



March 11, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Lester L. Straw, Superintendent of Parks
Michael F. Riley, Chief, Park Development Division
Douglas Alexander, Design and Project Management Supervisor

FROM: Linda Komes, Project Manager (650-2860) LK

SUBJECT: Facility Plan for Phase I improvements at the Woodstock Equestrian Park

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Approve the Facility Plan for the Phase-I Improvements at Woodstock Equestrian Park; and
- 2) Approve the Final Forest Conservation Plan.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**A. INTRODUCTION**

Woodstock Equestrian Park is located on MD Route 28, north of the historic town of Beallsville, in the northwest corner of Montgomery County. The 765-acre site straddles MD Rt. 28 and consists of rolling agricultural fields, forests and streams. Approximately 315 acres of the property is currently leased to local farmers and is under cultivation.

The 411-acre parcel located on the west side of MD Rt. 28 consists of approximately 375 acres that were donated to the M-NCPPC by Mr. Hermen Greenberg, specifically to accommodate equestrian activities. An additional 36 acres were purchased from Mr. Greenberg by the M-NCPPC in 1999. The west side of the park is named the Moritz Greenberg Equestrian Center in honor of Mr. Greenberg's father.

The 354-acre Brewer Farm, located on the east side of MD 28, was purchased from Mr. William Rickman Sr. by the M-NCPPC with State Grant assistance in 2000. This portion of the park was part of a land grant owned by George Washington in the 1790's and was used for fox chasing and farming. The east side of the park will be dedicated to the memory of Mr. Rickman's great-great grandfather, Dr. William Rickman, a surgeon and physician for the

English during the French and Indian War. Both Mr. Greenberg and Mr. Rickman recognized that a large amount of acreage was necessary for the equestrian park to become a reality.

On January 31, 2002, the Planning Board approved a Master Plan for Woodstock Equestrian Park. The Master Plan envisions the park as a "first-class equestrian center" whose goal is to preserve the site's rich cultural resources and traditional agricultural setting while "strengthening the future vitality of the growing horse industry in Montgomery County".

Staff is recommending that the Master Plan be amended. A Public Hearing on the proposed changes will be held as a companion case to the subject Facility Plan. For a full explanation of the proposed amendments please refer to the Public Hearing Draft of Proposed Amendments to the Woodstock Equestrian Park Master Plan. The proposed amendments include the following:

- 1) Recommends M-NCPPC purchase approximately 78.75 acres of undeveloped land contiguous to the park on the west side of MD 28;
- 2) Recommends flexibility in siting future facilities based on input from the *Friends of Woodstock*, and preliminary engineering information; and
- 3) Recommends that vehicles without trailers be permitted to access the park from the existing Wasche Road entrance.

B. PROJECT FUNDING

On November 17, 2000, the Maryland General Assembly authorized a \$600,000 Capital Projects Grant for Woodstock. The grant funds were designated to be used for the design and construction of boundary fences, recreational trails, restoration/stabilization of historic structures, and the initial design of equestrian facilities.

In addition to this public funding Mr. William Rickman, Sr. contributed an additional \$100,000 for the construction of the entrance and parking lot on the east side of the park. Mr. Hermen Greenberg also contributed approximately \$75,000 for improvements and engineering services including the construction of the stone entrance walls on the west side of the park. Mr. Greenberg has also pledged funds to cover the purchase of two bridges.

C. THE FACILITY PLAN PROCESS

The subject Facility Plan seeks to implement the Phase I facilities identified in the Woodstock Equestrian Park Master Plan. The work completed as part of Phase I include a boundary and topographic survey of the entire park; a wetland delineation and forest conservation plan; the design and construction of four-rail, equestrian-style fencing along the MD 28 property frontage and in several areas along common property lines within the park; monumental park entrances on both sides of MD. 28, including landscape planting, stone entrance walls, and gravel parking lots; over 16 miles of natural surface trails with four bridges; way-finding and interpretive signage; an at-grade crossing of MD 28; and archeological survey and historic preservation work.

