

Meeting Notes

Date: February 28, 2019 6 pm

Place: New Beginnings Baptist Church
923 Valley Brook Road, Room 216
Decatur, GA 30033

Purpose: Meeting with the Friends/Neighborhood of Little Creek Horse Farm

Attendees:

- The residents – neighbors of LCHF and some members of Conservancy (attendees list attached to this meeting notes)
- DeKalb County Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Affairs: Joy Lambert
- Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. (Wood): Gregg Hudspeth, David Diaz, Ron Huffman, Mirsada Ilic

Purpose

The purpose of the meeting was to collect the ideas for improvements and master plan preparation for Little Creek Horse Farm. In addition to the attendees from the Neighborhood, several members of the Conservancy were in attendance, too.

Introduction

Sign-in sheets were passed around the room. Greg Hudspeth opened the meeting and briefly described its purpose. The funding for LCHF improvements is not available right now, however, the County would like to be prepared with the Master Plan detailing the proposed and agreed upon improvements when the funding becomes available. The idea of this Farm to be available for all residents of DeKalb County, environmentally friendly and sustainable approach for Farm's improvements was weaved throughout the stakeholders brainstorming session.

Discussion Topic and Improvements Ideas

1. Little Creek Horse Farm property is a 38-acre site. (Nature Trail Area encompasses \pm 14 acres).
2. Wood is contracted by DeKalb County to produce the master plan of this park only. The master planning process is estimated to take approximately two months.
3. Historical significance of this unique park: General Sherman watered and boarded his horses at this location during the Battle of Atlanta. It is a unique County-owned and operated horse boarding facility in an urban setting.

4. The park's location offers opportunities for connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods and other parks and trails in DeKalb County and beyond. Currently, residents walk along Orion Drive to the Community Garden across Lawrenceville Highway.
5. The park is described as "A Little Gem" of the community that is essential to the health of the natural environment. Wildlife conservation, creek sustainability, storm water runoff control, litter control and green space preservation were all cited as essential when considering improvements to the park. Wildlife species mentioned as present in the park included beavers, hawks, owls, blue heron, and deer. It was suggested that native plant species replace intrusive species such as privet and kudzu. Minimizing impervious surfaces, light pollution at night as well as utilizing natural mosquito control (AGO mosquito traps in lieu of spraying) were also suggested.
6. Since the Park will accommodate the horse farm as well as general public park functions, it was suggested that interpretive signage be added to educate the general public (including "non-horse people") about the functions of the horse farm.
7. General public park functions discussed included a nature trail, playground, off-leash dog park, sidewalk, pervious surface or boardwalk adjacent to Orion Drive, two parking 'nodes' for visitors of the trails portion of the site, improvement to the bus stop (possible shelter and stairs), benches, trash cans, picnic tables as well as the possibility of a foot bridge across the creek to provide access to Concord Drive. It was suggested that 'No Dumping' signs be erected at the access road as well as along the streets to the north of the site identifying the property as being part of the Little Creek Farm Conservancy.
8. Concern was raised regarding the suitability of an off-leash dog park in the flood plain due to mud and feces adjacent to the creek as well as dogs' proximity to horses.
9. It was pointed out there is a parcel of DeKalb County property to the north of the creek which may offer an opportunity for park expansion to Concord Drive and may be suitable for non- horse functions to occur out of the floodplain and separated from horse pastures.
10. There is also an adjacent parcel owned by the City of Atlanta at the corner of Concord Drive and Valley Brook Road, maintained as a permanently protected natural area. This parcel currently serves as part of the Atlanta Greenway Project and could possibly accommodate limited trail access functions should it be incorporated into the park.
11. Joy Lambert (Little Creek Horse Farm manager – DeKalb County) suggested there be separation between horse activities (including riding trails) and general public park functions and wildlife to avoid 'spooking' of horses. She also encouraged visibility of the horses for the general public's enjoyment from a suitable distance.
12. The following improvements to the horse farm itself included: New Community Room being added to the existing house on-site (new bathroom and kitchen) to accommodate birthday parties and other functions, manure disposal facilities being upgraded, new 'Stride Ahead" ring with spectator area, trailer turn around and parking.
13. It was explained that the small horse paddocks were added to accommodate the therapeutic horse program and for recovery of injured horses.
14. It was suggested that soils in pastures be amended to maintain health of grass.

15. There is great interest in the success and well-being of this park. Many groups were mentioned as taking an interest in supporting this park including the Little Creek Horse Farm Conservancy, South Fork Conservancy, Park Pride, PATH Foundation, Friends of the Parks, Georgia Native Plant Society, The Audubon Society, and DeKalb County.
16. It was mentioned that a student is applying for a grant to have a memorial marker about General Sherman's history on the site.
17. It was also suggested there are several grants available through DeKalb County as well as through the Audubon Society.

Meeting was adjourned at 8 pm.

End of Meeting Notes

Enclosures: Sign-in Sheet

SIGN IN SHEET

Little Creek Horse Farm Master Plan
Community Meeting
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Susan Hawk	2827 Concord Dr.
Kendall Charlton	2870 Concord Dr
Kim Guyton	3158 Stonewyck Pl

SIGN IN SHEET

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Michael Emmer 2907 Concord Dr

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SIGN IN SHEET

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