastimes are somehow not deemed worth

the price of the parkland. To put it another way, is there a cost to our children losing what Rachel Carson called the "inborn sense of wonder"?

Richard Louv, in his book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*, cites research showing that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development. At the same time, he recounts how nature pursuits benefit kids with obesity, depression, and ADD. Environmental education measurably improves student performance in science, reading, math, and social studies, as well as reducing discipline problems.

And what about our planet's future? How will tomorrow's adults cope with serious environmental problems if they have no direct understanding or experience of the natural world? Rep. John Sarbanes, sponsor of the No Child Left Inside Act, said, "Nothing is more important than giving every Maryland student the basic knowledge to understand these complicated problems and figure out how we should respond, both as a society and as individuals."

Recently, I was explaining to a school principal how the dragonflies (or mosquito hawks) perch on tall flowers to watch for prey. The principal told me that the kids (and the teachers!) are afraid of those big bugs. I was stunned and saddened to think that these beautiful, elegant, and supremely useful

insects have become so unknown as to be a source of fear. I shouldn't have been surprised, however. One study found that kids could document 1,000 corporate logos but fewer than 10 plants or animals native to their backyards.

So do yourself and the kids in your life a favor, get outside this Fall. In the words of Luther Standing Bear, "Man's heart, away from nature, becomes hard; [the Lakota] knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans, too."

—Carole A. Barth

NORTHWOOD NEWS

Northwood News is published by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. The NFCCA represents the 1,493 households in the area bounded by Colesville Rd. (Rte. 29), University Blvd. (Rte. 193), Caddington Ave., and the Northwest Branch.

Any resident of this area is eligible to join the NFCCA. Annual dues are \$10 per household and may be paid at any Association meeting or mailed to the treasurer.

Northwood News is published five times a year—in October, December, February, April, and June. To place an ad or discuss a story, please contact the editor.

Editor

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North Four Corners Park Update

(continued from page 1)
using the existing small field.

■ We do not want to expand the parking in front of the rec center.

It's important to be clear, because MNCPPC continues to misrepresent the facts. For example, they talk about "removing active use areas from proximity to neighboring streets and homes" as if Timberwood Avenue was in Timbuktu and not part of NFCCA. When they talk about the "need" for large soccer fields, their vision includes all of down-county and soccer players from all over the region. When they "looked" for alternative sites for large fields, their tunnel vision was centered on North Four Corners Park.

Fundamentally, the Council and County Executive have to weigh these proposals against everything else that will be proposed for the FY09-FY14 Capital Improvement Program. Hopefully, as they do, they will consider the following points:

■ The methodology MNCPPC used to calculate the need for soccer fields has never been fully subjected to public scrutiny.

■ Poor field conditions and a tortuous reservation system mean that existing fields in the county are not efficiently utilized.

■ When polled., county residents rated "passive" open space activities above sports.

■ The Four Corners area has already lost the Kay Tract trees to Blair High School (and its fields), while new in-

fill housing is removing the last few open lots. Where is the plan to redress our nature deficit?

■ Poor management, inadequate policing, and nearly nonexistent maintenance are the norm at most of MNCPPC's existing facilities; adding more facilities in such a situation is simply irresponsible.

■ The projected cost of this project (\$6 million and counting) could buy a lot more than one soccer field if a more appropriate site or sites were selected. ■

Parents Seek Babysitters

Babysitters who live in Northwood/Four Corners, Forest Knolls, or Kinsman Farm are sought for local parents. Parents in the Northwood Baby Network (with preschool-age children) and who belong to the Northwood Parents list serve (see page 6) are seeking the name of teenagers in the neighborhood who are available for babysitting.

If you are interested, please contact Kirsi Ampe at ampejk@bellatlantic.net or 301.754.0416. References must be supplied.

The resulting list of babysitters will be made available, on request, to parents in the Baby Network and participating in the Northwood Parents list serve. The list will only be made available to parents in these two groups. ■

NFCCA BOARD

The Board of Directors for the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association meets five times a year, in October, December, February, April, and June. Current officers (whose terms end at the October 10 meeting) are:

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Do You Know About Freecycle?