During the facility planning process for the trail network and park entrances and parking lots, environmental and community impacts were analyzed, various development scenarios were analyzed, and detailed projected construction costs were developed. The goal is to design and implement the Phase I facilities envisioned in the Woodstock Master Plan while protecting the site's rich natural and cultural resources. The creation of the facility plan included the following steps:

1. Data Collection;
2. Inventory and evaluation of existing conditions;
3. Phase I archaeological study and investigation;
4. Structural assessment of the buildings standing on the Brewer Farm and the Seneca Stone Barn;
5. Historic Structures report for the Brewer Farm, Seneca Stone Barn and house site, and the Mary Fisher Farm;
6. Development of an existing Trail Condition Plan;
7. Presentation to the community at a public meeting of Site Inventory and Analysis and Design Concepts;
8. Development of a Proposed Trails Plan;
9. Preparation of Storm Water Management (SWM) Concept Plan and obtain approval from County;
10. Revision of Proposed Trails Plan Based on M-NCPPC, Community, County and MDSHA comments and preparation of Construction Cost Estimate;
11. Development of Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan and obtain approval; and
12. Presentation of Facility Plan at Planning Board Hearing.

D. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

On October 27, 2003, M-NCPPC, with the Montgomery Parks Foundation and Frederick Ward Associates held the first of two public outreach meetings with the intent of presenting the project to the community and gathering community input. Both meetings were held in the community building at Owens Local Park. The October 27th meeting also served as the charter meeting for the Friends of Woodstock Equestrian Park Group. In addition to the local community, members of the Woodstock Equestrian Park Planning Committee, who were active during the Master Plan process, were invited to the meeting.

During the meeting, the team presented the site analysis, the trails condition plan and the draft trails plan. The presentation also included a presentation on the history of the property and its historic and cultural resources. The graphic designer presented ideas for wayfinding, park entrance, and interpretive signage. Staff received valuable input from the community during the meeting and in subsequent conversations and correspondence.

Questions during the October 27th meeting centered around the timing of the opening of the park, funding for the Phase I facilities, timing of Phase II facilities, and park access. Several community members commented on the importance of providing a below grade MD 28 crossing and the anticipated cost for the crossing.

A second community meeting was held at Owens Local Park on February 4, 2004. The primary focus of this meeting was to brief the community on the proposed amendments to the Woodstock Master Plan. Staff also presented the trails plan and answered questions. The majority of the questions were on the proposed Master Plan revisions. One resident questioned several trails that appear to start along West Hunter Road. Once again, there were comments regarding the safety of an at-grade MD 28 crossing and the importance of the future below grade crossing.

Since the meeting, staff has communicated with members of the Friends Group who are in full support of the Phase I improvements. (See attached memo McClain to Komes, dated 3/8/04, in Appendix C). As construction documents are developed for the facilities, staff will continue to

work closely with the Friends Group to ensure that site improvements meet the needs of the local equestrian community. On February 14, 2004 the M-NCPPC and the Friends of Woodstock Group sponsored the first trail worksession at the park during which time approximately two miles of existing trails on the Rickman side of the park were improved.

E. AGENCY INPUT

On January 13, 2004, staff from the M-NCPPC and Frederick Ward Associates met with Nadine Piontka of the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) to discuss options for stormwater management in the park. On April 1, 2003 a stormwater management concept plan was submitted to DPS. Stormwater management concept approval was granted by DPS on April 11, 2003. Stormwater management in the park will be provided by allowing drainage to sheet flow and with two grass swales on the Greenberg side, and by a system of swales and sand filters on the Rickman side. At the present time, final stormwater management approval has been granted for the Rickman side of the park and is pending on the Greenberg side.

A Final Forest Conservation Plan was submitted to the County-wide Planning Division, Environmental Planning Unit of M-NCPPC and is recommended for approval. Forest Conservation requirements will be met by retention of all existing forest on-site. It is anticipated that the Facility Plan can be fully implemented with no, or very limited, impacts to existing forest.

On January 14, 2004, a report for the MD 28 crossing was submitted to the Maryland State Highway Administration requesting approval of an at-grade crossing of MD 28. The at-grade crossing is proposed along the northern property line of the park in an area with good sight distance. A sight-distance study was conducted and sight distance was found to be more than adequate at the proposed crossing point. Horse crossing warning signage is proposed along the north and southbound approaches to the park and push button activated flashing hazard identification beacons are proposed to be provided. In addition, a painted crosswalk will be provided at the at-grade crossing point. At the time of this writing, the report is under review by the MDSHA. Access permits for the entrances in to the park from MD 28 were previously applied for and granted by the MDSHA and construction of the entrances is nearing completion.

