



## 2021-2022 MCC Governing Board

### Special Called Meeting

July 6, 2021 6:00 p.m.

"hybrid": in-person at MCC and virtual

ZOOM meeting ID: 862 559 70522 Password: 949018

### MINUTES

**Board Members - ALL present:** *in-person:* Barbara Zamora-Appel; Maria Foderaro-Guertin; Rasheq Rahman; Lisa Mariam; Bill Glikbarg; Suzanne Le Menestrel; Shivani Saboo; Max Blacksten; Melanie Sletten; Ivy Chen *virtual:* Carla Post

**MCC Staff present:** Daniel Singh, Executive Director; Holly Novak

**Guests:** Deb Bissen (MPA); April Georgelas; Betsy Costle; Scott Spitzer; Christopher Hoffman; Paul Kohlenberger; Deborah; Mary Lou Melley; Sharon Williams; (703) phone number; Joyce Harris; M. O'Donnell; Barbara Ryan; Merrily Pierce; Cecilia Closs; Adam Wynn; John Herold; Carol Wolter; C. Schantz; Adam Wynn (Fairfax Co. Park Authority)

### CONVENE MEETING

The following Motion by Chair Zamora-Appel was spoken aloud to duly convene this meeting electronically:

#### **Motion for Electronic Meeting**

On 14 April 2020, the Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County issued an emergency ordinance pursuant to VA Code Section 15.2-1413. The ordinance permits county boards, including this board, to conduct fully remote meetings in order to continue the organization's essential services, so long as the following conditions are met:

(1) adequate notice is provided to the public and county; (2) the public is given a means to access the remote meeting; and (3) the purpose for the meeting is given in that notice, and that purpose serves to continue our essential services.

I believe those requirements have been satisfied. I therefore move that this board approve that the proposed agenda items are necessary to assure continuity of MCC's services, and that we are unable to meet in person per usual procedures due to the continuing state of emergency.

This "Special Called Meeting" of the Governing Board of McLean Community Center was convened on July 6, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. using ZOOM technology, which enabled Board members, MCC staff, and the public to participate virtually. This meeting was open to members of the public attending in-person at the McLean Community Center.

**BACKGROUND CONTEXT:** Dolley Madison Library, the McLean Community Center and McLean Central Park are broadly associated through geographic proximity and complimentary services offered by each entity. Summer concerts are enjoyed annually by the public in MCP, facilitated by MCC's technical specialists from The Alden Theatre. MCC Program staff coordinate with library staff to offer meaningful joint programs to the community. Because of this proximity and solid coordination that benefits the entire populace, MCC has a strong interest in contributing ideas and structuring goals for the over-arching redevelopment plan of McLean Central Park. Tonight's discussion focused on deciding the main points to emphasize in a public statement to be sent to Fairfax County articulating MCC Governing Board's views about the redevelopment master plan for McLean Central Park, with a focus on the proposed amphitheater. Background information has been gathered to research detailed progress of the development plan, including a recent letter issued by the MCA (McLean Citizens Association), and a response to that letter from FCPA.

**ADOPT AGENDA** No changes were requested to the proposed Agenda; it was adopted by acclamation.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT \*verbatim remarks, as stated by each person.**

*Chair Zamora-Appel stated that there are people present on ZOOM and in-person who would like to comment tonight. Some helpful guidelines: each person will have three minutes to speak; please focus on items not covered by previous commenters yet. If there are more than five people wanting to comment, then we will have to continue that commentary via e-mail.*

**Betsy Costle** (resident of 1220 Oak Ridge Avenue; she has lived there for 18 years). The amphitheater proposal is her focus: the FCPA proposed plan and the MCC aspects of it. I've lived here for 18 years and I recognize how 'touchy' the



