

Westgrove PACK General Meeting Minutes - April 21, 2024

Meeting called to order at 3:03 PM.

Attendees: Liz Yap, Jeff Pandin, Steve Zielenski, Sam Longstreet, Mike Bober, Michelle Primack, Shawn Bloom, LeeAnn Williams, members of the community

Financial Report (Jeff Pandin, Treasurer):

- P.A.C.K. income is up over last year. Income streams have shifted - less income from events and more income generated from caretakers' membership fees and donations.
- Turf maintenance expenses increased slightly.
- Some of last year's expenses have been eliminated—portable restroom, poop bags
 - Planned 2024 expenditure: repairing the water fixture on the north side of the park.
- Administration costs decreased slightly.
- **Moved to ratify budget. Seconded. Budget for next year passes.**
 - *See full budget breakdown at end of this document.

Turf Update/Opening Day (Shawn Bloom, Director of Operations):

- South side of the park closed on 2/19/2024 for grounds maintenance.
- P.A.C.K. paid to aerate, put leaf mulch down, and seed the south side of the park. Turf is coming in nicely.
- The plan is to open the south side of the park on 4/27/24.
- The south end water fountain is currently working and will be turned on prior to park opening.

County-Proposed Park Improvement Project (Shawn Bloom, Director of Operations; Jeff Pandin, Treasurer; Steve Zielenski, Member At-Large):

- Fairfax County Park Authority has proposed improvements to the Westgrove Off Leash Dog Area (OLDA) north end, namely to address the perpetual (at least 7 years) standing water issues and to make the Park more accessible to users with disabilities.
- In April of 2023, Westgrove P.A.C.K. submitted a second proposal of a more elaborate project to address the standing water issues that included a dog pool. This proposed pool would drain into rain garden that would water plants thus making it an eco-friendly solution.
- Fairfax County Park Authority rejected Westgrove P.A.C.K.'s original proposal of the creation of a rain garden and dog pool to address the standing water issues as impractical due to ongoing maintenance requirements.
- After discussions with the P.A.C.K, Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) provided a proposal (concept drawing provided at meeting) that included:
 - Remediating the "swale" drainage system and building a rock pit drainage system to alleviate standing water in the north end of the park.
 - Removing a large portion of the grass (>60%) and covering a large swath of the north end of the park in stone dust to reduce "maintenance exposures" while providing for ADA accessibility to the agility equipment in the north end.
 - Construction of a covered seating area and paver walkway, similar to the existing one in the south end of the park.

- Replacement of the water fountain with a more serviceable and ADA accessible piece of equipment.
- General landscaping improvements (hardscaping, trees, shrubbery etc.).
- The going priority of the Westgrove P.A.C.K. community has always been to retain the **maximum amount of grass as possible in both end of the Park** as it is Northern Virginia's largest park of its kind. In consideration of the County's proposed plan, the P.A.C.K shared the Board's vision to maximize turf with a smaller footprint of stone dust while maintaining ADA accessibility.
- Westgrove P.A.C.K. proposed a compromise to the County that included the creation of an "apron" of stone dust around the perimeter of the park that would allow access to all areas but still maximize green space.
- County responded with a plan that included an excessive cost (\$230K) estimate, and did not provide details as to which portion(s) the county would pay for.

Based on discussion at the meeting, it was determined that the plan is unacceptable to P.A.C.K. Board and park members, primarily due to proposed replacement of turf with stone dust, and cost practicalities. It was decided to re-engage the County for a more workable long-term plan as soon as possible.

In the short/immediate term, it was agreed to address the water and mud issues as soon as possible. P.A.C.K will investigate an initial phase of the County proposed plan that includes addressing water abatement and water fountain replacement.

Some feedback from the General Meeting on the County improvement project:

Comment: Grass is why we love this park. Keep as much as possible.

Question: Why does the county love stone dust?

Answer: Durability, easier maintenance, most economical, ADA compliant.

Question: If they aren't paying for it, why does the county have so much input?

Answer: We don't know how much the county might pay or how much we need to raise, yet.

Question: Can we keep the stone dust separate from the grass?

Answer: Plan includes a buried railroad tie border.

Question: Will the stone dust mitigate the mud problem?

Answer: In theory, yes. But there are other ways to do this

MOTION: We should actively move forward with fixing the water issue. Also, we authorize the board to speak on behalf of the community that the county's proposal regarding stone dust is not supported because the community wants to maximize turf. We look forward to working with the county on a mutually agreeable solution regarding stone dust and turf. We authorize the board to wordsmith this motion as needed. **MOTION PASSED**

Small Dog Space Update (Mike Bober, Member At-Large w/ Carolyn Neulight):

- Small dogs generally defined as 25-30 lbs or less, as well as puppies.
- County has an existing dog park report which maps all of the existing and proposed dog parks in Fairfax County. Calls into question the feasibility of a new small dog park or changing

a current park to add a small dog park. Also, our area is already “overrepresented” with dog parks. There is a new one coming in Franconia area that might be a good spot - new dog parks need to somehow accommodate small dogs.

