2025 0904 F&BC to the Mayor and Town Council regarding the Playground Comprehensive Plan

Dear Mayor and esteemed Town Council members,

The Forestry and Beautification Committee (F&BC) is writing with feedback on the currently proposed Playground Comprehensive Plan. We are somewhat puzzled by the handling of this proposal. At the last Town Council Meeting John said the proposal would be carried over to the next TC meeting while opinions from the residents were solicited. However, the proposed plan was not posted to the web site until it came out in the September 1 Bulletin. As we all know many residents do not read the Bulletin. Because of this, if the Council wants feedback, the Mayor ought to send a Grove Alert asking residents to review the proposal. And residents will need more time than one week before the Sept 13 Council meeting. Also, when Georgette spoke to Oscar Ramos and to Jonathan Dail, we got the impression the plan was still being refined in consultation with the other Town Committees. We hope this is the case as F&B is very interested in working with the Playground Group on this project.

The Playground Comprehensive Plan (Playground CP) is, in general, an excellent plan. Obviously, a great deal of care and creative energy has gone into it and there is much to like. F&B has committed to more consultation with the Playground group again after the plan is approved. We are eager to work with them to select new trees which best meet the need for shade in the park, especially around the new equipment.

Audrey and Georgette met Oscar Ramos in Woodward Park in July and discussed the plan. We expressed our concern about the plans involving what they call area #10 which we believe should not be altered in any way, including the addition of bridges across the drainage ditch. This area is an excellent example of passive stormwater management and has been so for decades. The Playground CP refers to “Some waterlogged areas are due to channels that run downward from the creek lip, into the middle of park spaces. We need to raise some ground level areas and dig channels that carry water into the creek. And: Videos were recorded on June 19, 2025, after heavy rain the day prior. Much of the standing water could be minimized with grading that runs down to the creek. Some of the current channels were directing water away from the creek and into the park space itself.” Please note that the goal of good stormwater management is to absorb rain on the land where it falls, not to rapidly move it elsewhere.

F&BC discussed the Playground Comprehensive Plan at our regular meeting on August 13. The main area of concern to F&BC is still area #10. The goal should not be to remove water from the park more quickly. This defeats the purpose of the passive stormwater system which is designed to get more water absorbed into the aquifer. The Town should not increase the quantity or velocity of water going toward the stream as this will increase erosion and cause other problems. This passive stormwater system works well; but, of course, those parts of Woodward

Park are frequently wet. When Audrey and Georgette met with Oscar, we explained this but we see no evidence of our concerns being addressed in the current plan.

In late August Georgette spoke to Jonathan Dail and they realized it could be helpful for F&BC members to meet in Woodward Park with as many Playground Workgroup members as possible with a view toward working out a compromise. This would aim to preserve the stormwater management area we are concerned about while making it possible to have a new path from the corner of Center Street and Maple Ave to the north end of the playground equipment. This concept was not discussed at F&B's August meeting so it is just an idea for mutual consideration.

Thank you for your consideration of this important stormwater issue. We hope the Town Council will not rush the process of creating the best possible Playground Comprehensive Plan and building community support for it.

Forestry and Beautification Committee

Jay Everhart, Deborah Mehlferber, Cynthia Werts, and

Georgette Cole and Audrey Maskery, co-Chairs