



## MONTGOMERY PARKS

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
2425 Reedie Drive | Wheaton, MD 20902  
MontgomeryParks.org

# Greenwood Local Park: Community Meeting Report

**Meeting Purpose:** Community Meeting for the Playground Renovation and Proposed Improvements at Greenwood Local Park

**Meeting Date:** December 8, 7:00 – 8:30pm

**Staff Attending:**

- Tricia McManus | Design Section Chief, Park Development Division (PDD)
- Lori Moore | Project Manager and Landscape Architect, PDD
- Chuck Kines | Planner Coordinator, Park Planning & Stewardship Division (PPSD)
- David Fisher | Park Manager
- Brian Lewandowski | Civil Engineer, PDD
- Corporal Derrick Williams | Park Police
- Melissa Chotiner | Media Outreach, Community Outreach and Engagement Manager, Public Affairs and Community Partnerships (PACP)
- Michelle Ramirez | Public Outreach Specialist, (PACP)

## Meeting Summary

The meeting was held virtually over Zoom with eight staff members present from Montgomery Parks and twenty members of the community. In addition, Senator Craig Zucker, who helped to attain funding for the playground renovation project, was in attendance and spoke briefly regarding the project and the importance of community involvement.

The meeting began with Project Manager welcoming the public to the community meeting. Montgomery Parks staff were introduced, and important reference information was provided. These online links are available on the Greenwood Local Park webpage and are listed below for reference:

- Project Page: [Greenwood Local Park Playground Renovation](#)
- Open Town Hall survey: [Greenwood Survey](#)

The format for the meeting was a presentation followed by a Question and Answer (Q&A) discussion session. Members of the public were encouraged to post questions or comments at any time during the meeting and to complete the Open Town Hall survey following the meeting. The agenda for the meeting may be summarized as follows:

- **Scope & Funding** – current funding includes a \$250,000 bond bill with \$250,000 match for the playground renovation and stormwater and accessibility

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improvements. Other future funding is anticipated to support the renovation of other existing facilities and site improvements.

- **Playground Renovation Program** – discussion on the benefits of play; Montgomery Parks’ inspection and maintenance procedures for playgrounds; the schedule for the replacement of playgrounds and how the renovations are prioritized and funded; code compliance; typical components of a Montgomery Parks playground renovation project; and the design and construction process.
- **Greenwood Local Park’s Existing Conditions** – overview of the site conditions and existing amenities.
- **Greenwood Local Park’s Proposed Playground Renovation** – discussion of the proposed project scope. Options for improvements were presented for several areas of the park including north courts, south courts, repurposed playground area, gazebo, and relocated playground area. Also, play equipment examples were provided.
- **Open Q&A Session** – the PDD Design Section Chief moderated the Q&A session where comments and questions that were posted by the public were addressed by Montgomery Parks staff members. A summary of the Q&A session is provided below.

## Summary of Questions and Comments Received

### ATHLETIC COURTS

- I just want to put in my support for six permanent pickleball courts with lighting, shade and seating for the playground, and a drinking fountain.
  - We always provide shade and seating for the playground. We can provide a drinking fountain on the site as well.
  - We have looked at this park for pickleball improvements for some time. Based on our experience, the best location for pickleball on this site would be at the basketball court location which is best in terms of neighborhood compatibility (further from homes). If we placed pickleball in the south court area, pickleball would be only 90’ away from the nearest residence which is too close. At the existing basketball court location, homes are much further away.
  - Lighting the courts requires that the parking lot also have lighting, and then park patrons will perceive that the entire park is open at night, when in fact only the courts are open at night. There are other locations nearby with lit

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- pickleball courts such as Bauer Drive and we're also looking at dedicated courts at East Norbeck.
- Additionally, lighting adversely impacts wildlife. The park is part of a Maryland Department of Natural Resources "Targeted Ecological Area." Artificial lighting disrupts species that travel by light navigation, and many species evolved to be active during absence of light. Lighting also interrupts many predator/prey interrelationships, e.g., reduces cover of darkness (for element of surprise or to avoid attack), attracts & concentrates prey (easing predation and creating potential population crash), and creates areas of avoidance (effectively limiting habitat availability for predators and prey).
  - As a tennis player, I support pickleball courts as long as it does not take away from the existing tennis courts and the wall (which is useful for tennis, lacrosse, and pickleball)
    - Tennis service in this part of the County is well served. A high quality tennis experience is located at Olney Manor Recreational Park where there are 18 courts. In addition to other tennis facilities nearby there are HOA courts adjacent to the park and we assume most residents are members and have access to those facilities. We feel that tennis in this area is already well served and would like to provide different athletic facilities, but want to hear from the community and look forward to seeing what the court preferences are in the Open Town Hall.
  - I also play tennis and pickleball and want to say that I also support 6 permanent pickleball courts as there are no permanent courts in Olney. There are many pickleball players who live in Olney who have to travel to places like Bauer Drive and Mattie Stepanek Park to play pickleball.
  - The tennis courts were pretty heavily used until they fell into disrepair. The wall (both sides) is used heavily.
  - Could a handball wall/court be installed as part of the tennis court "fencing" instead of extending beyond. Similar to a tennis/pickleball hitting wall. And then that space where the existing handball court is could be made into a fitness area?
    - Yes, that is a possibility. In the options, we also show keeping ½ of the handball wall. When we see the court preferences in the Open Town Hall, we can see how to best accommodate the preferences.
  - Wouldn't want lighted pickleball courts due to the proximity to the homes
  - Could you please explain why the PB cannot go into the tennis area. Building three courts is like building a two lane 270
    - Proximity to homes, noise impacts. We do not want to re-create the problem we have at Olney Mill.