Have you items in your home which are perfectly useable, but just don't suit you anymore? Maybe you've changed sizes and would like to get rid of the clothes that no longer fit. Perhaps someone gave you something but it turns out you aren't able to use it, or just can't stand it!! You have all these fine goods you'd like to get rid of, but don't want to take the trouble to sell them on ebay.

Then you need to know about Freecycle. This is a list serve where people offer goods they no longer want *for free* to folks in their area. There are several Freecycle list serves, but our neighborhood is covered by the Silver Spring Freecycle Group.

This is how it works. You send an email to *Freecycle-SilverSpringMD-subscribe@yahoo.com*; include your name and address so they can confirm you're in this area (no one but the moderator will see this). You'll receive an email welcoming you to the group and giving you "Guidelines and Etiquette" for participating.

You'll begin getting emails (a lot!) from folks offering items they want to give away (or items they're looking for). The subject line for each of these will state either OFFER, TAKEN, WANTED, or RECEIVED, followed by the item and, usually, the approximate location of the offerer. For instance, you may see a subject line which reads: "OFFER: loveseat (20901)." You are not allowed to include your address in your message; you

give that info out only to the person to whom you are gifting your item.

In the body of the email will often be a further description of the item and, sometimes, a more specific location (i.e., "I'm in North Four Corners."). You don't need to open the email if you see by the subject line that you're not interested. Just delete that email and look at the next one.

Posters are asked to be honest. If there's a tear, stain, or it just doesn't work, you are asked to disclose it. Someone may still want it!

The main rule is to keep it free, legal, and "appropriate for all ages" (i.e., no pornography, alcohol, tobacco, firearms, or drugs, legal or otherwise).

Also not permitted: no politics, no religion, no spam, no money, no trading, no personal attacks/rudeness, no services, no advertisements, and no discussion. Those who break the rules twice are thrown out of the group.

Once you've offered an item, you'll get emails directly from folks interested in it. You can choose to whom you wish to give it and arrange pick-up. Usually you put the item you're offering outside your door and the person will come by and pick it up. You don't need to be home or even see the individual. Then you post a "TAKEN" email. If the person doesn't come and pick up the item within the time-frame you've both agreed on, you can contact another person who sent you an email and offer it to them. *Easy!* ■



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<u>Sold</u>	<u>Closed Price</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>bedms</u>	<u>Full bath</u>	<u>Half bath</u>	<u>Days On Market</u>
1303 Caddington Ave	\$410,000	Split Level	4	1	1	5
406 Kerwin Rd	\$438,000	Cape Cod	4	2	0	6
800Whittington Ter	\$405,000	Split Foyer	4	3	0	10
306 Dennis Ave	\$459,000	Cottage	2	2	0	28
807 Malta La	\$465,000	Split Level	4	2	1	43
416 Royalton Rd	\$429,000	Cape Cod	4	2	0	50
10708 Margate Rd	\$485,000	Rambler	4	2	1	51
11019 Lombardy Rd	\$454,000	Rambler	3	2	0	71
709 University Blvd W	\$445,000	Split Level	4	2	1	75
<u>Active</u>	<u>Listed Price</u>					
216 Thistle Ct	\$437,500	Split Level	4	2	0	155
313 Marvin Rd	\$409,900	Colonial	2	2	0	142
11109 Lombardy Rd	\$399,900	Rambler	5	2	0	109
401 Irwin St	\$463,500	Split Level	4	2	1	99
406 Belton Rd	\$462,500	Rambler	4	2	1	86
10703 Lombardy Rd	\$459,000	Rambler	4	1	1	78
12201 Lombardy Rd	\$429,000	Rambler	3	2	0	65
924 Malta Ln	\$449,900	Split Level	5	3	0	60
10617 Eastwood Ave	\$448,000	Cape Cod	3	3	0	52
10611 Eastwood Ave	\$459,900	Cape Cod	6	3	0	43
405 Royalton Rd	\$415,000	Rambler	3	2	0	15
1016 Loxford Ter	\$475,000	Split Level	6	2	1	11
501 Royalton Rd	\$439,000	Rambler	3	2	0	10
10708 Eastwood Ave	\$539,900	Split Level	3	3	0	8



information deemed reliable but not guaranteed
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Stream Spruce-Up

It's time for our annual fall cleanup of Lockridge Creek. Help keep our community attractive and remove invasive weeds. We've been holding biannual cleanups of Lockridge Creek now for 18 years!

