

From: Robert Booher <booherfamily@comcast.net>
Date: May 17, 2017 at 8:06:28 AM EDT
To: Joli McCathran Town Of Washington Grove <jmccathranwgmd@gmail.com>
Subject: Dog park

Joli:

You requested we provide feedback on 3 areas selected by the PC for a dog park use. The feedback we can provide relates to the importance of these areas to the history of the Grove and then the compatibility of a proposed project. This is a summary of our discussion.

Railroad park is a relatively recent creation and previously was an industrial site for a long time. Apart from it's becoming park of our park system and representing one of our successful efforts to control our borders, there is not much historic significance accrued to it.

Wendy has been researching the woods and their place in our history. She has found that the uses and attitudes toward activities in the woods have been evolving over time. Former uses ranged from locations for latrines in the early years, ice harvesting operations and timbering to locations that hosted choral events. Those attitudes have been evolving toward preservation, thus the current labeling them as forest preserves.

Because of the range of attitude and uses, we currently do not see there are to be a historically consistent regulation of usage that would control or prohibit it as a use. The town has seen advantages over the years to consider many uses, including the platting of the east woods.

That said, the woods represent a very important aspect of the Grove and its founding relationship to nature. They and the surrounding fields are why there is a Grove and are integral to our context as a historic place. They set us apart both physically and spiritually from other communities around us. They are us. Thus any diminishing of that historic resource would need to be assessed.

This assessment is not possible without a tangible project. We would first need to assess whether there are negative impacts to the character-defining features. Then see whether there were mitigating measures proposed and their effect, then finally making the overall assessment. There does not appear to yet be any tangible information on whether the proposed park is temporary, seasonal, permanent, fenced, paved, covered, lighted, etc. thus we currently are unable to assess the impact it would have on the historic nature of the resource.

Once details are further developed we would be willing to assist in the assessment.

Sent from my iPad