infrastructure is and parking. Anytime there is a little bit of increased traffic beyond what people expect, it can turn into a difficult situation – both for neighbors and for people attending the MCC functions. So, we are right on the edge! When I first moved here, I was at a family memorial service and my husband’s caregiver phoned to tell me there was a school bus stuck in my driveway! This ended well – the kids got out; they got the bus out! I’ve worked with MCC since; and I will say: they make an effort to make things work. But the infrastructure is not set up for large numbers of people – so it sometimes gets a little bit dicey. There have been 911 phone calls because Oak Ridge has been blocked; threatened fist fights because people think they can go around there and park; and they can’t. What that says is that there is a very delicate balance – even given what MCC now does - with the infrastructure that supports it. It’s particularly bad now that we have cut-through [traffic] with Ingleside Avenue. It also sometimes is hard because you have four different entities: MCC; Fairfax County Park Authority; library; Fairfax County police. This takes a fair amount of organization and coordination in order to make things happen. Often, they do a very good job and it is very well-managed; but it sometimes goes awry. So, in saying that, I think it is a big mistake to plan for an amphitheater which will bring in 200+ more people that have to be here at exactly the same time. I don’t think the neighborhood, the roads and the parking are set up for that. The other thing I want to mention to MCC is budget implications. As we all know, FCPA is not given enough money to maintain what it currently has in MCP – not just our park, but parks generally. If you were to walk through McLean Central Park, you would see that. If you just walked down to the tennis courts – on your right, you would see a large crack. That crack was reported by the tennis players many times to FCPA – nothing was done. So, the tennis players themselves filled-in the crack. But I am worried... the MCC may assume that FCPA will maintain this very complicated, large amphitheater structure. I have my doubts, given the past. You can find a lot of your budget and time filling-in cracks or other maintenance on that structure in order to continue performances. I also want to say: you have a gazebo – it is mostly beloved by the people surrounding the park. My husband in a wheelchair loved coming to things there. Some bond money might be used to shore it up, maintain it... perhaps put in a ramp up to the gazebo itself so that would be ADA compliant. You don’t have to for the audience (at least my husband could certainly move around in his wheelchair very well there). People like to come listen to music and let their kids play around. So... I very much urge the MCC board to look to that rather than endorsing being part of the amphitheater. When the Master Plan originally came out, the people then at MCC really did not want to be a part of that (they told me): ‘I don’t think it will ever happen because they expect MCC to run it and I don’t think we can.’ Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

Sharon Williams (resident of McLean for about 35 years; lives at top of Hickory Hill Avenue and Oak Ridge). Thank you for all the time that you devote to taking care of the McLean Community Center. Through the years, I have never stopped being proud of MCC and McLean Central Park. It is a wonderful facility that we have taken full advantage of, with my three children growing up here. So, that’s why I’m here today – because I feel like I have a vested interest in it. I want to echo some of Betsy’s thoughts about the amphitheater and parking. I understand that many of the events for the amphitheater would occur during the same times as some of the events for MCC. The weekend shows; festivals – happening at the same time. And where is everyone going to park? That is something we are very concerned about. Also, the gazabo is wonderful! We’ve been there for many different events. Why not just make better use of the gazebo? It is more isolated – it’s wonderful to walk to through the park. I will also say that I am strongly, strongly against the dog park. Not against the idea of a dog park. I’ve had dogs and I understand that people want it. But the placement - near the tennis courts?!? The tennis course are used a lot (I hear the tennis balls from my house). So, you can imagine my concern: if I can hear tennis balls at my house... what is it going to be like if there is a dog park down there? I checked the Fairfax Co. site for dog parks: they can allow anywhere from 18 to up to 84 dogs in a dog park. So you can imagine being that close to 82 dogs, 365 days a year, 7:00 a.m. until ½ hour past sundown! If I’m hearing tennis balls, you can be sure that I will be hearing dogs. When I brought up the dog park issue in the last meeting about proposed changes, I suggested putting it near the intersection of Old Dominion Drive and Route 123. There are no neighbors close by; there is already noise there. The response was: “That’s where MCC’s ArtFest occurs.” I love ArtFest and have purchased art there; I attend every year. But excuse me... are you going to inconvenience all the neighbors for one weekend event? As well as the fact that it’s a large park; ArtFest can be moved slightly more to the east... to have the dog park in that corner, near the traffic where there already is noise... and won’t disturb anybody. So that is what I hope you will consider doing: moving the location of the dog park to someplace



that is not as disruptive to the neighbors. My final thought is that, having lived here for 35 years, I've seen lots and lots of changes. I was not happy with the change of the designation of McLean Central Park to an "urban" park (ten years ago). But I understand Tysons is expanding. But I do hope you will keep in mind that many people in the community enjoy the wildness of the park (trees; deer; foxes). Being able to escape a little bit from the 'urban' feel. So, in the future, when you are making plans to pave sidewalks or add more facilities, keep in mind that there are many people in the community that have other interests than that. There aren't too many spaces left this close-in to DC. So please keep that in mind. Once again, I love the park... I love MCC.

Barbara Ryan: I don't have a comment per se. I just want to thank you for having this meeting and giving us an opportunity to listen. I do have one request: As I listen to what you discuss, I will be particularly interested in hearing what plans you have to collect the views of the McLean citizens that you represent on the MCC Governing Board in your responsibility (us as taxpayers)... in how you look at this proposed concept plan. That's all I have to say. Thanks again.

### **MCC GOVERNING BOARD'S VIEWS ON REDEVELOPMENT OF MCLEAN CENTRAL PARK**

Chair Zamora-Appel explained that this meeting was called to better understand and articulate why MCC Governing Board thinks that McLean Central Park should be developed as shown in the Master Plan from 2013. Some things on that plan will not change. If there is some significant change to the Master Plan, the county must go back to the drawing board - which would cause a delay for another five years. So, we must now get feedback from our community to better respond to the county as to MCC Governing Board's position. The purpose of this meeting is to gather such information - listening to our local neighbors and to the MCC Governing Board members.

