



MCPB Item #5

Date: December 21, 2023

**MEMORANDUM**

December 14, 2023

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks *Michael F. Riley*  
Miti Figueredo, Deputy Director, Administration *mf*  
Darren Flusche, Division Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD) *DF*

**FROM:** Dominique Harlow, Chief of Staff (Director's Office) *DH*

**SUBJECT:** Designation of Royce Hanson Conservation Park at Broad Run

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**Recommended Action**

Approval to reassign the park name Royce Hanson Urban Park to Broad Run Conservation Park, as an appropriate replacement for the removal of Royce Hanson Urban Park at the Montgomery Regional Office. The new park name will be Royce Hanson Conservation Park at Broad Run.

**Background**

The redevelopment of the Montgomery Regional Office in Silver Spring eliminated the site of Royce Hanson Urban Park. The Parks Department recommends reassigning the name to another park in honor of Dr. Hanson's legacy of service to the Commission and Montgomery County.

On June 5, 2014, the Montgomery County Planning Board approved Mandatory Referral #2014047 for the disposition of the property located at 8787 Georgia Avenue, the former Montgomery Regional Office and Royce Hanson Urban Park. The Planning Board's decision was documented in a letter from former Chair Françoise Carrier to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, dated July 1, 2014, which noted that "the Parks Department will need to address the relocation of Royce Hanson Urban Park to another appropriate site." Refer to Attachment A.

**A Brief Discussion of Dr. Royce Hanson**

Dr. Hanson started his life as an orphan on the Depression-era plains of Oklahoma and achieved great heights through discipline, hard work, and education that led to decades of exemplary public service. Dr. Hanson is an academic, a pioneering Commissioner/Chairman of a major U.S. jurisdiction, an author, teacher, urban planner of distinction, and an advocate for wilderness and wild places.

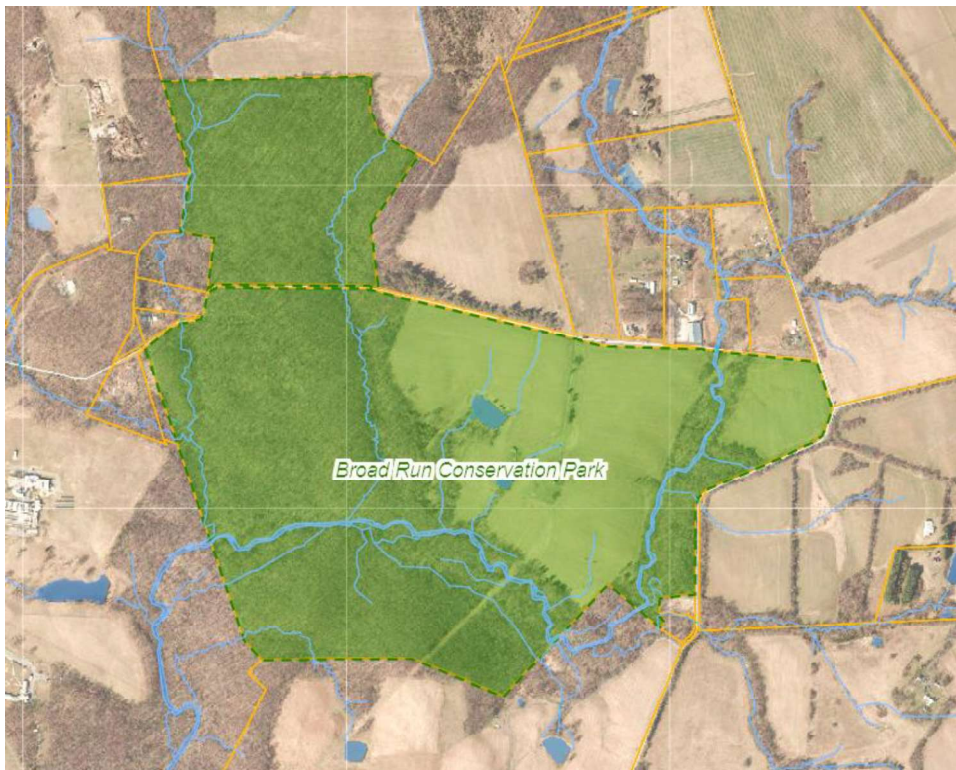
Dr. Hanson served two terms as Chairman of the Montgomery County Planning Board of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, first from 1972 to 1981, and again from 2006 to 2010. Under his tenure, one of Montgomery County's greatest planning successes was the creation of the Agricultural Reserve. The Agricultural Reserve covers almost a third of the county and is a national model of agricultural preservation in a densely populated area. Dr. Hanson also helped design an easement program

limiting development on agricultural land and transferring density to target receiving areas, a concept that has been replicated in many parts of the world.