On September 29, 2003 a Phase I archeological Investigation was submitted to the Maryland Historical Trust. An approval was granted on 1/23/04.

F. PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The Woodstock Equestrian Park Master Plan - On January 31, 2002, the Planning Board approved a Master Plan for Woodstock Equestrian Park. The subject Facility Plan seeks to implement the first Phase facilities envisioned by the Master Plan and is in full conformance. As previously discussed, a proposed amendment to the Master Plan has been submitted as a companion case to the subject Facility Plan. The amendment recommends that three adjacent residential lots be purchased and the majority of the lot area added to the park, adding language to the Master Plan which would permit flexibility in siting future facilities based on additional engineering information and input from the *Friends of Woodstock* group, and allowing limited vehicular access to the cultural resources from the existing Wasche Road entrance, located in the Greenberg portion of the park. The proposed Facility Plan is not directly affected by these recommended amendments.

III. THE FACILITY PLAN

As previously stated, the subject Facility Plan seeks to implement the first phase facilities approved as part of the Woodstock Master Plan. These facilities include monumental park entrances and gravel parking lots on both sides of MD 28, over 16 miles of trails, including four bridged stream crossings; an at-grade crossing of MD 28; a structural assessment and historic documentation of the significant historic buildings located on the site; an archaeological investigation of selected sites within the park; a wayfinding and interpretive signage program; and landscape planting.

A. PARK ENTRANCES AND PARKING LOTS

The Dr. William Rickman Equestrian Center Entrance

Mr. William Rickman Sr. contributed \$100,000 to the Montgomery County Park Foundation towards the construction of the entrance on the east side of the park. The entrance drive and parking lot were built in the location shown on the approved Master Plan and were designed by staff of the Park Development Division. The proposed ingress/egress point at MD 28 is in the same location as the driveway to the historic Brewer Farm. In order to preserve the vestiges of the historic farm, the new park entrance will follow an alignment just north of the existing cluster of historic buildings. The new entrance drive is divided at its intersection with MD 28 and will feature a new stonewall in the median with a cast stone panel bearing the name of the Dr. William Rickman Equestrian Park. The entrance drive will terminate in a gravel parking lot that will accommodate 10 vehicles with horse trailers and approximately 15 cars. An area for overflow parking will be designated.

The entrance is currently under construction by the Central Maintenance Division of M-NCPPC. Construction of the entrance is behind schedule due to the wet weather this past fall and winter, but is expected to be completed within the next several weeks. Mr. Rickman has committed additional funds to rebuild one of two existing Seneca stone entrance walls that was demolished to widen the existing driveway, and the new stone wall sign panel in the median mentioned above. Mr. Rickman had ornamental fence sections and gates fabricated for the original entrance walls which will be incorporated into the new entrance. The Facility Plan envisions that the new entry drive will be lined with shade trees and the walls and planting completed before the projected fall opening of the park.

The Moritz Greenberg Equestrian Center Entrance

The entrance into the Moritz Greenberg Equestrian Center side on the west side of the park also features a divided entry drive with fieldstone walls designed by the Park Development Division. Construction of the walls was paid for by Mr. Hermen Greenberg. A small temporary gravel parking lot was constructed behind the walls by the Central Maintenance Division. Permit drawings for a permanent gravel parking lot that will accommodate 10 vehicles with trailers and parking for approximately 24 cars are under review by the County.

It is anticipated that construction will begin early-to-mid summer and will be completed in the fall before the park opening. The *Friends of Woodstock* have not yet determined the exact date for the park opening. Upon completion of the permanent parking lot the small temporary parking lot will be removed. At this time it is intended that the cost to construct the parking lot will come from the State Grant.

B. THE TRAILS PLAN

As envisioned by the Woodstock Equestrian Park Master Plan, the park will provide an extensive system of trails for equestrians and hikers. Bicycles and all terrain vehicles will be prohibited. With few exceptions, the extensive trail network will be available for both hikers and equestrians. Several trails have been carefully planned to accommodate visitors with physical challenges.

