

4/5/16: Board of Supervisors Public Hearings FY 2017 Budget

Public Testimony
To the
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
April 5, 2016

Madam Chairman, Members of the Board of Supervisors thank you for this opportunity to speak to you. My name is Catherine Ledec. I am here as President of Friends of Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria, Virginia.

I'm here to talk to you about Parks.

Eight Friends Groups for Fairfax County Parks join our voices together today in a letter that I deliver here to you that requests additional funding for the Fairfax County Park Authority. The Friends groups included in this letter are:

Friends of Accotink Creek
Friends of Colvin Run Mill
Friends of Nottaway Park
Friends of Frying Pan Park
Friends of Lake Accotink Park
Analemma Society
Friends of Huntley Meadows Park
Friends of Green Spring Gardens

Together we represent more than 1,000 individuals that are Friends of Fairfax County Parks.

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The Friends of Huntley Meadows Park, and other friends groups, we volunteer at our parks to supplement and provide needed support work on natural resources management, education programs, advocacy, and outreach activities. We donate our time and our personal money to complete activities and projects that support our Parks.

First, we thank you for providing some added funding from the FY 2015 carryover. This has allowed the Park Authority to begin addressing the backlog of deferred maintenance. This is a start but our parks are not living up to their full potential and more funding is needed.

We are lucky to have the Fairfax County Park Authority, its Board, and the staff of the FCPA to manage 423 parks with more than 23,000 acres here in Fairfax County.

I'm here to remind us all of how important our Parks are. Here in Fairfax County many parks are nearby, within walking distance or a short drive from our homes and they provide opportunities for us to connect to and enjoy the outdoors throughout the year.

Our Parks are an important feature of the fabric of our lives here in Fairfax County. They serve to keep those of us who live here to stay, and to attract new residents and new businesses to locate here.

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If we are to succeed in attracting new business and new residents to Fairfax County we must remember that our Parks are an important part of what makes Fairfax County a great place to live. New business is not just looking for a place to do business; they are also looking for a place where their employees can live a high quality of life.

Parks are important for all of us in that they support the opportunity for us to pursue a healthy lifestyle; maybe sometimes we take this for granted. Current research shows that easy access to nature contributes to healthy people. Healthy people contribute to Healthy Communities.

Healthy Parks are also intimately linked to a healthy environment. A healthy park provides us with clean air and clean water, we all want this. And to top it off these ecosystem services are provided to us free of charge. We only need to care for and maintain healthy parks, green spaces and natural areas to benefit from this.

Parks also foster a deeper connection, understanding and appreciation for the relationship between our lifestyles and our environment teaching us the importance of being good stewards.

I am worried about the cumulative effect of deferred maintenance in our parks. Putting off fixing something until tomorrow, to save a few bucks today could be hurting us in the long run. With escalating costs, over time it becomes more expensive to fix things tomorrow.

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For the well-being of Fairfax County's residents and for success in our economic development activities we need to increase the funding provided to our Parks so that they live up to their full potential.

I urge you today to provide more funding to the Fairfax County Park Authority so that we can begin to again show off the natural beauty that exists within our parks for those of us who live here to enjoy and also for those considering relocating here.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak today.

April 3, 2016

Chairman Sharon Bulova
And members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22030

Dear Chairman Bulova and Members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors:

We are the Friends of the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) parks. This letter expresses our support for substantially increasing the annual budget for the Fairfax County Park Authority for FY 2017.

We are lucky to have the FCPA, its Board, and the staff of the FCPA to manage 423 parks, 23,210 acres or 9% of the total land area of Fairfax County. In order to attract new residents and new businesses to Fairfax County, which in turn would increase tax revenues (an important goal that we all have) we need to have healthy, well-maintained parks to support these efforts. We thank you for providing funding from FY 2015 carryover to allow the FCPA to begin addressing the backlog of deferred maintenance but our parks are not living up to their full potential and more funding is needed.

A healthy park means a healthy environment, this leads to healthy people and healthy communities. Parks are important for all of us in that they support the opportunity for us to pursue a healthy lifestyle. Here in Fairfax County many parks are nearby, within walking distance of our residences, and offer opportunities for us to connect to and enjoy the outdoors throughout the year. Parks also foster a deeper connection, understanding and appreciation for the relationship between our lifestyles and our environment teaching us the importance of being good stewards. Healthy Parks are a direct result of a healthy environment. A healthy park provides us with clean air and clean water, we all want this. And to top it off these ecosystem services are provided to us free of charge. We only need to care for and maintain healthy parks, green spaces and natural areas to benefit from this.

Thank you for considering our request for substantially increased funding for FY 2017 for the Fairfax County Park Authority.

Sincerely,

Friends of Accotink Creek
Friends of Colvin Run Mill
Friends of Frying Pan Park
Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

Friends of Lake Accotink Park
Friends of Nottaway Park
Analemma Society
Friends of Green Spring Gardens