



Date: May 10, 2017

To: Regina Brewer, Grady Go Team chair person
Dr. Betsy Bockman, Principal Grady High School

From: Alvah Hardy II, Executive Director Facilities Services

Regarding: Community Meeting about Walden Field Design

We enjoyed the conversation Wednesday evening, May 3, 2017 with the members of the Grady Go Team, Grady staff, and concerned parents and community members. The following is a brief recollection of the items discussed and the current direction the Walden Athletic field project is moving. It is not intended as a comprehensive review of the conversation.

The initial conversation involved the overall scope of the project. In no particular order, this included, but was not limited to:

1. Would a softball field fit at the Howard MS Site in place of the rectangular practice field?
Discussion - No. A softball field does not fit at the Howard site as currently designed.
2. Could we put softball and baseball at the Walden site and use the rectangular field currently in the Howard MS design as the Grady HS practice field? Or other district sites. The field at the Coan building was mentioned. As was the former Bass HS field.
Discussion – The district has not looked at that particular field configuration for Walden. But we could. The compass orientation of baseball and softball fields is more critical than for a football/soccer/lacrosse practice field. Using the field at Howard would present some scheduling challenges but was a possibility. After much conversation, it was suggested that Inman’s athletic programs have not been as robust as they could be due to lack of practice space and lack of game space. It was suggested that having the practice field proposed for the Howard MS site primarily serve the middle school would provide an opportunity to build a better athletic program at the middle school which would also benefit Grady as students would matriculate to high school with prior experience in their sport(s) of choice. The idea of using the fields at Coan and/or Bass for club sports was discussed. **It was requested that the district provide a list of available fields in the Grady Cluster and nearby clusters that might be close enough to be considered for use by the Grady cluster.**
3. Use the Walden field as currently designed with a shared baseball/softball diamond and investigate the potential to put a softball field at Inman after the portables are removed.
Discussion – We discussed the likelihood that a softball field would fit at Inman. And whether that created any co-use or scheduling issues at a school site where the district has not yet decided the ultimate use of the site. But that is a discussion that could be reconsidered in a couple of years when that issue comes back into consideration. It appears that a softball field will fit at Inman with some tree removal cost impacts, some topographic issues that can be resolved with dollars, and some potential concerns about the neighborhood’s perception about their use of the field as it sits currently. We discussed concerns with the combined convertible baseball/softball field. One clarification included that the district intended to build a clay pitching mound for the baseball field. There were some concerns expressed in the “Questions” document about the use of a temporary pitching mound. There was discussion about the field at Douglass HS which also is a convertible baseball/softball field. The



stripped infield does require more focused maintenance during baseball season to keep it in shape. The district indicated that it had researched convertible infields with turf specialists and there was little information available. The district does have a proposal to convert the infield between seasons at an annual cost of approximately \$40,000. How well the proposed conversion would work is still to be ascertained.

The proposed building program also was discussed. We discussed the locker rooms, their use, number of lockers, how to provide secure storage for the students (individual locks), the concessions area, public bathrooms, and field storage. The attached "Questions and Answers" document addresses most of these matters.

At the end of the meeting, it appeared the consensus was to continue the current design, with a convertible baseball/softball field and a practice field for football/soccer/lacrosse. How the infield is handled is still under consideration.

A search for a suitable location for a softball (or baseball) field and another practice field for football/soccer/lacrosse or other club sports, ultimate Frisbee was mentioned, in the near future should be undertaken. Suggested sites include Inman MS, Coan site, Bass Fields, field-of-dreams, and Central Park. It was mentioned at the meeting that the City of Atlanta Parks and Recreation department had been contacted about Central Park. The city had indicated that they were working on improvements and repurposing of some of the fields at the park. At this time they did not seem inclined to consider a shared use.

There were many opinions offered at the meeting and this memo is not intended to memorialize everything that was discussed. The number of student athletes impacted by the configuration at Walden was mentioned in relation to the number of football/soccer/lacrosse players versus baseball/softball players.

Another interesting topic involved the decision making process for any of the several mentioned scenarios related to the other locations for Grady athletics and club sports.

CC: Larry Hoskins, Chief Operations Officer
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