MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address: 7901 Meadowbrook Ln, Chevy Chase
Meeting Date: 6/12/2019

Resource: Master Plan Site #36/90
Rock Creek Recreation Center
Report Date: 6/5/2019

Applicant: M-NCPPC
Montgomery Parks
Public Notice: 5/29/2019

Review: HAWP
Tax Credit: n/a

Case Number: 36/90-19A
Staff: Dan Bruechert

Proposal: Solar Charging Station

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the HPC approve the HAWP application.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Individually Listed Master Plan Site #36/70 (Rock Creek Rec. Center)
STYLE: c.1940

The Meadowbrook Rec. Center is located to the south of the historic Rock Creek Stables. The park consists of a CCC recreation building, a playground, basketball courts, and playing fields.

Figure 1: The historic rec center is located in the southwest corner of the park.
**PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes install a solar charging station for portable devices.

**APPLICABLE GUIDELINES**

Proposed alterations to individual Master Plan Sites are reviewed under Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A) and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

*Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, space and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

8. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportions, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

9. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

**STAFF DISCUSSION**

The applicant proposes to construct a ground-mounted solar charging station to the north of the recreation center building. The charging station will be approximately 15’ (fifteen feet) tall and will be shaped like a flower (see attached application). Staff finds the location, design, size, and
materials to be appropriate with the surrounding park and recommends approval.

The new solar charging station (also referred to as a “solar tree” in the application) will be placed to the rear of the historic recreation center building, next to the playground and basketball courts. Staff finds that this location will not have a significant impact on the historic character of the recreation center building.

Staff additionally finds that the design of the charging station is appropriate in a park setting, adjacent to the playground. The design effectively contrasts against the stone recreation center, but is compatible with the adjacent, brightly colored, playground equipment. Staff concurs with the submitted narrative that the design adds to the playful nature and purpose of the park.

The proposed charging station will be approximately 15’ (fifteen feet) tall. This is lower than the roof of the historic recreation center and is the same approximate height as the basketball hoops in the adjacent courts. Staff finds the height is compatible with the surrounding site.

Finally, Staff finds that the metal base and pole are appropriate materials for the charging station. The metal features are consistent with many of the other recreational features in the park (i.e. playground equipment, basketball hoops, etc.).

Staff finds that the proposal will not impact the historic character of the historic recreation center building (24A-8(b)(1)) and that the park is better served by the HPC approving this HAWP (24A-8(b)(6)).

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the HAWP application; as being consistent with Chapter 24A-8 and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation; and with the general condition applicable to all Historic Area Work Permits that the applicant will present 3 permit sets of drawings to HPC staff for review and stamping prior to submission for permits (if applicable). After issuance of the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) permit, the applicant will arrange for a field inspection by calling the DPS Field Services Office at 240-777-6370 prior to commencement of work and not more than two weeks following completion of work.
APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Person: Julie Mueller
Daytime Phone No.: 301-650-4390

Tax Account No.: 

Name of Property Owner: Dept: Parks
Daytime Phone No.: 301-650-4390

Address: 7600 Fortview Ave., Silver Spring 20901
Street Number: City: State: Zip Code:

Contractor: Parks
Contractor Registration No.: Phone No.: 301-650-4890
Agent for Owner: As Above
Daytime Phone No.: 

LOCATION OF BUILDING WORK

House Number: 7901
Street: Headonbrook Ln.
Town/City: Chevy Chase Nearest Cross Street: East-West Abut
Lot: Block: Subdivision: 
Liber: Folio: Page: 

PART I. TYPE OF PERMIT AND ACTIVITIES

1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE: CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:
☐ Construct ☐ Extend ☐ Alter/Remove ☐ Add ☐ Sub ☐ Renovation Addition ☐ Porch ☐ Deck ☐ Shed
☐ Move ☐ (Small) ☐ Week/Remodel ☐ Roof ☐ Fireplace ☐ Wood-burning Stove ☐ Single Family
☐ Revision ☐ Repair ☐ 1 BR/2 BA ☐ Fence/Wall (complete Section 4) ☐ Other:

1B. Construction cost estimate: $ TBD (changing estimate)

1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved action permit, see Permit #.

PART II. PRELIMINARY SITE CONSTRUCTION AND EXTERIOR/ADDITONS

2A. Type of sewer disposal: ☐ 01 WSSC ☐ 02 Septic ☐ 03 Other: 

2B. Type of water supply: ☐ 01 WSSC ☐ 02 VES ☐ 03 Other: 

PART III. SPECIFY DATE FOR FRP/CURTAIN WALL

3A. Height: feet inches

3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:
☐ On party line/property line ☐ Entirely on land of owner ☐ On public right of way/assessment

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

Julie Mueller
Signature of Owner or authorized agent
3/11/99

Approved: ___________________________ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission
Disapproved: ___________________________ Signature: ___________________________ Date: 

Application/Permit No.: ___________________________ Date Filed: ___________________________ Date Issued: 

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS

EGR 5/21/99

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## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301/883-3400

### APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

**Contact Person:** Julie Mueller  
**Daytime Phone No.:** 301-650-4390

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax Account No.:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of Property Owner:</strong> Dept. of Parks</td>
<td><strong>Daytime Phone No.:</strong> 301-650-4390</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address:</strong> 9500 Brunes Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20901</td>
<td><strong>City:</strong> Silver Spring</td>
<td><strong>Zip Code:</strong> 20901</td>
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<td><strong>Daytime Phone No.:</strong></td>
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### LOCATION OF BUILDING/REVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>House Number:</strong> 9901</th>
<th><strong>Street:</strong> Meadowbrook Dr.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Town/City:</strong> Chevy Chase</td>
<td><strong>Nearest Cross Street:</strong> East-West Hwy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lot:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Block:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Liner:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Folio:</strong></td>
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### PERMIT ACTION AND USE

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<tr>
<th>1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:</th>
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<td>[ ] Construct</td>
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<td>[ ] Move</td>
<td>[ ] Install</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] Revision</td>
<td>[ ] Repair</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] Fence/Wall (complete Section 4)</td>
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| 1B. Construction cost estimate: $ TBD |

| 1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit #: |

### PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTENSION/ADDITIONS

| 2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01 [ ] WSSC 02 [ ] Septic 03 [ ] Other: |

| 2B. Type of water supply: 01 [ ] WSSC 02 [ ] Well 03 [ ] Other: |

### PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL

| 3A. Height ______________ feet ___________ inches |

| 3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations: |
| [ ] On party line/property line | [ ] Entirely on land of owner | [ ] On public right of way/ easement |

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

**Signature of owner or authorized agent:**  
**Date:** 5/21/19

**Approved:**  
**For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission**

**Disapproved:**  
**Signature:**  
**Date:**

**Application/Permit No.:**  
**Date Filed:**  
**Date Issued:**

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS

Ed. 6/21/89
1. WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

a. Description of existing structural and environmental setting, including historic features and significance.

Site

Rock Creek Recreation Center (MPHP 36-70), also known as Meadowbrook Recreation Center is in Meadowbrook Park, a 16.6-acre site just south of East-West Highway and north of the District of Columbia line in Rock Creek Park. The site contains the historic stone recreation building, a playground, tennis and basketball courts, and playing fields.

History and Significance

The early history of the site is first noted in a May 3, 1929 Maryland News article which announces that a rec center is being proposed close to the District of Columbia line. It touts that the new facility will be accessible to local citizens via the new Bethesda-Silver Spring Highway, known today as East-West Highway and which was in the planning and early construction phase then.

In 1933, M-NCPPC appropriated funds for detailed construction plans for a recreation area in Rock Creek Park, Unit 1. The exact construction date of the original open-air field shelter at Meadowbrook has not been determined, but with reasonable certainty, it is perhaps the earliest rec building constructed by the MNCPPC. A Washington Post article, published on September 7, 1934, noted that “a large field house of rustic design” was to be located between the District Line and the East-West highway near Chevy Chase and completed on September 15th.

The extant rec building was designed by Howard Cutler and his daughter Katherine; a Silver Spring architectural firm, in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS) and the M-NCPPC in early 1940. Shortly thereafter, it was built by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC).

The CCC had a direct impact on the construction of the rec center building. Its agency's influence on the architectural design is unquestionable. CCC employee, Albert Good, produced the standard model for blending of rustic architecture with the picturesque park landscape, a process he called “assimilation.” Among Good's floorplans that were widely distributed throughout NPS sites and which is very close to the Meadowbrook plan is one with two stone fireplaces, surrounding windows, enclosed ends, and crushed stone flooring.

By 1959 this park became known as “Candy Cane City” after the installation of red and white striped play equipment, including the Jack and Jill Climbing Tower and two spring-mounted hobby horses. These new pieces supplemented traditional equipment such as swings and see-saws. Meadowbrook was one of the first parks to have brightly colored, modern units.

By 1966, the new “Astro City” playground at Meadowbrook was on display for the Congress for Recreation and Parks. According to Evening Star, this equipment was “to keep children up with the space age. It takes them through journeys of the astronauts with walks, sliding boards, and climbs – if it
doesn’t scare them off.” Produced in Grinnell, Iowa, the M-NCPPC paid $10,000 for a spaceship sliding board, a Sputnik pole with rings, a Telstar Whirl, Moon Creatures, and Sand Craters. Despite this new, update space-age equipment, maps such as the Federal Rock Creek Park, published by NPS in 1972, continued to identify the children’s area next to the Recreation Center as “Candy Cane City.”

Today, the playground is filled with colorful modern equipment. The fence posts are painted red and white harkening back to the original park theme.

b. General description of project and its effect on the historic resources and environmental setting.

The Department of Parks proposes to install an ADA-compliant solar charging station to allow park users to charge their phones and laptops while at the park. The station, which includes a small concrete pad, would be located near the turn in the sidewalk between the rec center and the playground. This spot is close to most of the major outdoor functions in the park. The design is a prototype that is being proposed for use throughout the Parks system. The large, whimsical floral design would be easily recognized by Park users throughout the system.

Effect: The installation of the solar charging station will have no adverse effect on the historic character defining features of the designated recreation center. It will not alter or diminish the integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association. Furthermore, the proposed improvement is easily reversible. Its design adds to the playful nature and purpose of the park.

2. SITE PLAN: see photos.

3. PLANS AND ELEVATIONS: see attached

4. MATERIAL SPECIFICATIONS: see attached

5. PHOTOGRAPHS: see attached

6. TREE SURVEY: N/A

7. ADDRESS OF ADJACENT AND CONFRONTING PROPERTY OWNERS: N/A (inside Rock Creek Park)