

County of Loudoun
Department of Planning
MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 14, 2009

TO: Jane McCarter, Project Manager, Land Use Review

FROM: Pat Giglio, Planner, Community Planning

**SUBJECT: SPEX 2009-0004, SPEX 2009-0015 & CMPT 2009-0003
Scott Jenkins Memorial Park, 2nd Submission**

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Loudoun County Office of Capital Construction, on behalf of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors (the owner) is requesting two Special Exceptions (SPEXs) and a Commission Permit (CMPT) for the establishment of a County park on a 35-acre property east of the Town of Hamilton on the north side of Colonial Highway (Business Route 7). The subject property is zoned AR-1 (Agriculture Rural-1) and is governed under the provisions of the Revised 1993 Zoning Ordinance. The proposed park would include active recreational uses (athletic fields) and a share use commuter parking lot which are permitted within the zoning district by Special Exception. A Commission Permit is also required for establishment of a park on the subject property. The proposed park would specifically include four lighted baseball/softball fields, a lighted multi-use field and a shared-use commuter parking lot capable of accommodating up to 250 vehicles. The proposed park will be served by on-site wells and drainfields.

The applicant responded to Community Planning's first referral comments by providing a response letter dated August 11, 2009 and Special Exception Plat revised through August 5, 2009. Upon review of the submitted information, it appears that the majority of outstanding issues have been addressed; however, staff continues to have concerns regarding the proposed lighted athletic fields and impacts on adjoining properties.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The subject property is governed under the policies of the Revised General Plan. The Revised General Plan places the property within the northern tier of the Rural Policy Area. The area is planned for rural economy uses and limited residential development (Revised General Plan, Chapter 7, Land Use Pattern and Design Strategy Policies, Policy 3).

OUTSTANDING ISSUE:

The submitted materials adequately address and clarify those issues raised in the first referral regarding storm water management, the incorporation of low impact design (LID) techniques, the designation of tree conservation areas (TCAs), the utilization of existing vegetation and supplemental plantings within the required landscape buffers, and the provision of adequate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. However, staff continues to have concerns with the proposed lighting for the athletic fields.

Lighting

The Plan promotes the use of lighting for public safety and visibility without the nuisance associated with light pollution (Revised General Plan, Chapter 5, Lighting and Night Sky Policies, Policy 1a, p. 5-42). Lighting should be designed for effective nighttime use of the facility, minimizing off-site glare and the deterioration of the natural nighttime environment (Revised General Plan, Chapter 5, Lighting and Night Sky Policies, text). In the first referral, staff requested information regarding the proposed times of illumination and the intensity of lighting necessary for the use of the fields so that the appropriateness of the lighted fields and their compatibility with the surrounding rural area could be assessed. In response, the applicant has provided an updated illumination summary depicting the light intensities around the athletic fields and showing the decrease in light intensity along the properties perimeter which is in compliance with County standards. A plat note has also been added to state that all the lighting will be downward directed, cut off and fully shielded to direct light onto the athletic fields to minimize glare and light trespass on adjoining properties. County staff recommends that conditions of approval be developed to provide assurances that once the proposed lighting is installed and operational it complies with County standards and that corrective measures will be undertaken to assure that the lighting is the minimum levels necessary for the use of the athletic fields. Additionally staff recommends that conditions be developed to limit the hours of illumination of the proposed athletic fields to mitigate potential impacts on adjacent residential properties.

Staff finds that the lighting for the proposed athletic fields is in compliance with the lighting and night sky policies of the Revised General Plan. Staff recommends conditions of approval be developed to ensure the proposed lighting is in compliance with County standards and hours of illumination for the proposed athletic fields are limited to no later than 10:00 pm to mitigate potential impacts on adjacent residential properties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff finds that the proposed use of the subject property as a County park with athletic fields and a shared-use commuter parking lot is consistent with the general land use and public facilities policies of the Revised General Plan. Staff recommends that conditions be developed to ensure that the proposed lighting for the athletic fields is in compliance with County standards and that the hours of illumination extends no later than 10 pm to mitigate potential impacts on adjacent residential properties.

Staff finds that the application for a Commission Permit (CMPT) to establish a County park on the subject site is consistent with the land use and rural economic policies of the Revised General Plan. In addition the Capital Needs Assessment (CNA) for the western subareas of the County demonstrate a deficiency in regional and district parks; the proposed park on the subject property would assist the County in providing citizens with access to need open space and recreational amenities. Staff finds the general location and use of the subject property as a public park is consistent with the Revised General Plan and recommends approval of the Commission Permit.

cc: Julie Pastor, AICP, Director, Planning
Cindy Keegan, AICP, Program Manager, Community Planning-via email