



DEKALB COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Commissioner, District 1

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April 4, 2011

Susan Farrar
Henderson Park Community Garden
P.O. Box 2962
Tucker, GA 30085

Dear Ms. Farrar:

Thank you for your letter regarding the development of Henderson Park. We appreciate your commitment to the community garden and interest in the surrounding park area. There are several points that we would like to clarify with regards to the project which will hopefully quell your concerns.

The plans that were presented at the community meetings were conceptual plans, not adopted plans. The conceptual plans look at the entire scope of the project so that all elements, once funded, can be constructed without disturbance to prior phases already constructed. These drafts reflected the entire project, if fully funded at \$1.344 million. The phase that is currently being constructed is approximately \$380,000. It would be ideal to have the full funding available at this time, but that is not the case. This initial phase should be considered as the ground work for the entire project and the other elements of the project will have to happen in the future once additional funding is available.

The scope of this initial phase is funded at \$380,000 with this general breakdown:

Community Garden Entrance and Parking - \$125,000
Paved Multi Use Trail System - \$166,550
Plaza / Playground Area - \$21,850
Miscellaneous Furnishings - \$66,300

The priorities as stated in the minutes of the 3rd public meeting have been met as funding has dictated.

Priority 1 – Secondary Entrance off Henderson Road with 7 parking spaces

The need for additional parking was realized and expanded to 13 spaces, including one handicap space. Given the number of plots in the community garden, the walking trail use and the open field area, it was determined that 7 slots were not adequate to accommodate the number of potential park users. It is noted in the comments section of the minutes “increase 7 space lot if possible during construction document phasing”. The drive has been extended to move the parking lot to higher ground to allow for positive storm water drainage.

Priority 2 – Community Garden

The initial community garden footprint was for a plot 120' x 80'. The final plot of 105' x 105' is approximately the same amount of square footage so it is unclear where the information on the final plot being “less than half of the size allotted in the community approved master plan” has been derived. Expansion of the garden was mentioned in the meetings but since the garden is not the primary or sole function of the park, the needs of the garden were weighed with the needs of the entire 6.7 acre parcel. DeKalb's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs has stated that they would be happy to locate additional space at other parks for community gardening; there is already a garden located at the Tucker Recreation Center. In comparison, the community garden in Dunwoody is on 105 acres and is 8,000 square feet, while the 10,000 square foot garden at Henderson Park is on a 6.7 acre parcel. The area assigned to the community garden was determined to be the land best suited for this use because of the topography, accessibility, foliage, etc.

Priority 3 – Bringing Existing Soccer Restrooms Online for Use Year Round

This is outside of the scope of work for the project but will be followed up on by Commissioner Boyer's office.

Priority 4 – Soft Surface Trails

It was determined that with the limited budget available, it would be more economical to have the soft surface trails installed by others rather than a professional contractor.

Priority 5 – Playground / Restroom

The cost estimate for this portion of the project is \$418,500 and is not in the budget at this time. The current plan will lay the groundwork for future development of the playground area and restroom. The bathroom utilities will be installed and stubbed out, but since the restroom building has a cost of over \$100,000, it is not in the budget to be done at this time. For the plaza/playground area, there will be clearing done and Bermuda sod laid.

Priority 6 – Multi-use Trail, Site Furnishings, Pavilion, Overlook, Classrooms

Even though this is listed as priority 6, the trails are the primary infrastructure of the park. The portion that is currently funded is for the trail and site furnishings. The trail has additional costs associated that might typically be overlooked, such as tree

protection, grading, erosion control, staking, retaining walls, drainage, etc. The site furnishings include a 20' picnic shelter, picnic tables, grills, receptacles, etc.

Priority 7 – Parking Expansion

The approximate cost of the parking lot expansion is \$215,000, which includes \$40,000 of grading. This expansion is cost prohibitive at this time. Additional parking for the soccer fields is not a top priority given that the land was not purchased for that purpose. The wants of the community were for the area to be kept natural with walking trails with a focus on being pedestrian friendly. Additional parking would be utilized by the soccer teams for the adjacent property, property that is not included in this plan.

On page 6 of your letter, the changes outlined are indeed not included in the initial phase of this plan because of funding issues, but they are still a part of the plan. The first 3 items listed - restroom, soccer field parking lot expansion and playground have a cost of \$633,000 and cannot be funded at this time.

I feel that the county has done an excellent job in laying the ground work for a wonderful park area that will encompass the wants of the community as outlined in the community meetings. I would be happy to meet with your group to discuss this further.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Elaine Boyer

cc: Commissioner Stan Watson
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