



October 11, 2012

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 3, 2012

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Mary Bradford, Director of Parks *M Bradford*
Michael F. Riley, Deputy Director of Parks *MR*

FROM: Dr. John E. Hench, Ph.D., Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD) *J Hench*
Brooke Farquhar, Supervisor, Park & Trail Planning Section, PPSD *Brooke Farquhar*
Mark Wallis, Planner Coordinator, Park & Trail Planning Section, PPSD *(MSW)*

SUBJECT: Hillendale Park Activity Building (PAB) and Adult Education Building Demolition

Recommended Planning Board Action

Staff recommends APPROVAL of a phased closure and ultimate demolition of Hillendale Park Activity Building (PAB) and the former Adult Education Building by February 1, 2014, as follows:

- Closure date to coincide with septic tank agreement expiration – February 1, 2014.
- Available to the Public - November 2, 2012 to closure date of February 1, 2014, weekends only, maximum 3 events per weekend, maximum 50 people per event.
- Building to be demolished spring of 2014.

Background and Summary of Staff Findings

The Hillendale Local Park is located in the eastern portion of Montgomery County at 10615 New Hampshire Avenue in White Oak adjacent to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) consolidated Headquarters (**Figure 1**). The approximately 22.5 acre park consists of (**Figure 2**):

- 2 tennis courts
- 2 basketball courts
- 2 diamond fields with a soccer overlay
- 1 playground
- a natural wooded area
- 1 Park Activity Building (PAB) attached by breezeway to a now-closed prefabricated structure (formerly the Adult Education Building)
- Hillendale Park Office Building

According to park site plans from the period, the PAB started serving the public in the mid 1940's as a summer log cabin. Over the years, use expanded to the spring and fall and finally in the 1950's to year-round activities with the addition of a heating system. Around 1955, a prefabricated World War II-era structure—one of six given to M-NCPPC from the Naval Surface Warfare Center—was connected to the PAB by a breezeway. In the 1980's, the original PAB was suffering from extensive termite damage and was essentially rebuilt (with the exception of the roof structure), according to records and the oral history of the crew that undertook the carpentry.

Around 2008 the Adult Education Building was damaged by fire from faulty equipment and subsequently closed. Cosmetic repairs to the siding have been completed.

Hillandale Local Park is scheduled to undergo Facility Planning by the Department of Parks, Park Development Division beginning in the next few months. Approval of the removal of the pair of joined buildings prior to completion of the Facility Plan is important in order to allow the maximum flexibility in redesigning the park to better meet the needs of the community and to develop the best possible plan for the park.

Prior Approvals

On June 28, 2007, the Planning Board reviewed the *Functional Plan for Recreation and Ancillary Buildings: Preliminary Staff Recommendations (Attachment 1)*. Given the age and condition of many of the recreational buildings and the operational issues related to the leasing of ancillary buildings, an overall planning and management approach to these buildings was presented. Staff presented recommendations for future operations of the 31 park recreation buildings, including the Hillandale building, and key management changes for the 9 ancillary buildings. Park Activity Buildings were assigned to 4 basic categories and ancillary buildings to 2 basic categories.

The four Park Activity Building management categories were:

- Continue and Improve - 7 buildings
- Evaluate and Market – 8 buildings
- Transfer or Demolish - 5 buildings
- Assess Historical Priority – 1 building

The Hillandale PAB was recommended for the Transfer and Demolish management category for two basic reasons – cost of repair and duplication of services (see “Analysis”, below).

At the June 28, 2007 Planning Board hearing, the Board directed staff to bring each Park Activity Building recommendation for Transfer or Demolish back to the Board one at a time. Subsequently, Park Planning staff met with community representatives who argued that the facility served an important need for community gatherings, since there would be a lack of this service in the area while the two local schools (Key Middle School and Cresthaven Elementary School) were closed, demolished and re-built. In addition, although the White Oak Recreation Center would eventually provide needed indoor meeting and recreation space, the exact construction and delivery date was uncertain at the time.

Status Since 2007

In response to community concerns, the Department of Parks continued to operate the PAB for community use. In the interim, Parks replaced the septic system to keep the building operational, under an MOU between the Commission and the Montgomery County Health Department. The MOU assigned a five-year term that expires February 1, 2014 (**Attachment 2**).

Since 2007, the two schools in the area have been re-built and the White Oak Community Recreation Center has opened, providing alternative locations for public indoor meeting spaces nearby.

In May 2012 staff met with the community members to provide the preliminary staff recommendation for a phased closure and building demolition.