*Rasheq Rahman shared a graphic presentation; he and other Board members have been talking with the community and doing research on public information to understand the current situation. Most of this information was presented at FCPA public meeting on May 24, 2021.* We truly appreciate the input from fellow residents and citizens of McLean in this process. This presentation will echo a lot of what we have already heard. No decisions will be made today. The purpose is to inform a process: to develop communications and to help us make the best decisions going forward about what is happening currently in McLean Central Park (and perhaps also the CBC development plan for downtown McLean). We are using tonight's input to help formulate communications and outreach efforts to respond during this public comment period.

**BACKGROUND:** The gazebo is a free-standing structure (small, but integral to the park experience). It has many outdated items. **Key consideration: we on the MCC Governing Board are focused on McLean Central Park as infrastructure that directly affects the programming activities of MCC.** A lot of the park features have been separately determined and will not affect our approach (such as the dog park). From FCPA, there was discussion earlier about an "urban park" designation: MCP is currently classified as a "local" park that is considered part of the McLean community. MCP has been expanded over time; a lot of the efforts of McLean Central Park Redevelopment Plan are to make it into more of an 'integrated' experience for those who live here and use the park. **It's important to note several key components as together: MCC, Dolley Madison Library, McLean Central Park. We need to think about this as a 'campus' experience for local users. And it's within that notion of a 'campus' that MCC Governing Board is thinking about: What is the arts, cultural and educational component of this? Because that is part of our mission as an organization.** There was deep community participation during the initial creation of the plan in 2013; it was approved through a public comment process. FCPA has told us that various items are under consideration and will be further developed and finalized. **MCC's role in this process: inform our constituency at the McLean Community Center what is in the best interests of our activities and programming.**

*(detailed pictorial map of library, park)* The side of the park near Old Dominion and Route 123 is our area of concentration. Proposal: accessible access to the library and MCC and the park; drop-off point; proposed amphitheater in its current form; and an area for public art. **From a visual perspective, by having these institutions and assets within the park, we are making it both a continuation of the broader vision of a "walkable downtown McLean" with access to public art and public cultural institutions... and a perception as an overall 'art zone' that draws folks into the park.** Quote by Paul Shirley, FCPA project manager: "We are well aware of the interest and desire for the tennis courts. But that doesn't

affect what we are focused on – the assets for cultural, educational activities within McLean Central Park.” As the MCC Governing Board, how do we think about the amphitheater; public art installations; accessibility to the park as part of a notion of “...a ‘green space’ for arts, education and culture within McLean Central Park”?

There has been much discussion about recreational amenities within the park. **Given the unique home of MCP for the library, MCC, and several arts, educational and cultural institutions in McLean, this total area represents a platform. As we think about the space, the current gazebo serves as a blueprint/starting point for the vision of an amphitheater. But it can be so much more: a proper performance space; access to events; more free programming; an outdoor classroom space (exercise yoga classes; outdoor cooking and demonstrations; an asset to rent to the community (for graduations, community celebrations, public meetings). We hope to hear from others tonight about how we can best bring value through the amphitheater to McLean Central Park.**

*Q & A: There is a lot of interest represented here tonight. We recommend individuals to write comments/questions in the ‘chat’ function on ZOOM – voicing their comments briefly and focusing on moving the discussion forward so that many diverse remarks will be represented. “Chats” from ZOOM will be included in these Minutes. Next milestone in the process will be July 15; please submit public comments prior.*

**\*technical & logistical support necessary:** *Opinion expressed:* Being active in local theater productions and on the McLean Community Players board of directors, I am very concerned about resources. Doing a show at an amphitheater requires support: places for actors and musicians to wait; rehearsals; costume changing facilities; a place to issue tickets. An amphitheater is a hole in the ground with seats and lights; you then must add all the infrastructure support necessary for audience and cast (including restrooms). The concern is all the stress that will be put on MCC. We have all those facilities here at MCC but they are designed to support The Alden Theatre performances and perhaps some kind of black box theater in the future. I’m not opposed to an amphitheater per se; but I want FCPA to think about the total support infrastructure. Focusing on having 12 parking spaces for handicapped is not addressing the real issue; the conflict is that it will fall to MCC to support performances at the amphitheater – because we have those capabilities. MCC can’t be the resource for all of this because then we will have contention about over-usage of the very fine facilities of The Alden Theatre. I’m worried that we’ll take our focus away from the fabulous facilities we have here at MCC by having that amphitheater.

**\*programming authority over the amphitheater:** *Question: To the point from the public comment: Would programming ever happen concurrently both within The Alden and at the amphitheater?*

*Clarification by Executive Director Singh:* If MCC does support the amphitheater, I would like to propose a “partnership” formalized with FCPA so that we can clarify those types of decisions. We want to avoid a central office in Fairfax arranging programming here while not knowing what the library or MCC is doing. We would have to enter into an MOU with FCPA to make sure that the entity with the parking capacity [i.e. MCC] is the one actually scheduling the events (rather than someone in a central office.)