Come join us at **9:30 a.m. on Saturday, 20 October.** (Raindate is Sunday, 21 October.) We will start at the Lockridge Drive and Dennis Avenue intersection and work our way into Northwest Branch Park.

It's dirty work, so be sure to bring gloves and wear sturdy shoes, long sleeves, and long pants.

To find out more what it's about, contact Carole Barth at 301.593.7863. ■

Join One or Both NFCCA Email Lists

NFCCA sponsors two email lists. One is the general **NFCCA List Serve**, with general community news, including crime news. Send an email to nfcca-subscribe@yahoogroups.com to join.

The second is for **Northwood Parents**. To join that list, send an email to northwoodparents-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Please note that you do not need to be a member of the Civic Association to participate in either NFCCA list, but we do restrict access to neighborhood residents only. This means you will have to identify yourself and give your address. ■

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Have you considered serving your community by participating on the NFCCA Board? (A new board will be elected at the October 10 meeting.) A current Board member (page 3) will be glad to answer any questions you have. Meetings are only once a month. Think about it!



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Northwood Real Estate Report

September, 2007

Specialist in Northwood Market

Before you make any move in Northwood, Forest Knolls, or Kinsman Farm, I would be pleased to share my insights with you. I will inform you on how the overall market is affecting prices in your Northwood neighborhood.

Silver Spring Market Depressed

The real estate market in Silver Spring is depressed by lower sales volume and higher inventories of unsold houses relative to last year. Moreover, since the mortgage disruption, lower priced homes which generally sell to sub-prime borrowers, are now also harder to sell. Although it looks like average prices are UP in Silver Spring, this is misleading. Actually, many model-to-model sales are down over 10%. Higher priced homes are fairing relatively better.

Call for My Free Market Analysis

I will advise you how to prepare and stage your home to sell for Top Dollar in this market.

Settled Properties	July 1-August 31, 2007			July 1-August 31, 2006		
	# units	Avg. Price	DOM	# units	Avg. Price	DOM
Burnt Mills/NW Branch	1	\$512,000	84	2	\$465,750	53
Colesville	12	\$662,517	124	10	\$520,903	69
Dumont Oaks	6	\$412,000	19	6	\$449,333	48
Forest Knolls	1	\$395,000	10	5	\$454,640	35
Kemp Mill	8	\$496,750	71	15	\$535,203	43
Leisure World	33	\$283,652	100	41	\$285,377	92
Northwood	3	\$457,500	50	9	\$463,085	46
Sligo	14	\$473,581	52	15	\$415,543	34
Springbrook	3	\$830,923	115	12	\$572,566	92
Tivoli	2	\$382,350	70	6	\$400,217	31
University Towers	6	\$183,957	104	10	\$244,083	80
Woodmoor	11	\$510,282	88	8	\$517,941	20
Woodside	23	\$613,988	74	29	\$575,153	34
Forest Glen Metro Area	13	\$443,169	49	29	\$465,332	48
Wheaton Metro Area	24	\$412,256	71	22	\$450,357	58
Wheaton Regional Park	10	\$476,940	62	14	\$516,522	46
<i>Bethesda</i>	220	\$937,335	50	191	\$879,574	49
<i>Chevy Chase</i>	70	\$1,183,897	46	81	\$988,142	45
<i>Kensington</i>	45	\$511,038	36	62	\$588,587	65
<i>Olney</i>	62	\$460,783	55	77	\$490,180	44
<i>Potomac</i>	123	\$1,141,600	87	139	\$1,175,629	71
<i>Rockville</i>	273	\$533,781	63	323	\$516,657	55
Silver Spring	430	\$446,607	77	685	\$433,092	49
<i>Takoma Park</i>	43	\$491,860	50	54	\$487,268	28

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