Analysis

Staff has analyzed three operational factors that support demolishing the building:

- Existing Condition
- Duplication of Service
- Cultural Resource Evaluation

Existing Condition

The *Infrastructure Inventory and Assessment of Park Components* (Facility Engineering Associates, March, 2007 **(Attachment 3)**) concluded that the septic system has failed and that a hookup to public sewer would cost approximately \$30,000. The Health Department will not allow connection to either the Hillandale Park Office Building or the Fire Station. Park staff obtained an independent budget estimate for two options to connect the building to the public sewer system. The estimate showed that installing a gravity sewer through forested areas would cost \$123,000. The second option would require tunneling under New Hampshire Avenue and would cost \$222,000 **(Attachment 4)**.

Staff concluded that the costs of septic hookup and fixing the building would exceed the building's current replacement value.

Duplication of Service

In evaluating the future operation of the PAB, staff examined other service providers including Libraries, Montgomery County Public Schools, closed schools, and the Recreation Department **(Figure 3)**. In the specific case of Hillandale, the recent provision of public meeting spaces in two nearby facilities at the Cresthaven Elementary School, and the Key Middle School has increased the level of service for rentable indoor meeting space in the vicinity of the Hillandale Local Park. The White Oak Library is slightly over one mile north on New Hampshire Avenue from Hillandale Local Park. The Hillandale Civic Association is currently meeting in the former Hillandale Elementary School which is now leased to Centers for the Handicapped.

The addition of the White Oak Community Recreation Center (CRC) includes a public meeting space with a kitchen and other amenities in a park setting **(Figure 4)**. This 33,000 square foot building, located on parkland, opened in June of 2012. The CRC layout includes a community room and kitchen equivalent to the PAB function in addition to the following services: Gymnasium, Exercise Room, Senior/Community Lounge, Arts/Kiln Room, Game room, Conference Room, and Activity Room.

Cultural Resource Evaluation

Cultural Resources Stewardship Section staff within the Department of Parks have an overarching interest in documenting the history of the Commission and the Department of Parks. The Section's Senior Historian has reviewed and begun writing up the history of the Commission. As part of that larger effort, the history of the original Hillandale recreation building and the World War II temporary structures has been evaluated. In addition, Cultural Resources staff understand the laws and principles of historic preservation within the county.

Cultural Resources staff consulted directly with the Historic Preservation Section staff, both in a detailed site visit and in two follow-up meetings, as part of its evaluation, and developed an internal staff-level strategic plan for how to protect the best of these types of buildings. Towards that end, Cultural Resources is now preparing a *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* amendment that will include the history of park activity buildings and the nomination of at least one building from each genre that has the best integrity. Six buildings dating from the 1930s to the 1960s will be nominated in FY 13 or 14. The buildings to be preserved are those that best meet the criteria of Chapter 24-A of the Montgomery County Code, the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Hillandale has lost much of its original building material in recent decades, according to the trades people who actually did the repairs. Therefore, Hillandale is not the best candidate for designation or preservation. A more suitable building to represent the era is its 'twin,' the Pinecrest recreation building, which will be part of the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* amendment. It is worth noting that the Historic Preservation Section staff of the Planning Department did not recommend the designation of Hillandale within the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan. (See "Area Master Planning Considerations" below).

Area Master Planning Considerations

The White Oak Science Gateway (WOSG) Master Plan is currently underway. The recommendation in the WOSG Preliminary Draft is as follows:

"Remove the Park Activity Building (upon approval by the Planning Board as part of a Parks Department agenda item), to allow for repurposing of parkland with facilities that are in demand, such as community open space, reconfigured play area, etc. (Final program and park design to be determined through the currently funded Facility Plan)."

As mentioned above, Historic Preservation Section staff did not recommend the designation of the Hillandale PAB (with its attached Adult Education Building) to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, but included the structures in the list titled, "Potential Historic Resources for Future Evaluation." Preservation staff also noted that the Hillandale buildings had "compromised integrity." At the September 20, 2012 presentation to the Planning Board of the Preliminary Recommendations, Parks staff noted the Historic Resources chapter language and voiced Park's opinion that Hillandale's compromised integrity makes Pinecrest, its "twin," a better example of the building type, and the better candidate for preservation.

Repurposing of the Site

The park is undergoing facility planning in the next few months. The facility planning public process will give the community opportunities to suggest alternate uses on the park activity building's footprint among other issues. Community input to date suggests relocation of the playground to make it more visible, and reconfiguration of the disjointed parking and driveway pattern. The facility plan will address these issues in a comprehensive re-thinking of the entire park.

