



Park and Recreation Commission Meeting

Public Hearing

February 20, 2014

City Council Workroom

301 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Speaker Request Form

PURPOSE: City-wide Parks Improvements Plan

Other Topic: _____

Please Print:

Name: MARLIN G. LORD

Address: 2124 HICKORY ST ALEX, VA 22305

Telephone: 703 834 2124

E-mail Address: MGLAIA@aol.com

Check here if you would like to be notified of future Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearings via email: Yes No

Comments: Additional comments please use the back of form

Amile Run - good

Chiniquet - parking in Sun Arrows



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Other Topic: _____

Please Print:

Name: FRANK SHAFRATH

Address: 410 Va. Ave

Telephone: 703 993 8560

E-mail Address: fshafra@dgmw.edu

Check here if you would like to be notified of future Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearings via email: Yes No

Comments: Additional comments please use the back of form

IN SUPPORT OF THE 50 METER NATATORCUM.

A SACRED ASSOC. / SWIMMING. -> +



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Other Topic: _____

Please Print:

Name: KATHRYN A. BROWN

Address: 2724 HICKORY ST, ALEX 22305

Telephone: 7/549-5227

E-mail Address: NEONKANO@aol.com

Check here if you would like to be notified of future Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearings via email: Yes No

Comments: Additional comments please use the back of form

CHINQUAPIN PARK
I SUPPORT RETAINING THE COMMUNITY GARDENS AS THEY ARE.
EXPANSION & IMPROVEMENT WOULD BE WELCOME, BUT
NOT ANY CHANGE OF FORMAT. ADDING COMMUNITY GARDENS
IN OTHER LOCATIONS, SUCH AS OTHER PARKS, PUBLIC SPACES,
OR ARRANGEMENTS IN NON-CITY SPACES, WOULD BE GREAT TOO.



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Please Print:

Name: Bill Hendrickson

Address: 304 E Spring St

Telephone: _____

E-mail Address: whendrick@aol.com

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Please Print:

Name: Gary Carr

Address: 216 Aspen St

Telephone: 703-518-8999

E-mail Address: gary@garyphoto.com

Check here if you would like to be notified of future Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearings via email: Yes No

Comments: Additional comments please use the back of form

tel ray cirk - Simpson Park

Renovate open space lightly users.

TRACKS





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PURPOSE: City-wide Parks Improvements Plan

Other Topic: _____

Please Print:

Name: Dale May

Address: 4203 S. 36th St

Telephone: 703 379 4763

E-mail Address: dmay82@aol.com

Check here if you would like to be notified of future Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearings via email: Yes No

Comments: Additional comments please use the back of form

Chiniquard - to turn around at far end. ->

15 new plants. ->

✓

PrMc. 2.20.14

**Comments by Dale E. May, of Chinquapin Organic Gardens Advisory Board re
Chinquapin Park Plans at Alexandria public hearing, Feb. 20, 2014**

My name is Dale May, and I'm a member of the Chinquapin Organic Gardens advisory board. I'd like to comment on item 16 of the Chinquapin Park changes, which would add a turn-around loop at the end of the service road bordering the community gardens.

The information indicates that since the road dead ends, it causes drivers to conduct a 3-point turn, often damaging the adjacent woodland. I'm there almost every day during the gardening season, and I've never seen anyone back into the woods while turning around. For one thing there is a curbed type drain there.

There's a need for parking for the 15 new plots that will open in that area this season, but it's not likely that many gardeners will be there working at the same time. We would rather see the two bollards at the end of the road in your photo be removable so mulch and wood chips for the gardeners' use could be stored in the paved area where the bee hives are. This would free up space for more parking between the lower service road and garden plots because the materials are currently being piled there. It would be good to have some logs installed to designate parking areas. Dog walkers also park there.

Our concern is that the turn-around in the road might use up valuable current garden space. The backyard composting demonstration site that I maintain is also in that area, with plantings adjacent to it. It takes quite a lot of space to put a loop in the road that city trucks are going to occasionally travel on.