Dr. Hanson was a champion for natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation and education, serving previously as the President of the Maryland Environmental Trust and Chairman of the Montgomery County Department of Parks Legacy Open Space Advisory Group. Dr. Hanson served on the Board of the Montgomery County Parks Foundation from 2009-2022. As an academic, Dr. Hanson’s research spans urban planning and politics, constitutional law, and the ethics of political campaigns. He has authored multiple books and has an award named after him from the Montgomery Countryside Alliance.

### **Analysis**

Parks staff conducted a comprehensive analysis of approximately three dozen existing park sites to find a suitable replacement. Emphasis was placed on parks within the Agricultural Reserve. Other factors considered included park prominence, ease of public access, and appropriateness of a park name change. A site selection committee was formed and included the Planning Director, Parks Director and Deputy Director, the Director of the Montgomery Parks Foundation, the Parks historian, multiple Park Managers, and Park and Planning staff. Following consideration of all parks meeting the initial criteria, the committee strongly believes the recently acquired Broad Run Conservation Park is the ideal park site to transfer Dr. Royce Hanson’s name. The park site captures Dr. Hanson’s passion for parks, natural and cultural resources stewardship, outdoor recreation, and education, and is located within the Agricultural Reserve. This park is a fitting tribute to Dr. Hanson, who participated in designating this property in the Legacy Open Space Plan in 2008 as an important resource for park acquisition and who is often referred to as the “architect” of the Agricultural Reserve.



**Figure 1. Broad Run Conservation Park**

Broad Run Conservation Park was designated as a Legacy Open Space Natural Resource site “best of the best” in 2008 by the Planning Board. The 472-acre site is a unique park for resource stewardship, resource-based recreation, and public access and education.

Broad Run Conservation Park was acquired in 2021 with a two-year reservation term that allows the Parks Department to take control of the site in December 2023. Currently, Broad Run Conservation Park is undeveloped for active recreation use but provides opportunities for quiet enjoyment and a natural environment. The Park Planning and Stewardship (PPSD) Division is beginning site planning for the property to provide opportunities for the public to experience and enjoy this remarkable natural area through a variety of resource-based recreational activities, including primitive camping, fishing, picnicking, birdwatching, and photography. Multi-use trails for hiking, running, horseback riding, and mountain biking will also be park amenities.

### **Individual Naming and Dedication Policy**

Royce Hanson Urban Park was dedicated to Dr. Hanson in 1981 under a previously appointed Planning Board. It is noteworthy that the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning has updated its park naming policies throughout the years. The original Park Naming Policy was approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board on September 10, 1998. On December 1, 2011, the Planning Board approved an Individual Naming & Dedication Policy that differentiated between philanthropic and commemorative naming and established standards for each. The Individual Naming & Dedication Policy was recently updated on May 7, 2020, to include the following elements for consideration in approving the commemorative naming of a park asset:

1. The individual proposed as the subject for naming:
  - a. Has been deceased for at least five (5) years; and
  - b. Achieved an exemplary level of community esteem during life.
2. A broad cross-section of community leaders:
  - a. Expresses formal support for the naming; and
  - b. Demonstrates that a substantial consensus in favor of the naming exists both in the area immediately surrounding the park or facility to be named and in the larger Montgomery County community.
3. After appropriate research and evaluation, the Department produces documentation sufficient for the Planning Board to conclude that:
  - a. The requirements and conditions set forth above in paragraphs (1) and (2) have been satisfied; and
  - b. During life, the individual proposed as the subject for naming established and maintained an exceptional level of support for the park asset, park system, or related trails and open spaces in Montgomery County.
  - c. For purposes of this paragraph, an “exceptional level of support” means a sustained civic contribution during life that necessarily involved making personal sacrifices which inured to the benefit of other people in their access, utilization or enjoyment of the Park Asset, park system, or related trails and open spaces in Montgomery County.

While Dr. Hanson meets the majority of the criteria of the current individual naming policy, this updated policy was not in effect at the time Royce Hanson Urban Park was named. In this instance, Parks staff is recommending that the Board honor the decision made by a prior Planning Board and reassign the name to

another park. The final decision on commemorative park naming is ultimately the domain of the Planning Board.

### **Fundraising and Partnerships**

In recent discussions with Dr. Hanson, he requested that the naming be coupled with a fundraising effort by the Montgomery Parks Foundation. He also asked that we consider a partnership with the Global Ecology Program at nearby Poolesville High School, a field-based program to immerse students in a wide range of environmental issues. Lastly, he requested we explore potential farm incubators on the land that is currently leased cropland. All these proposals have merit and will be pursued by the Parks Department.