**\*parking capacity:** *Question: Even then, would there be ample parking between the library and MCC and on-street parking to accommodate MCC and amphitheater? Can it accommodate everyone?*

*Clarification by Mr. Singh:* We wouldn’t program events at the same time. But yes – MCC has 300 spots. There would be a surplus of 100 spots even if we had a 200-person audience at the amphitheater. Our performances in the park have had up to 400 people at the gazebo. I don’t think the final dimensions of what the park is going to put up will be anything bigger than usage/capacity that is happening at the gazebo right now. A suggestion based on some concerns about loss of green space was **to propose a green roof amphitheater that could accommodate everything we want to program. We would only program what can be self-contained there. If it cannot host actors that need costume changing space, then we would instead only program music performances or speakers. MCC would not bring on anything there that could not be self-contained in that space. Clarifying the MOU is very important: If FCPA is going in that direction, what is MCC’s role? What can MCC support and what is outside?**

**\*increased expectations/ possible negative public reactions:** *Opinion expressed:* But then we will get questions about: “Gee, we had a wonderful musical concert. Why can’t I do a musical there?” MCC will get hit with: “How do you support the amphitheater?” Or, “You guys at MCC are really nasty – you don’t support us.” It can become negative public dialogue.

**\*MCC staff involvement would ease the usage situation:** *Opinion expressed:* Currently, there is great burden on MCC staff to transform the gazebo into an appropriate venue for outdoor concerts – having to bring over generators for lighting;

sound. Everything involved to make those summer concerts happen is really laborious. From my perspective, I see the amphitheater as easing-up some of the burden on MCC by having an appropriately-resourced space for such concerts. *Opinion expressed:* Technical Director Jennifer Garrett sought and obtained an electrical service for the gazebo to be installed by the county to support lighting there. MCC technical staff are very competent – but MCC resources would get sucked into this. We have a great facility here and I want to protect it.

*Summary by Chair Zamora-Appel:* I think if we were to do what Executive Director Singh has proposed, then MCC becomes the planner of the space. And it will become part of the programming of MCC. It will no longer be a situation of: the gazebo is FCPA and MCC is here. Everything would be one; that's the purpose of coordinating. \*assuming that FCPA would approve the MOU

*Opinion expressed:* I think we are a little off-bounds on this issue: FCPA runs the gazebo; the amphitheater will be their purview. When we use it for MCC events, the MOU will dictate the terms, just like they are dictated at all other parks and rec. facilities. I think we are jumping into an area that doesn't exist and making it into something that doesn't need to exist. When FCPA owns that facility, they run that facility. When MCC rents the gazebo, then it becomes our gazebo for us to use and coordinate as necessary. FCPA has strong procedures on how they do things. I think it is taking a big leap to presume that MCC would be in charge of all events at the amphitheater. And if we were, then as long as you have clear regulations for how things are run, that will protect everyone.

**\*new 'casual' performance space:** *Opinion expressed:* One of the most appealing aspects about an amphitheater is being able to host 'cultural showcases' - which aren't done by professional casts but rather by regular people. For a lot of multi-ethnic communities, places like amphitheaters are perfect for that! However, because there isn't a space like that in McLean, a lot of us go to Ashburn or Centreville or far parts of northern Virginia to access that resource. My question to people who aren't in favor of the amphitheater: Does The Alden Theatre allow for more 'casual' performances? Or is it only meant for the professional casts?

*Clarification by Mr. Singh:* **The Alden Theatre can do whatever you, as the MCC Governing Board, decide for it to program. Right now, we are at 80% capacity of what we can do there for the youth program. We also have a resident improv program. So, that's one of the reasons why we are looking for an additional place that we could program and add support for. Lots of community groups ask MCC for performance support. If there is a way for us to have a kids' recital (without needing a full technical crew) – maybe by moving them into the amphitheater and having the theater show here, it would help us have additional resources to serve the community more.**

**\*lack of MCC direct control and oversight would become problematic:** *Opinion expressed:* I'm not opposed to the amphitheater at all. What I am opposed to is something with no supporting infrastructure around it. If FCPA put the infrastructure around it, I'd love to have MCC coordinate the whole thing.