Information in the item states a pervious surface of the turn-around will be designed to filter garden run-off. Actually, the incline in the land is such that any run-off during storms flows toward the existing drain where the service road makes an L-like bend.

I'd like to see the money saved or better spent....perhaps for the community gardens' operation or a diorama of Chinquapin Village and the earlier John McGinnis farm, to be in an appropriate indoor space – perhaps the Rec Center. I recently found what may well be McGinnis's horse-drawn plow, and it is now at Alexandria Archaeology for safe keeping.

Your introductory material mentions that the park is named after the Chinquapin Oak tree. Actually that is another tree. I've researched this and found it was very likely the Allegheny Chinquapin ..a cousin of the chestnut ... that likely once grew in the park before Chinquapin Village was built there. It has sweet, edible nuts, which the oak doesn't have. In Elizabeth Douglas's oral history on the city's website, she speaks about eating the nuts as a child. I hope to obtain two of these Chinquapins in one gallon pots this spring and get them growing. Then perhaps they can one day be planted in the planned edible trails section of the park. It takes two to pollinate and they are actually a shrub, but can be pruned as a tree.

Thank you.



If questions, contact: Dale E. May, email: dmay82@aol.com; phone: 703-379-4763



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PURPOSE: City-wide Parks Improvements Plan

Other Topic: _____

Please Print:

Name: Jennifer Hartenstive

Address: 2428 Taylor Ave 22302

Telephone: _____

E-mail Address: jchartenstive@gmail.com

Check here if you would like to be notified of future Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearings via email: Yes No

Comments: Additional comments please use the back of form

I'm here this evening solely to speak on behalf
of my neighbor, Andrew Findlay, who could not be
here in person.

Statement for the Park and Recreation Commission Hearing on the
Citywide Parks Improvement Plan - February 20, 2014

I am opposed to the Citywide Parks Improvement Plan as it applies to Chinguapin Park. The Plan is premature, wasteful and will seriously harm the Park. I ask the Commission members to not endorse the Plan.

The glory of Chinguapin Park is the broad, open, green space dotted with big, beautiful trees. There is nothing else like it in Alexandria.

The Parks Department itself knows this. The Plan, on page 40, describes the results of user surveys:

"When asked, 'What do you like about the park,' participants overwhelmingly identified the Park's open space and natural setting, reinforcing the uniqueness of a large, passive-use, green space in the City. Chinguapin Park has a serene and pastoral character, which is clearly desired as an escape from more urban areas nearby."

Despite these fine words, the plan does not make the slightest effort to preserve and protect this natural beauty. The Park today has tennis courts, basketball courts, a children's playground, a picnic pavilion and a dog run. They are all located inconspicuously around the edge of the Park outside of the loop road. The plan moves them all directly into the open green space. The remainder of the green space is carved up by pavement for walking paths, connecting paths and "entrance plazas." In the May version of the plan, there was a single, long, and inobtrusive walking path around the inside of the loop road. It was a very good idea. Why has it been deleted?

The plan eliminates the "serene and pastoral" nature of the "unique passive use green space" and turns this green oasis into a busy activities hub, which effectively destroys the character of the Park.

A large chunk of the Park has been set aside for the new pool and pool parking. The Pool Feasibility Study will determine how much of this space is actually needed. Therefore, it is premature to proceed now with plans for rearranging the Park facilities.

The pool expansion may cause some facilities to be moved, but the very flimsy reasons given on pages 43-45 have no credible basis in safety, user preferences or cost for moving anything into the green space inside the loop road. The facilities should be left in their present locations where possible. If anything needs to be moved, creative ways can be found, including using unneeded space from the pool study area to keep it out of the green space.

The cost estimates for Chinguapin in this plan run from just under seven million to almost nine million dollars. That's spending a lot of the taxpayer's money just to ruin what the users said they liked best about the Park!

Again, I ask you as Commission members to not endorse the Chinquapin part of this plan until, aided by Feasibility Study results, a much more creative effort is made to protect the beauty of Chinquapin Park!