### **Conclusion**

Given the loss of Royce Hanson Urban Park in Silver Spring, the Montgomery Parks Department recommends transferring Dr. Hanson's name to a new park property that will be turned over to park ownership this month. This is an appropriate and prominent park that speaks to Dr. Hanson's passion for parks, commitment to natural resources stewardship, appeal for outdoor recreation, steadfast support for education, and vision for creating Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve.

With Planning Board approval, the park name will be changed from Broad Run Conservation Park to Royce Hanson Conservation Park at Broad Run. The Parks Department will plan for a Summer 2024 Dedication Ceremony, and Dr. Hanson, his family and friends will be invited to attend.

### Attachments

Attachment A: Planning Board Letter dated July 1, 2014

cc

Jason K. Sartori, Planning Director, Montgomery Planning  
Patrick Butler, Upcounty Division Chief, Montgomery Planning  
Mike Little, Northern Region Division Chief, Montgomery Parks  
Patricia McManus, Section Chief, Park Development, Montgomery Parks  
Brenda Sandberg, Land Management Supervisor, Montgomery Parks



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

July 1, 2014

Mr. Al Roshdieh, Deputy Director  
Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
101 Monroe Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

RE: Mandatory Review for the disposition of property located at 8787 Georgia Avenue  
Mandatory Referral # 2014047

Dear Mr. Roshdieh,

Thank you for submitting the mandatory referral for the disposition of property located at 8787 Georgia Avenue in downtown Silver Spring, Maryland. The application regarding the disposition of the property was accepted on April 28, 2014 along with an application for a Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan. The site is bordered by Spring Street to the north, Georgia Avenue to the west, a county parking garage to the east and commercial properties to the south. The property is currently improved with the Montgomery Regional Office of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Royce Hanson Urban Park, and surface parking.

On June 5, 2014, with a 5-0 vote, the Montgomery County Planning Board approved the Mandatory Referral for the disposition of the property on a motion by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Wells-Harley, with Commissioners Anderson, Dreyfuss, Presley, Wells-Harley and myself voting in favor of the motion.

The application is the result of a public/private partnership through a Request for Proposal process overseen by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation that will result in the relocation of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Headquarters currently located on the Property to the Wheaton Central Business District ("Wheaton CBD").

The site is located within the 2000 *Approved and Adopted Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* ("Sector Plan"). The Plan articulates six themes as a vision for the downtown. These themes, transit-oriented development, commercial downtown, residential downtown, civic downtown, green downtown and pedestrian friendly downtown, serve as guides to evaluate development proposals in the central business district. This proposal would meet five of the six themes, with civic downtown being removed from the current conditions. The application is within a 10-minute walk of the metro station, and is proposing ground floor retail with residential above. A pedestrian connection that

Mr. Al Roshdieh  
July 1, 2014  
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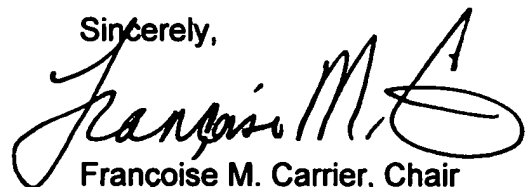
extends Fenton Street to Spring Street is proposed, with a linear public space to facilitate the linkage and activate the space, as specifically recommended in the Sector Plan (p. 72). This application achieves many of the urban design goals in the Sector Plan (p. 73) such as to “create an attractive pedestrian environment by creating a system of short blocks, and defining streets with buildings, open spaces, and streetscaping at a human scale created by street-front retail, frequent doors and windows, architectural detail, and appropriately scaled buildings.” The Board recommends that the trees be preserved to the extent possible along Georgia Avenue and Spring Street to further articulate the green downtown and pedestrian friendly themes.

As noted in the Staff Report issued for this application on May 23, 2014, the Parks Department will need to address the relocation of Royce Hanson Urban Park to another appropriate site.

While the Sector Plan did not contemplate the relocation of the M-NCPPC headquarters, the proposed uses are substantially consistent with the land use recommendations of the Sector Plan, identifying residential and semi-public uses on the Property. The uses proposed are consistent with the current CBD-1 zone and future conversion to the CR family of zones, both of which allow a greater degree of flexibility.

Please feel free to contact me at 301- 495-4605 or Robert Kronenberg of our staff at 301- 495-2187 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Françoise M. Carrier, Chair  
Montgomery County Planning  
Board

cc: Gwen Wright, M-NCPPC, Director of Planning  
Rose Krasnow, M-NCPPC, Deputy Director of Planning  
Robert Kronenberg, M-NCPPC, Area 1 Chief












# Royce\_Hanson\_MCPB\_memo\_7Dec2023

Final Audit Report

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