



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

July 30, 2019

Dear Chairman Dorsey and Members of the County Board,

Members at the July AHCA meeting **voted unanimously to approve the [attached resolution supporting at least two public off-leash dog parks in Aurora Highlands](#)**. This topic was announced in our July newsletter with additional information provided on the AHCA website.

Sites at Virginia Highlands and Eads parks have been identified as the ideal locations to best meet current needs by experts from Shirlington Dogs II and Aurora Highlands residents that have organized and obtained extensive support from residents throughout the area including multi-family buildings from River House to Met Park to Crystal House.

The creation of a facility at Virginia Highlands is of greatest interest to the community. The conservative estimate is that there are **over 2,500 dogs within a 10-minute walking distance of Virginia Highlands Park**. This location would serve the most significant portion of residents in Pentagon City within walking distance, negating the need for cars, which residents increasingly do not have, and associated traffic and parking.

The Virginia Highlands site requires removing one softball field to create the full space necessary to meet area demand for a dog park, which would also provide additional open space. This proposal has received over 100 written signatures and more than 20 volunteers have stepped up to provide maintenance and support under the name Pentagon City Dogs. The intent to remove the softball fields to provide adequate dog park space and community open space has been clearly stated by proponents in their outreach, posted on the AHCA web site, and was discussed at the July meeting, **and there have been no known community concerns expressed to AHCA or to any of the proponents about the softball field removal in order to meet these needs**.

A facility at Virginia Highlands is proposed on a "temporary" 2-5 year basis so that it can be implemented inexpensively and quickly, at the end of the Fall 2019 season, and revisited when the anticipated master planning process for Virginia Highlands Park occurs in the future.

The Eads site is not within easy walking distance of Pentagon City, but would serve the needs of residents in the southern portion of the neighborhood. It is supported by the Arlington Ridge Civic Association and has undergone feasibility review from DPR. There was some concern voiced by neighbors of potential noise impacts and the preservation of trees in the proposed area at Eads park. We expect the proponents and county will work with the community to ensure any facility at Eads adequately addresses such concerns.

It must be noted that after discussion, members expanded the proposed resolution from "two dog parks" to "*at least* two dog parks", reflecting the extent of the need in the area. This was with the

full knowledge that various developments such as Met Park 6, 7&8 and Crystal House may also include dog facilities in future years.

It is our expectation that providing the proposed substantially sized public facilities at Virginia Highlands and Eads parks will allow developments to provide smaller basic dog facilities as needed for their residents, including in courtyards and rooftops, conserving new public spaces and allowing community benefit concessions to address other needs that cannot be achieved as easily.

The two resident groups pushing for these facilities will continue to engage with residents and the county. We expect the board will also do everything it can to see these facilities come to fruition.

Sincerely,

/Scott Miles/
President
Aurora Highlands Civic Association

cc:
Mark Schwartz, County Manager
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks & Recreation

attached:
Aurora Highlands Civic Association Dog Park Resolution
Shirlington Dogs II Endorsement letter for Virginia Highlands Dog Park
Virginia Highlands Dog Park executive summary and proposal
Virginia Highlands Dog Park supporters list
AHCA website notice regarding proposed dog parks