

February 27, 2004

Mr. Dennis Callahan, Director
Department of Recreation and Parks
1 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Mr. Callahan:

The Office of Environmental & Cultural Resources has been participating in the master planning process for the five Anne Arundel County parks in Shady Side. We thank you for the invitation and opportunity to contribute to this process.

Our office mission addresses the wise use and protection of our County's trust resources; therefore, we are keenly interested in the use recommendations for these properties. As such, we offer the following comments and recommendations for consideration as your Department moves forward in the planning process.

The *Environmental Analysis of Five Anne Arundel County Parks, Shady Side, Maryland* (ERM, 2003), documents the valuable environmental assets of these properties. The Office of Environmental & Cultural Resources supports the preservation and protection of these assets to the maximum extent possible. We also recognize the need for multi-purpose athletic fields in this area of the County. To fill this recreational need, we recommend that all alternative locations for the multi-purpose athletic fields be identified, their feasibility be investigated (environmentally and economically), and a hierarchical decision process be put in place to support any final location choice for the multi-purpose athletic fields. I am sure you would agree that this alternatives analysis should be open to public scrutiny, as the master planning process has been.

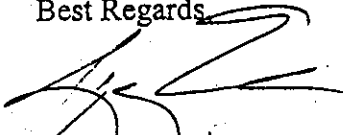
Specifically, we recommend the following alternatives be included in any alternatives analysis:

- Investigate the feasibility of improving the existing recreational facilities at Shady Side Park such that these facilities can be utilized throughout the recreational season;
- With the concurrence and cooperation of the Board of Education, consider improvements to recreational fields at Shady Side Elementary School and allow these fields to be used by the Recreational Council leagues; and
- Investigate the use of County-owned open-field property behind the Lula G. Scott Center for placement of the multi-purpose fields.

Our office further recommends that the wetlands permitting agencies, Maryland Department of the Environment and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, be kept apprised of activities as they relate to potential development of these park properties. Involving these agencies at the beginning of the process may provide further guidance to the County with respect to appropriate recreational field location and other permissible uses of these properties.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in the master planning process, and for the opportunity to comment on proposed uses of the Shady Side Parks properties. Should you wish to discuss these recommendations at further length, please contact me at your earliest convenience. I can be reached at ext. 7441.

Best Regards



Ginger Ellis

Environmental Planning Administrator

cc: B. Walker
B. Dixon
J. Keene
E. Gawel
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