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- Repurposing the two basketball courts to three dedicated pickleball courts is an excellent idea. As the fastest growing sport in America, there will certainly be adequate demand for such courts. Also maximizing the distance between homes and pickleball is a good idea, as this has been an issue in other neighborhood parks that have tennis courts with pickleball lines, as Chuck just mentioned.
- First off, love the pickleball courts being prioritized. Is there someone experienced with pickleball court design being consulted to make sure they are planned to take into account the specific things that are important to players such as minimal space between courts, dividers, accessibility?
  - We have park standards for pickleball design and layout but if you have specific suggestions for pickleball that you are not seeing in the other courts that we've built, please let us know. If we're building dedicated pickleball courts in this park, we want to make sure it's a high-quality experience. We think three is the best fit for this area in terms of providing adequate space between courts. The only way we could get six courts without excessive costs is to build pickleball at the existing tennis courts which we don't want to do due to the reasons mentioned. Since there is plenty of parking here and the pickleball can be an adequate distance from homes, we feel that this is a good location for dedicated pickleball courts.
- I'd like to express support for keeping two tennis courts.
- I agree with the commenter who said the state of the courts, including the sticks and debris that often cover them, is the reason why they haven't been used as much as they might. In addition, enclosed tennis backboard half-courts, like the ones at Olney Manor near the swim center, would be a great addition
- The sound issue of pickleball is a concern and moving it to the basketball courts will impact the residents on Alpenglow Lane. The HOA courts of Tanterra are already audible where I live. The existing tennis courts would be used more if the moss at the woods side wasn't an issue. Pickleball belongs at Olney Regional Park where the sounds won't impact residents.
  - The courts on the side do not receive the amount of sunlight needed to dry the area. Anytime we get any type of precipitation, it does not dry out quickly and gets slick. We do pressure wash them but are not able to frequently. Shortening the courts (repurposing tennis) would have the benefit of removing that area next to the woods so that the remainder of the court would get more sunlight. It is a maintenance issue in any park where we have courts adjacent to trees, and we are not going to cut down the trees.
  - Since we're not taking out any trees, we're looking to repurpose these facilities to create a better park experience.

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- You can play pickleball on tennis courts. Not the other way around.
  - Believe this comment is saying that you could leave the tennis courts and putting in a pickleball overlay which is a possibility.
- As a matter of interest what is the distance to the nearest home?
  - 90 feet
- There are a couple of homes that butt right up to the tennis courts.
  - Yes, we are aware of that. That is why we were proposing pickleball at the north court location.
- 6 dedicated pickleball courts would be a major improvement for the area. Lights would be great, but need to make sure they are pristine, not like the ones at Bauer. This will help spread the crowds from other pickleball venues in the area.
- I enthusiastically support dedicated pickleball courts at Greenwood. It would be great, and I think demand is great enough to warrant 6 rather than 3 courts if space is available.
- The Greenwood tennis courts would be an amazing setting unlike Olney Regional Park if the moss issue was irradiated.
- Another rationale for the installation of dedicated pickleball courts is that pickleball provides healthy recreation and social opportunities for the elderly adult community. While we see a significant number of 55 and over players at the local community centers, having high quality outdoor pickleball courts will be well utilized by this population.
- You could swap the tennis courts and basketball courts. Then paint pickleball lines on the two tennis courts so that they could be used for both tennis and pickleball. And since people play on the basketball courts a lot, they could continue to play basketball where the tennis courts were.
  - Tennis courts are much longer than other courts so they would not fit within the paved footprint at the north court area. We are constrained for space in this area due to the surrounding grade and the location of the existing infiltration trench which we would like to leave in place and upgrade to bring up to current standards.
  - There are three DEP regulated facilities which are not up to current standards that we will upgrade and we will also provide other SWM facilities to treat any other facilities that we develop.
- According to the [USA pickleball Association](#), the new technology - Accoustifence might be able to reduce the noise. Can we put into the consideration for new courts?