*Clarification by Mr. Singh:* **My worry is that if MCC doesn't stay involved, FCPA will put it on anyway and then MCC will have no control of it. Then we lose the parking and someone else is running that show. It's going to be much worse than if MCC were involved and carefully coordinating everything.**

**\*resiliency benefits from an amphitheater:** *Comment by Vice-Chair Post:* The only thing I want to say is: **In centuries past, amphitheaters - if they are located in the proper place, they add great new dimensions to a community – and they bring people of all ages together – for entertainment; for recreation; and for interaction. We lose a lot of that [connection] in McLean Central Park: the kids are here; there may be events over there. It is not an interactive area right now. I believe there is an ability to keep and retain a lot of the green space with sustainable design. I also think of this amphitheater as an “insurance policy” for resiliency planning for the future.** Over these past two years, indoor spaces were shut down. Many outdoor arts venues (once things got under control) were able to continue - including nearby localities of Falls Church, Reston, Arlington, Washington, DC. We didn't as much in McLean. **The ability to have an amphitheater where we could safely put on shows and support our arts culture – that is resiliency planning** (in the event that something like COVID-19 happens again). Outdoor arts facilities provided a lot of relief for starving artists...people longing for interaction... people dealing with loneliness - it brought them some joy. **I think we have an opportunity to build something and teach our community: to allow everyone to imagine, dream, and learn about the outdoors. We can do this with climate-smart design – putting in features like rainwater barrels; native plants; storm**

water retention basins. Many amphitheaters across the U.S. have such resilient design elements. We've been talking about many sustainable initiatives at MCC (a pollinator garden and plantings) and I see this as an extension. This [amphitheater] space could double as an outdoor classroom for kids to learn about the natural world every day – that they cannot do inside. **I hope we all consider this in our thinking and not look at it as “taking away” from our greenspace; but rather, as enhancing and using our green space as a means to teach... to encourage... and to provide resiliency to the community, going forward.**

PROCESS: The plan for today is to gather input. For the next few days, comments will be circulated among the Board members and then those of us who've been involved will DRAFT and refine (with input from the rest of the board) a proposed statement - until we can come to something that we can generally approve of. The timeline is: individual review, reflection & study (July 7 – 15); vote on proposed letter at July 15 Strategic Planning Session; letter released – July 16.

### **MORE PUBLIC COMMENTS**

\* reduced infrastructure of current MCP is a welcome intentional “check” against nearby over-development:

Deborah: I have lived here for 50 years and have seen the area change... and change... and change. We are suffocating from the extension of Tysons, which is always offering us 'even more walkability... more livability.' I've seen all that fade; I lived here before it was even there. So, we're getting pinched from that side. And then I see McLean Central Park (this piece of land); and I say: **You know, the idea of an amphitheater sounds great – but it requires a lot of maintenance (which, as we've talked about, hasn't been kept up). But I also think of MCP as a “check.” I have not agreed with the over-urbanization of McLean. As a ‘check,’ I think less is more in the park. We're going to need ‘less-is-more’ especially if there is over-urbanization of McLean. That's my take as a long-time resident. I think the park is beautiful. I like the outdoors; but I'm not a fanatic. But I feel this -the pressure of the area: what it has been... and what it can become if we don't watch out.**

\*confusion about parking areas and possible pedestrian bridge: Executive Director Singh encouraged people to show up at VDOT public meetings and put pressure to ask for the pedestrian bridge. There is an easement at the bank across from MCP for a pedestrian bridge. Unless the public shows up and pushes for it, it's not going to happen. He encouraged folks to show up at the BoS meeting and ask for more funding for the parks: their budget is .05% to cover over 400 parks that they maintain in the county. All public comments are valid concerns. But the people who can help address them is the BoS. So, really keep the pressure on them. MCC Governing Board will look at how we can address these concerns in the right place. *Summary by Barbara Zamora-Appel:* Thank you, Daniel. For those who are not aware, that pedestrian bridge will have people park on the other side of McLean and cross over the bridge to come to the events here. That is part of the CBC downtown revitalization plan. It hasn't been talked about as much because, based on our understanding currently, a lot of these different planning commissions are not communicating with each other. So, it is up to us as residents in the community to actually go to the public meetings. Much of the concern is based on parking and the pressure it puts on neighboring residences. It's a matter of understanding what is there (the plan as written) – and a matter of us saying what we need.

Public comment (Betsy Costle): *Question: Where is the parking on the ‘other side’ supposed to be?*

It is part of the CBC redevelopment plan (Kim Dorgan has it); that information is readily available.

*Summary by Chair Zamora-Appel:* All feedback is important. This is not our decision; we can only provide feedback to the county. Where do we believe we should be as the MCC? 1. MCC is meant to be inclusive and easily accessible. 2. The programs we are now trying to bring to the community have an outdoor component: we are doing more outdoor events because of COVID-19. Large crowds have been walking to the park! 3. Offering programming for children: demographics of McLean is that there are a lot of children. Green space is important: kids like trees; they like to explore trees by the creek near the gazebo. The plan here is simply to collect information, write our position on it and send to the county. Whatever decision is made, hopefully our feedback will have an impact on that decision.

*Comment by Lisa Mariam:* We are really fortunate in Fairfax County that our park authority has a continuing feedback cycle with the community. I've seen this in all the meetings that I've attended - where they give you so much opportunity and

choice about the most minute of details of the park. Let's just keep that in mind: this is conceptual and there will be a lot of time to provide more feedback as the process goes forward.