PC:

John Nissel, Chief, Facilities Management Division, Department of Parks
Steve Chandlee, Acting Division Chief, Southern Parks, Department of Parks
Antonio Duvall Acting Chief, Park Police Division, Department of Parks
MaryEllen Venzke, Chief, Management Services Division, Department of Parks
Mitra Pedeem, Chief, Park Development Division
Kate Stookey, Chief, Public Affairs & Community Partnerships Division, Department of Parks
Joey Lampl, Cultural Resources Manager

Figure 1: Location Map



Figure 2: Park Map

Hillandale LP

10815 New Hampshire Avenue, Hillandale, MD 20903

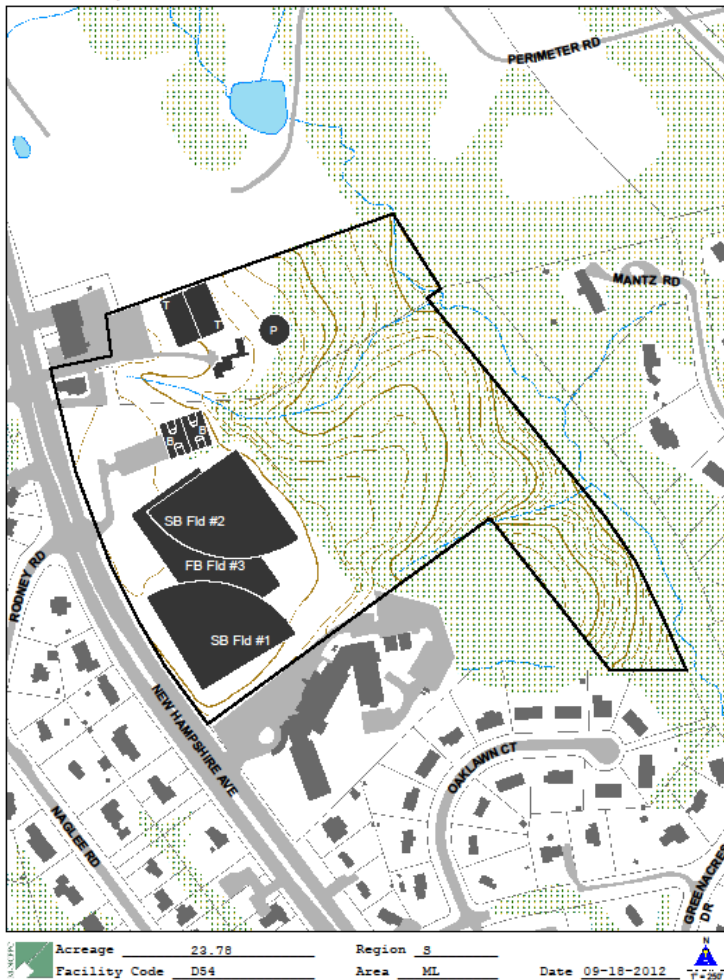


Figure 3: Recreation Buildings and other public meeting spaces near Hillandale Local Park

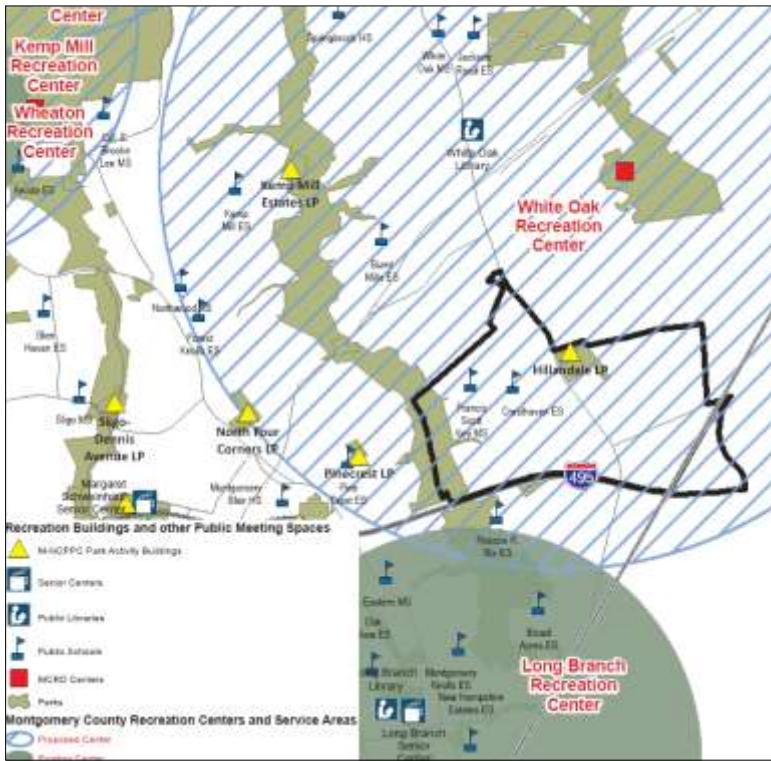


Figure 4: White Oak Community Recreation Center



Attachments

Attachment 1 – Planning Board Memo: June 28, 2007. Functional Plan for Recreation and Ancillary Buildings:
PRELIMINARY STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Attachment 2 - Department of Permitting Services: Sewage Disposal System Permit

Attachment 3 - Facility Engineering Associates (FEA) Final Report - Infrastructure Inventory and Assessment of
Park Components, March 2, 2007

Attachment 4 - W.F. Wilson & Sons, Inc., Budget Proposal