

Wednesday, October 28, 2020

Dear Greater Oakton Community Association Members and Friends,

Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, the Greater Oakton Community Association (GOCA) has continued to work with the Fairfax County Park Authority, Fairfax County Park Foundation and Virginia Department of Transportation to enhance and strengthen our community. Below are the priorities we are addressing:

- **Saving the 250 year-old Oakton Witness Tree** (aka, the "Mosby Oak," at 2911 Hunter Mill Road) from removal by VDOT. Working with Allison Richter of VDOT, Providence Supervisor Dalia Palchik, State Senator Chap Petersen, arborists, and GOCA members, we were able to save the tree from removal while it is viable. GOCA has committed \$1,000 to have an on-site, visual evaluation of the health of the tree in Fall 2020 and Summer 2021 by the leading arborist in Virginia, Ed Milhous.

- **Creating a history marker at the Oakton Witness Tree.** Thanks to you and local community organizations, GOCA raised sufficient funds to design a history marker for the tree. The cost will be about \$1,500 plus installation and maintenance. Wording of the history marker will depend on the report of the Fairfax County History Commission who will provide guidance as to markers, building names, statues, etc., including those that may appear to honor the Confederacy and those who may have had an affiliation with the Confederacy or slavery. Legend and oral history suggest that the Oakton Witness Tree was the site of a meeting between Confederate officer John Mosby (who later renounced his alliance with the Confederacy) and abolitionist Alexander Haight.

- **Applying for a Fairfax County Park Foundation grant** to create a seating area at the Oakton Community Park in the coming year. In addition, GOCA hopes to ask for regular mowing of the field during the growing season so that the community can use the field.

- **Leverage interest on endowment funds from Capital One Bank** for the preservation and maintenance of the historic Oakton Schoolhouse located at the Oakton Community Park. The accrued endowment interest is about \$18,000 currently. GOCA seeks to apply for matching grants in order to add a second ingress/egress door with a handicap ramp so that the Schoolhouse meets Fairfax County code for public use. Future projects include installing a modest

kitchen and restroom facilities in addition to purchasing desks, chairs and AV equipment so that the schoolhouse can be used by the community.

- **Reviewing the 2005 approved Fairfax County Park Authority Master Plan** for the Oakton Community Park. While we need to hew closely to the Master Plan if we are to avoid much further delay, the plan provides some flexibility in deciding the use of the field on the left side of the Park. We believe we should explore this flexibility in light of changes to the field for drainage/run-off control (installed at the front of the field when the Roundabout was built), limitations on parking, and the possibility of evolution in community preferences since the Master Plan was approved in 2005. The Master Plan also calls for a circular trail through the woods and a pavilion, which we hope to have funded through inclusion of the Oakton Park in the 2024 Fairfax County Park Authority Bond Referendum. In January 2021, GOCA will send a survey seeking your feedback on possible priorities for the remaining field area.

- **Germinating two acorns gathered this fall** by a GOCA volunteer from the Oakton Witness Tree. If the acorns germinate, GOCA will request that the Park Authority permit planting of the seedlings in the Oakton Park.

**GOCA asks for your continued financial and volunteer support.**

Our organization a 501©(3) charity and is composed entirely of committed volunteers. We truly need your tax-deductible donations--and your time and expertise. If you can donate, please do so via our website at [www.greateroakton.com](http://www.greateroakton.com). You can also help by designating the Greater Oakton Community Association as the beneficiary of your purchases through AmazonSmile.com. If you wish to volunteer your time and expertise, please contact me directly at [Jkerrtener@gmail.com](mailto:Jkerrtener@gmail.com).

Lastly, GOCA wishes to acknowledge with deep sadness the passing last spring of GOCA board member and long-time community volunteer, Jim Milstead. Jim's wife, Tooley Milstead, is a retired Fairfax County Public Schools teacher and has been a leader in working with our Oakton Library. She has also chaired the Friends of Oakton Library. We hold Tooley and her family in our thoughts.

With gratitude,

Janet Kerr-Tener and Patty Reed, Co-Chairs  
Greater Oakton Community Association