Thank You

Andrew Findlay
2500 Taylor Avenue
Alexandria 22302
amfindlay@hotmail.com

Additional comments:

A single, accessible walking/jogging path, as in the May plan, meandering among the trees around the interior of the loop road, would be far more attractive than the proposed sterile 1/4 mile circle and would eliminate unneeded pavement and help preserve the pastoral beauty of the Park.

Existing parking lots should not be closed where possible and arbitrary consolidation of parking which takes more of the green space should be avoided.

Regrading the athletic field, pervious roadways and invasive species removal are all excellent ideas. So is reforestation as long as it is not used as an excuse to move existing facilities. Elimination of the volleyball area because it is "underused" is unnecessary. What is the annual cost of maintaining it?



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Other Topic: _____

Please Print:

Name: Corp, Catherine

Address: 133 Dale St 05

Telephone: 571-265-8009

E-mail Address: ccorp9@aol.com

Check here if you would like to be notified of future Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearings via email: Yes No

Comments: Additional comments please use the back of form

4 Mile Run Park - 2 items

① community garden on Dale St - approved first heard of this at last community mtg. No notice

② asked for water fountains - one is listed



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Other Topic: _____

Please Print:

Name: Elizabeth Wright

Address: 113 S Ingram St 22304

Telephone: 703.370.9463

E-mail Address: eliz.wright@alumni.umw.edu

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PURPOSE: City-wide Parks Improvements Plan

Other Topic: _____

Please Print:

Name: KEVIN BEEKMAN

Address: 3905 ELBERT AVE

Telephone: 703.519.4801

E-mail Address: KEVIN.BEEKMAN@ALEXANDRIA.ORG

Check here if you would like to be notified of future Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearings via email: Yes No

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RE: 4MR Park Plan: make attention to park
entrance at Four Mile Road as well as
pump station area on Commonwealth Avenue



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PURPOSE: City-wide Parks Improvements Plan

Other Topic: _____

Please Print:

Name: JONATHAN KRALL

Address: 6A E MASON AVE

Telephone: 7/477 4156

E-mail Address: JONATHAN@JONATHANKRALL.NET

Check here if you would like to be notified of future Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearings via email: Yes No

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GREAT PLAN! GOOD CONTRIBUTIONS TO
COMMUNITY!



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PURPOSE: City-wide Parks Improvements Plan

Other Topic: _____

Please Print:

Name: Jim Clark

Address: 3315 Old Dominion Blvd
Alexandria 22305

Telephone: (202) 549-9468

E-mail Address: jimclark5@comcast.net

Check here if you would like to be notified of future Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearings via email: Yes No

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Other Topic: _____

Please Print:

Name: Rupert Munro

Address: 4908 Kilburn St.

Telephone: 84 (843) 475-4291

E-mail Address: _____

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Comments: Additional comments please use the back of form

Ben Brennan



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PURPOSE: City-wide Parks Improvements Plan

Other Topic: CHINGUAPIN COMMUNITY GARDENS

Please Print:

Name: CATHERINE HILLARD

Address: 404 TENNESSEE AVE ALEXANDRIA 22305

Telephone: 703 855-7211

E-mail Address: CHILLARD@comcast.net

Check here if you would like to be notified of future Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearings via email: Yes No

Comments: Additional comments please use the back of form

Not speaking but in support of Chingquapin
Community Gardens.

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2014

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: DANA WEDELES, PARK PLANNER 
LAURA DURHAM, PRINCIPAL PLANNER

SUBJECT: CITYWIDE PARKS IMPROVEMENT PLAN
E-MAILED COMMENTS

Since public release of the Citywide Parks Improvement on January 16, 2014 until February 20, 2014, Staff received the following comments via e-mail:

1. I looked at the plan for Holmes Run /Veteran's park, and I wanted to say I really like the idea of adding lights to the path between the bridge at the park and the neighborhood on Taney ave. That part of the park was really scary at night. Also I love the idea of the bridge to the library. I think that will be great for both the park and the library. And renovating veteran's park is great - it was really lackluster. I like the plan and I think it reflected the area well. The only thing that was missing was that a LOT of people actually play soccer in the park, on the taney ave neighborhood side between the bridge at veteran's park and north ripley street. I think you didn't get any results from them because most of the people who play soccer over there probably are ESL and would not respond to a poster in English. I think in the plans for putting in more equipment, it would be great to have soccer goals for them in the big field on the taney ave side.
2. Good evening, As participants in your surveys and regular users of both Holmes Run and Cameron Station, we applaud the good work of the RCPA. This document has been a long time coming and we look forward to the public hearing next month. Well done. Before you go to final print, though, please have your editor review the document for grammatical and typographical errors. Here is a sampling of what I found in pages 11 – 15 (I lacked the stamina to continue

editing!). 1)Page 11 – last para, line 1 – “residents” is possessive and needs an apostrophe at the end. Conversely, in line 6, “resident’s” is plural and needs the apostrophe removed. 2) Page 12 – 2nd para, line 1 “park’s” is plural; remove apostrophe 3) Page 12 – final bulleted item should read share “with” as opposed to share “to” 4)Page 13 – item 2.1 – “residents” should be possessive; add apostrophe; 2nd bulleted item – remove period at end 5) Page 13 – item 2.2 – should read “opportunities to partake” 6) Page 14 – objective 3, line 8 should read “identification enriches and connects” (subject –verb agreement) 7) Page 14 – items 3.1 and 3.2 – remove periods after bulleted items 8) Page 15 – Objective 4 – should it be a colon rather than a period? The other objectives are punctuated with a colon. Thanks for making sure this will be a top-notch document! And again, for all the hard work that has gone into its preparation. Sissy Walker, 498 N. Latham St.

3. Dana, Thank you for coming to the HRPC meeting last night and discussing the James Marx All Veteran's Park Improvements. As I mentioned, I was impressed with the scope and scale of the Citywide Parks Improvement Plan document that was issued last month. There was obviously a lot of work done putting that together and it covered a wide range of issues. From what I've read, your plan addressed most of the issues and concerns our group has been advocating for for many years. It was great to see something actually on paper with target time frames and budgets for actually getting things done. I know that much of the proposed improvements are still unfunded, but it was still good to at least see them as part of a comprehensive plan. I look forward to working with you and the city to help make these plans a reality. I know others in the Holmes Run Park Committee are also interested in helping in any way we can to help implement these park improvements. Please keep me and the others updated and in the loop as these projects progress. I'll look forward to attending the public hearing on the 20th and further discussing the proposed park improvements.

Brian Marquis

Marquis Graphic Design Associates

1509 King Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

P 703 519-7916

E Brian@MarquisGraphicDesign.com

4. In response to your request for feedback on the Draft Citywide Parks Improvement Plan I have the following comments about the Chinquapin Plan.

First, I applaud the hard work and thoughtfulness reflected in the plan and,

especially, the intent to construct a walking loop at the perimeter of field. Unfortunately, the depiction does not show the loop at the perimeter, but rather well within the field. This would severely inhibit the dimensions of playing fields. A better walking laydown would be next to the existing traffic loop, either inboard or outboard. That would afford a loop of a bit more length and at the same time provide a safer pathway for those who park their cars around the loop.

Of perhaps lesser significance, the TC Williams band and some other TC activities practice in Area 9 and beyond. While I understand the park is not designed for the school, I believe some consideration must be given.

Next, the Draft Plan's Objective One, states the intention to link parks with pedestrian, bicycle, and trail systems. The plan to widen and provide a turnaround for the street that parallels the gardens would inhibit safe access to the Chinquapin Trail in Forest Park. A marked pedestrian lane down that street would help significantly, whether the garden street is widened or not.

Finally, Section 7 was not addressed in the plan except for the goal of planting an area of native species. There is a severe need for re-grading and re-planting of sod in that area. Just a few months ago a huge truck trailing tree trimming equipment was driven into that area, leaving sorely damaged sod and numerous deep ruts. Those ruts have now filled with water and it seems they will continue to do so, thus creating a hazard for walking or play. Correction of the shortfalls in that area should be included in the plan.