### **MORE PUBLIC COMMENTS (from "chat" function on ZOOM)**

Christopher Hoffman: In addition to the amphitheater, we have a real opportunity to build a much better playground area on the tot lot location. This could include art and music activation stations and art activations such as murals. The point here is about incorporating arts as part of the tot lot playground development.

Joyce Harris: I believe MCC does an excellent job in sponsoring art activities. I would like MCC to consider using the park as an outdoor classroom for environmental activities.

Public comment: Why are there not more programs pertaining to educating children and residents about their immediate environment in McLean Central Park? Is that not part of MCC's mission?

Carol Wolter: I'm concerned that you are now talking of a 'campus' and green space for the arts... and the notion of a park with trees and plants is becoming secondary. You will have to cut down a lot of very mature trees to build the access road. COVID-19 shows us that we need parks, not more concrete.

Sharon Williams: You mentioned that many of the items that are being proposed are concrete and cannot be changed – otherwise you have to go back to the drawing board. Can you tell us which items are set and which are flexible?

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: It's not so much specific items but rather, a certain percentage of the plan. If we make more than a certain percentage of revisions from the Master Plan from 2013, it triggers a loop back to a full revision. And then it doesn't guarantee that the bond money FCPA received (\$2.5M from the November 2020 bond measure) will be there; some other park is going to get that money. If we go more than 20% of the original plan (or whatever the figure is), it automatically triggers going back into the beginning of that process. If too many things weren't taken into consideration, that's why it is triggering this change.

Sharon Williams: Thank you for that explanation. And my understanding was that comments could still be given to the county until July 30. For MCC's purposes, your comments to MCC are to be prepared by July 15.

Betsy Costle: This has been unclear to me as to how far can we move off of what is now an 'outdated' public plan. Not that it was wrong, but it was at a very different time. Now, we are 8 years later and it's not clear to me whether it's 20% changing. I don't know... but it is certainly something that we should all worry about.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: **That's why we must put pressure on the FCPA planning process because this is a process that McLean citizens have inherited. We can change the process; but it's hard to do so as things are happening in real-time.**

Paul Kohlenberger: I have a clarification: I'm not 100% on this, and what Mr. Rahman said a moment ago might be absolutely true. **My understanding has been that with FCPA Master Plans, the uses are set. But they do not all need to be activated when the plan is constructed or built-out (as we are now). For instance: it had a new drop-off area. That wouldn't necessarily need to be built. But were it not in the concept plan, it couldn't now be added. Same thing if we wanted a skate park, or any number of random [things like] a water park – we couldn't add that now. But my understanding is that we are not obligated to build every single feature as shown.**

Adam Wynn – from FCPA: **You are correct – the Master Plan is a long-term vision; it's not a development plan. So, as you stated, if we find that a facility is no longer needed (since the Master Plan is 8-years old), that does not need to be developed. But you cannot add a completely new use that is not in the Master Plan.**

Deb Bissen (MPA): Would there be an opportunity to include food trucks as part of MCC events?

Comment by Rasheq Rahman: We have used food trucks in the past for other programming in our current situation.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: That would be something we'd have to ask FCPA (because food truck access roads must be rather wide). I don't know if that can be added at this point. They've said we can take things off; but it's unclear if we can add a new element. ACTION ITEM: Executive Director Singh can check this detail with FCPA.

Adam Wynn (FCPA): Food trucks aren't really dictated by a master plan. What really is relevant: Is there a spot for a food



truck? It becomes more of a ‘coordination’ item for special events that would need to be figured out between FCPA and MCC. We have food trucks in other parks – basically, it is just figuring out an agreement.

#### **FURTHER DISCUSSION BY BOARD MEMBERS**

##### **\*seek alternate sources of funding for ongoing maintenance of the amphitheater:**

**Suzanne Le Menestrel:** I want to raise the idea of a public/private partnership to help support ongoing maintenance of the amphitheater. I agree with what has been said about the maintenance issues at the gazebo: we saw trash, uncut grass, things looked like they were not taken care of. A while ago, Executive Director Singh mentioned the possibility of setting up a partnership with McLean Community Foundation that would ensure that: if MCC is going to be the primary programmer of the amphitheater, that there would be a way to address some of the maintenance issues and making sure we have the resources to make it a comfortable space for performers.

*Comment by Executive Director Singh:* **We can do designated gifts to the Parks Foundation – “MCC is donating XXX dollars to the Parks Foundation for the use of \_\_\_X\_\_\_ in this \_\_\_\_\_ park.” We can be very specific – even bringing a particular artist to perform. If we were to proceed with an MOU, we would want to iron out what portions MCC would want to control. We could put in the contract that either: “...MCC or Friends of MCC will clean up before-and-after the event so that citizens are not inconvenienced.” We can build-out as much or as little as we want in the MOU. It would be through the Parks Foundation that we would funnel the resources for those kinds of needs.**

**Bill Glikbarg:** Two questions: 1. How do I submit comments to FCPA? Is it by July 30? 2. McLean Citizens Foundation will give money for specific projects (such as building a public restroom in the park). Back to this notion of bringing the community together to support some of these things – there are groups available work with us in the community to help do some of those things. I don’t want to be totally negative – I want to find a way to work this together.