The majority of the trails currently exist and were created by former logging, agricultural, or equestrian activities. Most of the trails have been used for many years by the local equestrian community. During the Facility Planning process these trails were located using a Global Positioning System (GPS). A primary goal of this project was a thorough assessment of the existing trail network. The proposed Trails Plan, identifies and locates the more than 15 miles of existing trails, recommends specific portions of trails that should be closed for environmental and safety reasons, proposes several new trail segments, and identifies trails which need to be upgraded. The plan also makes specific recommendations as to the nature and extent of the necessary proposed improvements. With the exception of the proposed handicap accessible trails, all of the trails within the park will be natural surface trails. The handicap accessible trails will be constructed to meet current guidelines regarding accessibility and will utilize crushed stone or a soil additive.

As part of the trail improvements, four bridged stream crossings are proposed, two on each side of the park. The bridges are constructed of Fiberglas, are light-weight and can be installed by volunteers with M-NCPPC supervision. The bridges will be eight-feet-wide so as to easily accommodate equestrians and to permit the comfortable passage of carriages and maintenance vehicles. A non-slip decking material will be used such as structural lumber made from recycled plastic or rough sawn Oak. Mr. Greenberg has pledged funds to purchase the two bridges proposed for the west side of the property.

The trails plan also includes an at-grade crossing of MD 28. The crossing is proposed to be located at the northern property edge in an area with good sight visibility. The crossing is proposed to include warning signage approximately 400 feet to the north and south of the crossing, a rider-activated flashing light, and a painted crosswalk. A study has been submitted to the Maryland State Highway Administration and at the time of this writing is under review. Staff notes that this at-grade crossing is envisioned as a Phase I improvement. A below grade crossing is the preferred long-term solution and will be implemented in the future as additional funds are available and after the required engineering studies are completed.

C. HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Woodstock Equestrian Park and the surrounding area include a number of significant historic resources. The Brewer Farm, a complex of small, Seneca sandstone and frame farm buildings located on a ridge a short distance back from MD 28, (on the Rickman side of the park), was part of the Woodstock tract, a portion of which was owned by George Washington during his presidency.

Dr. William G. Brewer purchased the farm in 1834 (with John J. Wilkinson Jones from Oak Ridge/Eleven Brothers). The buildings remaining on the property date from 1861 when Dr. Brewer's grandson, George Brewer, built a large house and numerous outbuildings, and from 1908 when George's son, William G., inherited the farm, modified the house and added more outbuildings. The Brewer's, who moved from Anne Arundel County in the early 19th century

were notable physicians, attorneys, and leaders in agricultural and political activities in Montgomery County.

The entire property was designated in the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation in 1984. Permission was given in 1986 by the Historic Preservation Commission to demolish the main house and dairy barn. The Seneca sandstone foundation of the main house was excavated and used to build the stone entrance walls on MD 28. The remaining structures on the property appear to be from two eras, the two stone buildings appear to date from the time of the first house construction by George Brewer, around 1860, and the frame outbuildings from 1908 or later. The date of the cistern has not been determined.

The west side of the park (Greenberg side) contains two identified historic sites. Both are accessible by means of a farm lane leading in from Wasche Road. On the south side of the farm lane is a group of outbuildings, known as the Mary Fisher Farm but which is correctly identified as the Jones Farm, grouped around the foundations of a large house constructed circa 1896 to 1900 by Edward Wilkerson Jones.

Further up the farm lane on the north side of the lane is the Seneca Stone Barn, a rare example of a stone English barn most likely constructed at the end of the eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The barn is the most historically important of all the buildings in the park, and is one of the few remaining stone barns in all of Montgomery County, and is in serious need of stabilization. The house that was most likely associated with the barn was located nearby at the top of the hill and was demolished in the first half of the 20th century.

Confederate Major General J.E.B. Stuart's may have passed through the park during his famous escape from Union troops on October 12, 1862. Although the exact route is unclear, a map of Stuart's route produced by Civil War Historian Colonel Wilbur S. Nye may indicate that Stuart and his troops passed directly past the cluster of buildings which comprised the recently settled Brewer Farm. Stuart then proceeded north along MD 28 before heading west towards the Potomac River. A portion of this route is included as a park trail.

A Phase I archaeological study was conducted at four locations within the park. The study also involved extensive historical background research. The study was completed in conformance with the *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations in Maryland*. The four locations within the park where test pits were dug include the two parking lot locations, around the tenant house located on the Brewer Farm and around the Seneca Stone Barn and house location. Neither parking lot contained archaeological artifacts. Artifacts were recovered at the remaining two sites. A report was submitted to the Maryland Historic Trust and was accepted in November 2003. The recovered artifacts will remain with the M-NCPPC.