Robert F. Dunn
819 Marshall Lane, 22302
703-370-9589

5. Hi, Dana:

Thank you so much for all the hard work you do and for your way of reaching out to everyone. I commented on the plans earlier, and they look fine.

My concern, not surprisingly, is that aspect of the park I use the most often: the small fenced-in dog park near the railroad tracks. Would it be possible to do just a little basic maintenance on the park?

For example, it's been at least three or four years since the City put gravel down in the park. Right now there are some potentially dangerous holes throughout the park, the sort of holes that could lead to a broken ankle or worse on humans and their pets.

Gravel may be too expensive; but would it be possible to put down mulch from routine tree trimming work the City does? As well, the fencing now has a number of gaps that make it unsafe for small dogs. Would an easy fix be possible for that? I understand the City has other priorities in improving and maintaining Brenman (sp?) Park, but that little dog park is a place where neighbors gather on a regular basis.

Cordially,

Elizabeth Huergo

4922-B Barbour Drive

Alexandria, VA 22304

703-863-7601

www.elizabethhuergo.com

@elizabethhuergo

6. Hi Ms. Wedeles, I just skimmed most of the Park Plans for Booth, Brenman Parks, but I didn't see mention of the need to replace the planks on many of the bridges that connect the parks to surrounding trails (i.e. the bridge over Holmes Run at the East end of Brenman park that connects to the Holmes Run Trail). Given the interest in improving access for bikes, I'd strongly encourage that this maintenance be included (if it is not currently in the plan) and that a synthetic material and SCREWS be considered for the planking as it reduces the possibility of damage to bicycle tires. Wooden splinters (large ones) and NAILS (because they pop up over time) specifically can puncture tires easily and ruin a bicycle / park experience. Thank you! Regards, Brian

7. Hi Dana, I would like to provide my feedback on the parks plan. I was hoping to do so at tonight's DRCA meeting, but the agenda is loaded and I have to leave early. Here are my comments:
 - a. Dog park - I don't know that terracing the hill is a good idea - it depends on the 2/12/2014 materials used. One dog park frequenter who is a landscape architect indicated it would be ideal if the steeper parts of the hill in the park could be re-graded to the same slope as the less steep parts. I'm not a landscape expert, but that seemed like a sensible approach to me.
 - b. Parking adjacent to the dog park and basketball field - how many parking spaces will be gained by expanding the parking lot? I know the parking is in high demand during peak use of the park, but if we are only gaining a few extra spots then I would rather keep the lot the same size - it is a shame to get rid of more passive park space for car parking. Maybe more

bike racks would encourage people to ride their bikes to the park. If the intent of expanding the parking lot is to facilitate an easy turn around for parents who are dropping their kids off for games, I recommend that the parents be re-directed to the YMCA/City of Alexandria parking lot which already has the ability for someone to easily turn around.

Thanks for letting us chime in on the park improvements! Sarah

8. Hello Dana, Many of us in Hume Springs are opposed to the placement of a community garden on Dale St. in our neighborhood. It is in a residential area on a dead-end street with parking problems and restrictions. It is also used by Cora Kelly for student recess. We suggest you find a more accessible place in FMR Park or on the corner of W. Reed and Commonwealth for this community garden.

Betty King

3731 Mark Dr.

703-836-0776

9. Hope you're enjoying your snow day! In light of your message about the City Wide Plan, I am pasting my comments below. Please let me know if you have any questions, and thank you for consolidating everyone's inputs. -Louren

1.2 Improve Park Entrances:

- Rather than provide a standard number of park benches at each entrance, recommend assessing the need for park benches within park grounds. This is especially true for the Brenman/Holmes Park run areas, where entrances are not always in line of sight of where children are playing or where there are activities happening. But there does appear to be a shortage of benches and tables in high traffic areas.

Ben Brenman: Recommendations & Implementation Strategy

- I'd like to advocate for a higher priority level for item 2 (reserve space for possible long-range need for Community Center), from Low to Medium. The West End is underserved in terms of community centers, and especially for indoor play for children. Houston Center and Chinguapin, for example, have soft playrooms. But for West Enders, particularly our neighbors relying on public transit, neither of these is too convenient to get to, especially in rainy/cold months when those types of spaces tend to see the most visitors. Additionally, the Chinguapin Center is already undergoing a much-needed improvement, which is great, but West Enders have yet to see a Community Center of their own.