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- The complaints we receive about noise are for those courts with lights that are open at night. We do not receive complaints about pickleball court noise during the day. Our best defense against pickleball noise is placing them at a distance from homes.
- If you are not providing lighting and as you say that is what most of the complaints you get are about, then surely the PB courts could go into the tennis area, no? With some noise fencing a mentioned above by Steve Liu.
  - In this situation, the homes are at a higher elevation than the courts, so the acoustifence would have little to no effect in this situation.
- OK. Given the problem with maintaining the tennis courts where they are and that they cannot be moved to the existing basketball courts, then I think it makes sense to repurpose the existing tennis courts for basketball and athletics. But if you do, please leave both sides of that wall so that tennis players will have somewhere walkable to hit (against a wall) when the HOA courts are in use. Then everybody gets something they want: basketball, pickleball, athletic areas, and two tennis players can hit against either side of the wall.
- What is the footprint of the basketball courts vs. the tennis courts?
  - Our standard details show 124' x 64' for a single tennis court and 92' x 56' for a single basketball court. Sizes for the existing courts may vary somewhat since they were constructed before the standard was put in place.
- Can Chuck expand on the neighborhood complaints regarding pickleball at Olney Mill? I had heard the concerns were more about daytime use, but perhaps this is not the case.
  - During the day, Olney Mill has a crowding issue and noise due to the crowding and overflow parking onto the streets. At night, the pickleball noise is more prominent because the ambient noise is reduced. We get complaints during the day about crowding and noise complaints at night.

## OTHER FACILITIES

- The park is largely used for walking/jogging and dog walking. To enlarge this area, could we get another walking loop, off the main loop, to include the old GA Ave?
  - The old Georgia Avenue is the main access drive into the park. We couldn't extend north of that as there are woodlands there that we do not want to disturb. We intend to focus our improvements on the core area of the park, but that will include accessibility improvements and resurfacing of the

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existing trail that extends from Queen Elizabeth Drive to just north of the existing basketball court.

- When will this happen?
  - In terms of the anticipated schedule, once we have the comments from the Open Town Hall, we will post a design concept for public comment on the project website this Spring. Then, we will refine the concept based on public feedback. The construction documentation and permitting should begin in the Summer of 2023 with construction anticipated in the Summer or Fall of 2024.
- Provision of an adult fitness facility similar to the one at Wheaton Regional Park would be a significant improvement!
  - That is feasible for this park and could be near the handball wall in the south courts or integrated into the court surface.
- Signs say that “Park close at darkness”. What gives?
  - It is our park policy that our parks close at sunset for all parks, with some exceptions.
- Having a playground near a parking lot has its challenges, i.e., kids running into the lot or cars running into the playground.
  - Having a playground near the parking lot has its benefits because it is a better location from an accessibility standpoint. To mitigate the conflicts between children and automobiles, we would put in fencing on that side of the playground or some other type of barrier to prevent kids from inadvertently entering into the traffic area.
  - We can also raise the grade of the playground which would help with drainage and create a barrier between the traffic circulation area and the playground. Other options would be to use bollards or we could re-purpose some of the boulders that we excavate from the site. We will ensure that the facility is safe.
- There’s a low spot on the Eastern path between the basketball court and Greenwood Elementary that has always been a problem. Will this be addressed?
  - For this project, we are focusing on the core area of the park. We started with the playground, we have expanded the scope to include other facilities in poor condition. Any further work to the north, such as the path system or the field, would need to be part of a future project.
  - We’re aware of the drainage issues in the north. We have a temporary solution in place now and will continue to look for other solutions to keep the area dry. Our Division Chief is aware of the issue as well and we will add it to our list of projects for the future.

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- Are there any thoughts about the erosion occurring deep in the park that is opening a six foot deep crevice/creek bed due to stormwater runoff that has now reached the old Georgia Avenue footprint?
  - We noticed this when we were in the field and are aware of these drainage issues. Since the park was developed, all the water from the park drains to that area and into the tributary that goes under 97. We talked to Park Planning and Stewardship Division and in the location where we're proposing the playground, it is not considered a stream but a drainage channel. We will stabilize any area that we disturb but will not do any stream restoration as part of this project.
- Will the new parking lot be pervious concrete?
  - No, we typically do not use pervious pavement due to the maintenance issues and the required regular vacuuming to make it effective. Also, the soils must have infiltration potential. With the old road bed and all the rock outcrops at this site, it is likely that the soils are not suitable for infiltration at this site. We always test for infiltration as part of our stormwater management requirement.
- Have you thought about moving the old water trough, appears to be mostly quartz, that's just off the walkpath to another location?
  - We talked to our historic section about this trough so they are aware that it is there. We don't have any plans on relocating it as it would result in more disturbance to the woodlands in that area.

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE STAFF THOUGHTS AND CONCERNS**

Greenwood is a special park that is unique compared to other parks. It is a favorite park for visiting due to the rock outcrops and the mature trees. However, it is very difficult in terms of maintenance, particularly with getting crews to the different areas of the park. We think the renovation will make it easier to maintain in terms of getting to different areas of the park. Also, reducing the court size where the tennis courts are currently located will remove that area that is difficult to maintain and help dry the courts out.

In terms of park police, it is one of the quieter parks. Last year, it only received 5 service calls with no major offenses. With the new plans, we hope to see the park opened up more with clear lines of sight to the facilities.



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### **Contact Information**

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Safety concerns and questions:  
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301-949-8010/ for immediate matters, please call 911