D. PARK SIGNAGE

A comprehensive park signage program has been developed including monumental park entrance signage, regulatory, wayfinding, and interpretive signage for the cultural resources. Cast stone panels set in monumental stone walls have been designed for the park entrances. In addition signage will be installed before the park entrances in either direction displaying "Park Entrance 200 feet".

At each parking lot a kiosk will be provided displaying park rules and regulations, important announcements, as well as a plan of the park locating trails and park amenities.

Trail signage will utilize park standards and will be mounted on pressure-treated 6" x 6" posts displaying pictograms and messages such as "Stream Crossing Ahead". Wayfinding information will be also displayed along the trails, both at the entry points and at trail intersections. At the beginning of each trail a post-mounted sign will inform trail users of the trail name and the distance in miles to complete the trail loop or segment.

Interpretive signage is intended to be provided at the Brewer Farm, The Mary Fisher (Jones) Farm, and at the Seneca Stone Barn. In addition signage will be provided along the portion of the trail thought to follow a portion of J.E.B. Stuart's historic route.

E. LANDSCAPE PLANTING

In order to reinforce the site's natural beauty and rural and historic features, additional landscape planting is proposed. In the first phase this landscape planting will consist mainly of planting at the entrance walls, along the entry drives, around the new parking lots, and around the Brewer Farm.

The plant palette will consist mainly of native species with an emphasis on a historically appropriate treatment in the vicinity of the historic Brewer Farm.

III. FUTURE PHASES

The Woodstock Equestrian Park Master Plan identifies that "developing a park the size of Woodstock and the program of equestrian activities it envisions will take many years to accomplish". The first recommendation for Phase I Implementation is to "establish a public-private partnership such as the *Friends of Woodstock* to begin to develop a long-range implementation strategy".

The *Friends of Woodstock* group has formed and has reviewed the current facility plan for Phase I and is busy developing a strategy to implement the future facilities envisioned in the Master Plan. First on the list of future facilities is the desire to provide two outdoor rings. The Friends plan to hire a consultant to help in the design and siting of the rings. M-NCPPC staff will continue to work with the Friends Group to help assist in implementing both Phase I and future facilities.

IV. COST

The Consultant prepared a cost estimate for construction of the proposed Phase I facilities and improvements at the Woodstock Equestrian Park. The estimated cost to complete the improvements is as listed in the following Table. A more detailed summary is included in the Facility Plan Technical Report, Attachment D.

Woodstock Equestrian Park Cost Estimate		
ITEM	TOTAL	NOTES
Brewer Farm	\$48,759	1
Edward Jones Farm and Seneca Stone Barn	\$43,625	2
Greenberg Parking Lot and Trail Head	\$147,959	
Bridges	\$83,000	3
Trails	\$0	4
At-Grade MD 28 crossing	\$30,600	
Signage	\$26,750	5
CONSTRUCTION COST	\$380,693	
15% Cost Contingency	\$57,104	
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST	\$437,797	6

Notes:

- 1) It is anticipated that a portion of this work may be completed by volunteers and that the landscape material may come from the Pope Farm Nursery which may decrease the projected costs.
- 2) These costs will likely be delayed to a subsequent phase after stabilization efforts for the Seneca Stone Barn are completed. Funds to stabilize the Seneca Stone Barn are planned to come from a different source.
- 3) Mr. Greenberg has pledged \$42,000 towards the purchase of two bridges which is in addition to the \$83,000.
- 4) Trail improvements will be completed entirely with volunteer labor.
- 5) It is anticipated that the trail signage will be installed by and may reduce the projected construction cost. The interpretive signage for the Fisher Farm and the Seneca Stone Barn may be delayed until stabilization efforts are complete.
- 6) Because many of the Phase I facilities (including the natural surface trail network which largely exists) will rely heavily on the use of volunteer labor for construction, it is not possible at this time to define the exact extent of the facilities which will be funded with the remaining State Grant funds. Therefore, we have established the following spending priorities for the Phase I facilities: The Greenberg parking lot, bridges, at-grade MD 28 crossing, signage, the Brewer Farm, Edward Jones Farm and Seneca Stone Barn trails and improvements.

V. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Vicinity Map

Attachment B: Proposed Trails Plan

Attachment C: Correspondence

Attachment D: Facility Plan Technical Report (Consultant's Report)