

*City Of Alexandria, Virginia*

**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: APRIL 4, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 69: RESPONSE TO MARCH 20, 2008 LETTER FROM ALEXANDRIA PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION RE: NEW POTOMAC YARD ATHLETIC FIELDS

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Members of City Council received a letter from the Chair of the Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission, Judy R. Guse-Noritake, dated March 20, 2008 that raised and discussed several issues regarding the New Potomac Yard Athletic Fields. (See attachment.)

The City is working with the developers of the Potomac Yard project to replace the two temporary fields currently located on the east side of Route 1 with two fields located near the Simpson Stadium complex. The Park and Recreation Commission letter expressed the desire for a number of features for these two fields and the status and response of City staff to those desires are shown below:

1. The new fields should be synthetic turf. The City is working with the developer to design two synthetic turf fields. The additional cost of this feature, compared to natural grass, will be approximately \$500,000 and will be born by the City. The City's approved FY 2008-2013 Capital Improvement Program includes \$850,000 in unallocated balances for Athletic Field Improvements, as a result of a decision by City Council during last year's budget process to designate a portion of FY 2007 surplus funds for this purpose. These funds will be used to fund this project.
2. The fields should be built as large as the site and budget constraints will permit. City staff are working with the developer to accommodate 2 full size fields that are 110 to 120 yards in length and 65 yards in width. There are a number of constraints on this site, including existing and proposed utilities, topography/grading/drainage and adjacent uses, and the legal geometric boundaries of the site that prevent impinging upon the existing boundaries of the existing Simpson Fields site. The design process is intended to resolve and balance the dimensional needs of the 2 fields to

accommodate programming needs for all field sports, site constraints and the construction of lighting and parking facilities.

3. These fields must be lit and should use “full cut-off lights similar to those used at Minnie Howard. City staff intend for these fields to be lit with technology similar to that used at Minnie Howard. A companion budget memo discusses the lighting needs of both these two new fields and the existing Simpson Field facilities. That memo recommends that the lighting of all these facilities be upgraded and installed in FY 2010. Should existing CIP resources (including any balance in the Athletic Field Improvements CIP account) be insufficient to provide the funding level for lighting estimated in that other budget memorandum, City staff will devise a solution in the context of the development of the FY 2010-2015 Capital Improvement Program.
4. The fields must have adequate parking. It should be noted that space on this site is limited and the parking issue is related to the size of the fields themselves. As noted in the letter from Ms. Guse-Noritake, however, City staff are confident that parking needs for these facilities can be fully accommodated.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Letter from the Chair of the Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission, Judy R. Guse-Noritake, dated March 20, 2008 re: New Potomac Yard Athletic Fields



DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS  
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## Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission

March 20, 2008

Mayor William Euille  
Vice Mayor Redella Pepper  
Councilman Ludwig Gaines  
Councilman K. Rob Krupicka  
Councilman Timothy Lovain  
Councilman Paul Smedberg  
Councilman Justin Wilson

Re: New Potomac Yard Athletic Fields

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

The February meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission opened with a presentation by the developers of the Potomac Yard project (PYD, LLC) about plans for the two new fields that are to be located near the existing Simpson Stadium where Route 1 once ran. This presentation was followed by our own public hearing on the proposal. The intent of the hearing was to help shape the programming and design of the new facility. PYD, LLC has retained professional design services for this site and will be assuming most of the associated costs for the development of these two fields as a part of their development conditions for the larger Potomac Yard project.

As you may recall these two fields were a part of the original consideration for the development of Potomac Yard. While the plan approval also allowed for the eventual placement of an elementary school at this same site, planning and construction of such a school is not contemplated until some point a decade or more into the future. With the rather dire current need for athletic fields at this time the City has moved forward with the developers to begin a process to put two full sized fields in place near Simpson Stadium which will be used until the need for a school is demonstrated.

The two new fields will replace two existing temporary grass fields built in main part of Potomac Yard a number of years ago by the previous owner of the development. As the fields were then seen to be relatively temporary in nature they were built 100 yards long and covered with natural grass. We knew at the time that the City would have greater requirements for the more permanent fields that would replace them. It is our understanding that PYD, LLC believes they are required to supply "replacement fields", which obligate them to provide for two 100 yard long, natural grass fields.

Speakers at our hearing following the presentation, along with Commissioner's and staff's comments, all underscored the need for the two new fields to be enhanced from the two temporary ones in the Yard's center. They spoke to the demonstrated need for these new fields to employ synthetic turf and to be built as large as the site and budget constraints will permit. In addition, these fields must be lit. At this location artificial lighting should not be an issue as lights already exist at the adjacent Simpson Stadium. In addition the technology now commonly recommended by the Recreation planning staff employing the new "full cut-off" lights -- which can meet both USGBC LEED and Dark Sky standards -- is anticipated to be used here. Similar lights were installed at the new Minnie Howard field and are a great success.

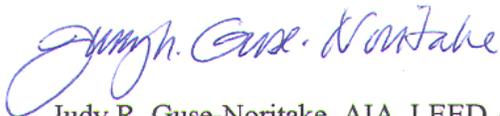
In addition PYD, LLC, in consultation with staff from several City departments, addressed the issue of adequate parking in and around this location. These two new fields, along with the existing stadium and the YMCA will have parking demands during all hours of the day and evening, as well as on the weekends. Staff expressed confidence that the parking can be fully accommodated for all anticipated uses in the existing parking lots and on the streets that surround the site using flexibility and careful programming. It should be pointed out that with the removal of the Route 1 roadbed and it's supporting grading, this area will be fairly level and the additional street parking that will result from this will be quite substantial.

The Park and Recreation Commission would like to express our support of the expanded goals for this project as outlined above. By building the right kind of fields we will go a long way to helping close the field deficit the City now faces. We understand that there are on-going discussions with the owners of Potomac Yard about the timing and associated costs of realizing the full scope of this project. We would like to underscore that the two new fields *must* be in place and accepted by the City for full use before the two temporary ones are removed. We have had too many fields come out of the City's' inventory for construction purposes with no alternatives in place. It has caused tremendous issues for families in our community, as you are well aware.

In addition, though the City is grappling with a budget shortfall, we understand that as discussions continue with PYD, LLC it may become more evident that some minimal additional investment by the City could be necessary to achieve the full program outlined above. As most of the cost for construction of these new fields will be carried by PYD, LLC, if some reasonable amount of additional funding is required from the City to make sure that the fields are full-size, that they have lights, or that they have synthetic turf, then we believe that is a wise investment given what we stand to add to the field inventory. We would like to insert that consideration in to your on-going budget discussions.

If we may be of any further help in this matter, please do not hesitate to ask.

With warm regard,



Judy R. Guse-Noritake, AIA, LEED AP  
Chair  
Park and Recreation Commission

Cc: Kirk Kincannon  
Jim Hartmann  
Park and Recreation Commissioners  
PYD, LLC