Not sure where it is most appropriate to fit this in, but over the years I've noticed that the city has a spotty way of capturing fees/scheduling for individual park use (for example, using park space for birthday parties or other events). They do have this for larger parks, such as Fort Ward, but it's lacking for places like Tarleton Park. Is this something that would be appropriate to address in this Improvement Plan, or best to leave it for a different venue?

10. Sorry I didn't get this to you sooner but the weather has interfered with my workload.

I applaud the effort taken to produce the Plan and the involvement of the citizens of Alexandria. It is a very valuable tool in analyzing the need for improvement in the parks of Alexandria.

At this point I don't have any individual issues with the assessment of the need for improvements. However I am curious as to how this Improvement Plan is utilized.

Will the City Council will make decisions about the funding of the goals stated in the Plan. How will the City Council use this Plan to decide which parks will get what resources to meet the proposed goals?

Will City Council appropriate a fix amount of money for Capital Improvements and let the Recreation and Parks staff decide which park and goal to apply the funds each year?

Or

Will City Council arbitrarily to adopt specific goals for each park?

The Plan may not be providing all the information the City Council might need to make the decisions. One piece of information that is not included is a measurement tool demonstrating the citizen usage of each park.

Hope this helps.

Ruth

11. Dana I live in Delray however I am somewhat dismayed that almost all of the open space recreation In the area is off limits to the public unless we are part of some officially sanctioned and approved event.

I'd love to be able to run or kick a ball on the soccer fields next to Simpson Park - I help pay for the park it's next to where I live and there are few alternatives. What are my citizen rights to access and use the public park soccer area at Simpson Park?

Thanks, Brian Collins

12. Statement for the Park and Recreation Commission Hearing on the Citywide Parks Improvement Plan - February 20, 2014

I am opposed to the Citywide Parks Improvement Plan as it applies to Chinquapin Park. The Plan is premature, wasteful and will seriously harm the Park. I ask the Commission members to not endorse the Plan.

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"When asked, 'What do you like about the park,' participants overwhelmingly identified the Park's open space and natural setting, reinforcing the uniqueness of a large, passive-use, green space in the City. Chinquapin Park has a serene and pastoral character, which is clearly desired as an escape from more urban areas nearby."

Despite these fine words, the plan does not make the slightest effort to preserve and protect this natural beauty. The Park today has tennis courts, basketball courts, a children's playground, a picnic pavilion and a dog run. They are all located inconspicuously around the edge of the Park outside of the loop road. The plan moves them all directly into the open green space. The remainder of the green space is carved up by pavement for walking paths, connecting paths and "entrance plazas." In the May version of the plan, there was a single, long, and inobtrusive walking path around the inside of the loop road. It was a very good idea. Why has it been deleted?

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The pool expansion may cause some facilities to be moved, but the very flimsy reasons given on pages 43-45 have no credible basis in safety, user preferences or cost for moving anything into the green space inside the loop road. The facilities should be left in their present locations where possible. If anything needs to be moved, creative ways can be found, including using unneeded space from the pool study area to keep it out of the green space.

The cost estimates for Chinquapin in this plan run from just under seven million to almost nine million dollars. That's spending a lot of the taxpayer's money just to ruin what the users said they liked best about the Park!

Again, I ask you as Commission members to not endorse the Chinquapin part of this plan until, aided by Feasibility Study results, a much more creative effort is made to protect the beauty of Chinquapin Park!

Thank You

Andrew Findlay
2500 Taylor Avenue
Alexandria 22302
amfindlay@hotmail.com

Additional comments:

A single, accessible walking/jogging path, as in the May plan, meandering among the trees around the interior of the loop road, would be far more attractive than the proposed sterile 1/4 mile circle and would eliminate unneeded pavement and help preserve the pastoral beauty of the Park.

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