- Westgrove small dog enthusiasts are encouraged to be involved in the Franconia park development.
- In the meantime, at Westgrove, we cannot have a permanent solution, but we can move forward with a 4-week test program (field study?) to identify 3-5 blocks of time weekly where the north end could be closed off for 60-90 minutes that would allow for small dogs to be segregated.
- Volunteers are required to keep count of how many dogs use the park during small dog restricted times. We will send off a survey to our mailing list to identify small dogs vs large dogs and when people are most likely to use the park.
- We also have to find a way to reach small dog owners in the community who don't currently use Westgrove. At the end of the pilot program, we'll have data to show that a small dog park could work to show Fairfax County. This is NOT a long-term proposal at this point.

MOTION: Proceed with a one-month “field study” regarding small dog hours using Westgrove north end as a test area. All of what we discussed above is included. MOTION PASSED.

Safety Issues Follow-Up (Steve Zielenski, Member At-Large and LeeAnn Williams, Vice Chair):

- To address, we want to foster positive interactions at the park. The P.A.C.K. want park users to feel comfortable coming to the board to discuss any specific incidents. We want to do an educational program where we remind people of the rules. Also, we want to informally work with dog handlers to help.
- Fairfax county has lots of rules about aggressive dogs. If there is a situation where there is a repetitive and/or serious problem, a report needs to be filed with the county and law enforcement if necessary. Our portion of the county has three animal control officers that are very responsive.
- All of this information will be on the website.

Gates (Shawn Bloom):

- Each gate now has a gravity lock.
- Shawn will be testing a spring that will close the gate on its own. Once it is determined what works, we will start installing them on the exterior gates.

“NEED HELP” Follow-up and Empty Fall Board Seats:

- Our board is small (9). One seat has been empty for the past year (communication, fundraising, membership and development - can break these out). **We need volunteers!**

First hot dog Friday is likely around Memorial Day.

Mike applied for a grant for us to get another bench. News in May.

Meeting is adjourned at 4:16 PM.

Westgrove P.A.C.K
Statement of Income and Expenses

	4/22-3/23	4/23-3/24
Income:		
General Donations	\$ 683.00	2,191.00
Dues	1,280.00	1,720.00
Sustaining Caretakers	6,725.00	11,221.64
Caretaker Weekend	2,025.00	928.41
Amazon Smile Commissions	117.08	62.85
Fall Festival	4,092.40	2,106.00
Hat Sales	0.00	13.00
Magnet Sales	0.00	5.00
South End Fountain Repair Donations	0.00	450.00
Hot Dog Friday	<u>2,376.49</u>	<u>2,198.69</u>
Total Income:	\$17,298.97	\$20,896.59
Expenses:		
Operations:		
Turf Maintenance	\$7,760.00	\$7,982.50
Communications	324.76	337.10
Portable Restroom	1,072.47	0.00
Waste Bags	1,408.75	0.00
Water Fixture Repairs	1,918.00	0.00
Drainage Improvements	<u>410.00</u>	<u>750.00</u>
Total Operations:	\$12,893.98	\$9,069.60
Administration:		
Liability Insurance	\$ 937.00	968.00
Bank Fee	12.00	0.00
Online Payment Fees	438.41	613.74
PO Box Rental	446.00	0.00
Registration Fees	50.00	75.00
Webpage	<u>140.34</u>	<u>189.34</u>
Total Administration:	\$2,023.75	\$1,846.08
Fundraising:		
Banners	\$ 0.00	661.96
Hats	0.00	227.20
Fall Festival Expenses	<u>286.68</u>	<u>198.10</u>
Total Fundraising	286.68	1,087.26
Total Expenses:	<u>\$15,204.41</u>	<u>\$12,002.94</u>
Net Income (Loss):	\$2,094.56	\$8,893.65

Balance Sheet
3/31/24

Assets:

Burke and Herbert Checking:	\$12,647.13
Paypal Account	7,538.55
Held in trust by FCPF	<u>1,603.50</u>
Total Assets:	\$21,789.18

Budget

	2023	2024 (proposed)
Operations:		
Ground Preparation and seeding	\$5,245.00	\$5,245.00
Mowing and Monthly maintenance	3,000.00	3,000.00
Waste Bags	1,100.00	0.00
Other Operations	<u>1,000.00</u>	<u>2,600.00</u>
Total Operations:	\$10,345.00	10,845.00
Administration:	1,700.00	2,100.00
Fundraising:	1,000.00	1,100.00
Projects:*	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total:	\$13,045.00	\$14,045.00

Fairfax County Project Proposal



WESTGROVE DOG PARK
IMPROVEMENTS SKETCH



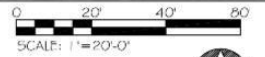
4/4/2024



Westgrove P.A.C.K. "Counter" proposal as of April 2024



WESTGROVE DOG PARK
IMPROVEMENTS SKETCH



4/4/2024