##### **\*opinion of youth Board members on how the amphitheater might help the students with their activities**

**Max Blacksten:** Generally, when we have the amphitheater, it might be a good outlet. We have a very close proximity to McLean H.S., which is the school I’m representing. There is definitely a use for the school and events. If we can bring some students on the high school level into McLean Central Park and close to MCC, that will enable to get us more involved. Maybe we can work with OFC to get events here that are really getting teens exposed to the park instead of just the adults and young kids that we have the tot lot for. It will just be another thing that teens will say: “Hey, we want to hang-out here at the amphitheater because there’s a place to sit.” Or a better place for us to hang-out rather than just having the park. The amphitheater will be another thing that can maybe attract teens into McLean Central Park, and then further bringing them towards MCC.

**Ivy Chen:** That’s a really good point. I also want to talk about Shivani Saboo’s point – about adding the cultural and diversity aspect for schools, which is so important. Obviously, we do hold events in schools; but having that sort of outlet there [an amphitheater]... I know that The Alden Theatre is open; but sometimes it’s booked. Having an amphitheater as an outlet for people to go to for performances... for school events... for school projects – that can be very beneficial for not just McLean and Langley High School, but schools around the area. They can use an amphitheater facility to their benefit. It doesn’t have to be school-related – but also other things: a get-together (for art projects; for summer stuff). There are some pros-and-cons for having an amphitheater open (maintaining it; constructing appropriately for youth and adult uses alike). Those things are important. And I feel like there are always ‘benefits’ and ‘cons’ that come with all that. But from the youth side, I can definitely see some impacts that can be made that would be super helpful.

**\*park as an outdoor nature education feature:** **Rasheq Rahman:** To echo Ivy Chen’s point – as a father of elementary school children, having that opportunity for my kids (who literally grew up on the tot lot) now to come back and engage – both in things like outdoor theater (such as Shakespeare in the park) as well as, if this becomes truly a ‘green’ environmental space where we are engaging in it. We usually have to go out to places like Arlington for a nature center. **The idea of a ‘green’ amphitheater’ (as is in the proposal) could be very beneficial and a unique aspect.**

*Summary by Executive Director Singh:* It would be the first one in Fairfax County to have a green roof = now FCPA has a green roof building. Some of your feedback is driving us toward creative solutions that meet your needs. We are really grateful



for all your feedback to figure out what this could be. Ultimately, it is still up to FCPA to decide. If the public is worried about loss of green space, that's one way we could obtain a 'green' roof and continue the green space elements. We even proposed having the pedestrian bridge have a 'green' roof; that is something we would have to work with VDOT.

Carla Post: We have been working on trying to get an educational program as part of our plans for a pollinator garden. It is an objective on our committee to do more education; this would be a great opportunity. There are many ways the amphitheater could be built so as to not destroy trees. It's more expensive for FCPA; but it can be a 'green' design; and a perfect opportunity to bring kids there to learn about more things. We've been talking about that in the space closer to MCC; but having this as an opportunity to expand that would be great!

**\*direct impact on MCC's operational costs:** *Clarification by Executive Director Singh:* **The only other thing to mention is the impact on MCC's current programming: \$2K in operational costs for every concert we offer in MCP – because technical crew has to start at 12 noon to prepare the gazebo for a sound check; and then to close-out the technical set-up.** We also get requests from the public for a later concert time (because 5 p.m. is too hot in July) – but then our MCC crew is working in the dark. I don't want them loading/unloading heavy equipment or driving a golf cart in the park in darkness. **So, the current gazebo does limit what we can do and is more expensive than if there were an amphitheater. If it were a fully-capable amphitheater, then we could program later in the evening when it's cooler (and not in the hottest part of the day). The crew could show up one hour before the performance. Those are some of the operational costs MCC is carrying for putting on those concerts.**

**\*continual commitment by FCPA for ongoing maintenance costs:** Bill Glikbarg: I can think of fabulous uses; but as you add things, you will also discover needing to have lights on the path back to the parking lot. Then we start adding huge costs to this. Where is the money coming from? Is the FCPA going to have the money to maintain these enhancements?

