



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
National Capital Region
Rock Creek Park
3645 Willoughby Lane, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008-1267

OR BULKY REFER TO:

H3015 (NCA-ROCR)

JUL 20 2009

Thomas Luebke, Secretary
Commission of Fine Arts
National Building Museum
401 F Street, NW, Suite 312
Washington, D.C. 20001-2728

Dear Mr. Luebke:

The National Park Service (NPS) has reviewed the revised plan, prepared by the District Department of Recreation, for the rehabilitation of Francis Field. We offer the following comments to the Commission and to Department of Recreation (DPR):

National Park Service staff met with Department of Recreation representatives to discuss NPS concerns with the original plan. The plan initially showed several encroachments on NPS property. Those encroachments have been removed from the revised plan.

We also expressed concern about lighting and the adverse impact of the existing stadium-style lights on Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (2005). Authorized in 1913 and constructed between the 1920s and 1930s, the parkway was established to provide a landscaped connection between the Mall and Potomac Park, the National Zoo, and Rock Creek Park. The park setting of the parkway is an important feature of the design that the NPS strives to protect from non-compatible development at its boundaries. This includes inappropriate lighting flooding onto the landscape.

The DPR subsequently agreed that 1) the proposed new lighting for the field would be placed away from the NPS buffer zone for Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway; and 2) the existing flood lights would be removed. We have since learned from the DPR that the Francis Field project will be done in two phases. However, the DPR has not identified funding to remove the existing stadium-style lights and replace them with the more appropriate and energy efficient lighting design identified in the revised plan in either phase of this project. We believe that there must be a commitment by the DPR to implement all aspects of the plan once it is approved by the Commission of Fine Arts. We are therefore requesting that the DPR identify funding for the removal of the existing lights and replacement of the new ones as shown on the approved plan during Phase I of this project.

Finally, since full implementation of the approved plan depends upon the DPR's continued use of a portion of NPS-owned property at Francis Field, the NPS has agreed to issue a special use permit which will allow the DPR to 1) erect and maintain a new fence on NPS property to replace the existing one; and 2) utilize NPS property only as specified in the permit. The permit will stipulate that no structures will be erected on NPS property (including lights); and NPS property must be maintained by the DPR according to NPS standards for maintenance.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Cultural Resource Specialist Simone Monteleone Moffett on 202-895-6011.

Sincerely,

Adriane A. Coleman
Superintendent, Rock Creek Park

Cc:
Ximena Hartsock, Acting Director
District Department of Recreation
3149 16th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20010