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**Subject:** [Alcova\_Heights] NFATC Update  
**Date:** Monday, May 1, 2017 10:15:58 PM

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Neighbors,

As most of you are aware, the following was approved at a recent AHCA meeting:

The Alcova Heights Citizens Association agrees to further explore the option of building a trail along the perimeter of the State Department property between South Quincy Street and 3rd Street South. This would be done with the clear understanding and acknowledgement that there are a number of concerns that must be addressed to mitigate the impact on the adjoining property owners including: safety, lighting, landscaping, long-term control of the land along the perimeter and retention of the existing fence where it is. Further, a committee of residents representing the full neighborhood would be created to work with the State Department, Congressman Beyer's office and the County Manager's office to gather information and develop options. A vote to proceed with any option will be taken by the Association ONLY after the process is complete and the options are known and understood.

The committee has been working on this and recently met with representatives of the Department of State, Congressman Beyer's office, GSA, ACPD, and various county offices, including those that represent bike paths, pedestrian concerns and engineering. The information below does not address all the questions that have been raised, but it does address many of them. It is important to note that the current Environmental assessment is silent on the subject of the trail, but does speak to a number of other issues that directly impact the neighborhood, including the closing of the current trail, the impact on the sledding hill and the construction of a fence along the perimeter of the property. Most of these issues are related by the potential for a land swap that would provide land for the discussed bike trail in exchange for land that would be used in the construction covered in the EA with the exception of the fence, which directly impacts the discussed bike path.

The information below is divided as much as possible to separate the two issues – first providing information regarding the bike path, which is within the charter of the committee, then separately providing information that we have gathered regarding items within the scope of the EA.

Regarding the bike trail:

\* Along the entire perimeter of NFATC, there will be a new 9' fence that curves outward, similar to ones that exist on Army bases. The exact location of the new fence has not been determined. Items on the exterior side of the fence that are on gov't property that could be used to help someone scale the fence would be removed. That would include tree limbs, sheds, etc. We don't believe funding for this fence has been appropriated. Our understanding is that if a bike path is built, the land on the exterior side of the existing fence would remain as the bike path would essentially be a buffer zone between the existing fence and the new perimeter. If there is no bike path and the new fence is built on or near the existing fence line, then GSA/DoS may make changes to the government-owned land that is currently outside the fence line. While building a fence along the actual property line is possible and may happen in certain locations, we don't think they will decide to do that along the entire perimeter. They could, but we don't think they will.

\* Bike trails are not normally built with lighting, but it could be included in the design. It has been suggested that there might be call boxes and distance markings to enhance security. Whether State would light their perimeter fence or have security cameras has not yet been decided.

\* The inside of the fence perimeter will be patrolled by the facility guards just as the current one is. The frequency was not provided and will not be provided.

\* The standards for a bike path are 10' wide with a 2' shoulder on either side with a maximum slope of 5% and a maximum cross slope of 2%. There are also routinely exceptions for short stretches that don't meet this standard. The initial impression is that these standards could be met with moderate changes (levelling/filling). This was the first time the county engineering staff had seen the location, so the land has not been surveyed for a path.

\* There would be no lockable gates at the end of the path. There would probably be bollards to prevent cars from accessing it.

\* The bike path would only be built if a land swap was done to transfer the ownership of the property along the perimeter of NFATC from S. Quincy to 3rd St. S. to the county.

\* A question has been asked about whether property owners along 6th St S. could purchase the land on their side of the fence. The answer is no if it continues to belong to GSA as that is against the rules. We don't have an answer from the county at this time.

Regarding the EA:

\* The existing bike path is going away in August.

\* GSA and DoS want a number of things from Arlington county: a buffer at the child care center that would require county land to accomplish, to own the land at their George Mason entrance, a stronger barrier than the existing split rail fence on county land along S. Quincy and no parking on S. Quincy.

\* There is currently funding for the addition to the child care center and destruction of the current path. This may include funding for the portion of the fence near the child care center, but we are not sure.

\* There are no plans to add regular operational entrance at Quincy St or at the eastern end of NFATC to access Glebe Rd.

We'll be requesting additional information from and via the County and will share it with the neighborhood when we receive it. One of the items we want additional clarification on is the decision-making process. One thing to note is that the AHCA has a voice in the process, but does not make the final decision. We'll hope to have additional information to pass on very soon.

Thanks,  
Eric Owen  
6th St S

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Posted by: Eric Owen <owener1@yahoo.com>

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