*Summary by Executive Director Singh:* This is our chance to ask for what we want: if it is lighting for the path; capability to do later-evening programming - then we should get it in there. Because if we don't say it, then FCPA will counter that "MCC didn't say it. Give us the feedback." **MCC Governing Board should ask for the ideal situation. FCPA is going to do the best job; they are here to make a good solution for the community. They don't want to plop something up and walk away. We also have some power in working with Parks Foundation and Friends of MCC in how we control and shape this going forward. So, we want to be mindful and stay involved. My worry is that they will put in an amphitheater that we're not really interested in operating... and then someone else will be operating it and creating much more traffic problems, programming conflicts, and all such issues. MCC should ask for everything we want; and FCPA will decide what they can do.** Perhaps a half-way solution: "Here's what MCF can do... here's what Friends of MCC can do... Here's what the MOU should look like." And we piece it together. ArtsFairfax may be able to help us find other support. No one agency is going to be able to find the perfect solution. It takes all of us working together.

**\*comparison: how operations at other county amphitheaters are handled:**

*Request for Adam Wynn (FCPA) to comment and elaborate on plans for operating the facility.*

Adam Wynn (FCPA): **Basically, we are in listening mode. As everyone knows, the last development concept that was presented was really the beginning of a conversation based on that 2013 master plan. An "MOU" or "operating agreement" on how it's going to be used are all yet unwritten pages that still need to be figured out. But it's something that's continuing in discussion. We also would not want to build an amphitheater unless we had these agreements and understanding of how it would be operated. There is nothing determined yet.**

Carla Post: *It was never FCPA plan to operate the amphitheater – but just to build it?*

Adam Wynn (FCPA): Well, in the 2013 Master Plan, it basically said that it would be a shared agreement with the MCC and "Arts and Parks". Because it is not built, there is no current plan for how we would operate it.

*Summary by Secretary Foderaro-Guertin:* Listening to everything that has been proposed and the concerns, I recommend the following focus:

1. Traffic must be dealt with.
2. The pedestrian bridge is an awesome idea. If we need to get monies for that, maybe that's what we should do.

It will ease the traffic flow; parking issues will be solved. On the other side, the traffic goes over the bridge into the park.

3. Maintenance in the park (ongoing)

4. Environmental impact.

Adam Wynn (FCPA): I've heard all of that - and not just in this meeting (opportunity for public comment will continue until July 30). Environmental impact and avoiding any type of disturbance of trees... those are all things that we would highly consider if we did move forward with the amphitheater.

5. Operational (technical/logistical) support.

Question by Secretary Foderaro-Guertin: *Can citizen committees be formed in order to get information? Or is all this coming out of the FCPA office? We would like to see a nice, easy transition from where we are now, to the end. How are these issues going to be addressed? If you can see a path forward by resolving these issues, is someone already working on them?*

Adam Wynn (FCPA): Basically, we are in listening mode - collecting all the community's comments, all stakeholder comments. We are going to take those comments and look at some potential solutions. Then the next step would be having another community meeting and inviting everybody in and getting feedback again. It's a conversation back-and-forth. We are not just going to just develop a plan without further impact and input from everybody.

Question from Secretary Foderaro-Guertin: *Will some of the work include involving the other Fairfax County agencies, such as VDOT - which I understand will have to take care of the pedestrian bridge if it is built?*

Adam Wynn (FCPA): We are aware of the pedestrian bridge and are looking into that as well. We're looking into:

a. What are the land impacts? and b. Where would that likely come into the park? Those are conversations we are having.

Question from Vice-Chair Post: *There are four other amphitheaters in Fairfax County. How are they operated or managed?*

Adam Wynn (FCPA): That's above and beyond my knowledge. I apologize.

## **OUTREACH STRATEGY**

Summary by Chair Zamora-Appel: We have several days hence to reflect on this discussion and consider a proposed DRAFT letter to FCPA articulating the MCC Governing Board's position. A formal vote on the letter will be taken at the Strategic Planning Session on July 15. If approved, the letter will be released on Friday, July 16.

If you want to send your comments directly to Fairfax County, send it to Adam Wynn (FCPA).

If you want to comment to MCC, send to Holly Novak: [holly.novak@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:holly.novak@fairfaxcounty.gov). Public messages received at MCC will be part of our position statement to the county.

Clarification by Suzanne Le Menestrel: We are just focusing on the idea of an arts campus and programming. The dog park... tennis court location... none of those aspects are in MCC's purview.

## **OLD / NEW BUSINESS and ADJOURNMENT**

Executive Director Singh thanked all public attendees for participating. We hope to have you back in The Alden soon!

Public comment (Sharon Williams): Thank you for the opportunity to address you all. I appreciate everything you're doing. I was thinking back of my children swinging on a rope that they tied at the creek at the park several years ago! And how my son was involved in the 1990's in the theater. It's a pleasure to be here; and McLean Community Center and McLean Central Park is a big part of that. So, thank you!

Chair Zamora-Appel opened the floor to any other items of old or new business. Nothing was mentioned as a further topic of discussion for this evening. Chair Zamora-Appel thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted – Holly Novak, Executive Assistant to the Governing Board