



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Miran Lee 240-777-7819/ Neil H. Greenberger 240-777-7939

Montgomery Council Backs Continued Operation of Sligo Creek Golf Course

*Based on Report of Task Force, Revenue Authority Moves
Toward Extension of Agreement for Silver Spring Facility*

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ROCKVILLE, Md., July 27, 2010—Based on the encouragements made by the Sligo Creek Golf Course Task Force, which was appointed by the Montgomery County Council to seek options to keep the nine-hole course in Silver Spring operating, the Montgomery County Revenue Authority today said it would move toward extending its agreement to operate Montgomery County's oldest public golf course.

The Revenue Authority made its announcement before the Council during discussion of the task force report. Its current agreement to operate the course was scheduled to end on Nov. 30. The agreement was encouraged by recommendations in the report to keep operating the course and to reduce operating costs.

The Revenue Authority, which leases other County public golf courses, and the Park and Planning Commission amended the operating agreement for Sligo Creek on July 1 that allows the Revenue Authority to operate Sligo Creek until Nov. 30. The Revenue Authority and the Park and Planning Commissions will now begin discussions to extend the current operating agreement.

In September 2009, the Council established the Sligo Creek Golf Course Task Force with the goal of producing a report with the following requirements: (1) review course revenues, usage rates, and fees; (2) evaluate the costs associated with operating and managing Sligo Creek Golf Course; (3) identify essential capital improvements required to keep the course operational over the next five years; (4) evaluate what similar jurisdictions have done to manage public golf courses; (5) recommend potential public-private partnerships that would make the course financially viable; and (6) recommend golf course enhancements that may be necessary to make the course financially viable that do not impact the quality of life in the neighboring community.

“I am proud to have pushed for the creation of the Sligo Creek Golf Course Task Force at a critical time in the Council’s deliberations regarding the future of the golf course,” said Council Vice President Valerie Ervin, who represents District 5 which includes Kensington, Silver Spring, Takoma Park and Wheaton. “The Sligo Creek Golf Course Task Force worked diligently, under difficult time constraints, to provide the Council with options for golf course operations at this treasured community resource. We must continue to think creatively and cooperatively because, as the Task Force has shown, by working together, we can come up with sustainable options to improve Sligo Creek Golf Course and keep it open the future.”

The Task Force found that from 2000-08 Sligo Creek was down 26 percent in number of rounds played, while all other Montgomery County public golf courses were only down 8 percent. During that same period, Sligo Creek was down 3 percent in revenues while all other Montgomery County public golf courses were up 39 percent. It was estimated that Sligo Creek lost approximately \$679,000 during the study period, including \$145,000 in 2008.

“The operating agreement between Park and Planning and the Revenue Authority preserves Sligo for the next three years and will give us time to develop a comprehensive plan to address the long-term viability of the course,” said Councilmember Marc Elrich, who along with Vice President Ervin has worked with the neighboring communities and Sligo Creek management over the past two years to secure the long term viability of the course. “We need to robustly promote Sligo Creek as an asset that fills an unique role in the golf system of Montgomery County. I believe Sligo will make a positive contribution to the system.”

One of the major items that the Task Force focused on was the annual management fee Sligo Creek was charged by the Revenue Authority. The Revenue Authority said it charged each public golf facility it operated \$168,180 in 2009. The task force disagreed that Sligo Creek, the smallest revenue generator, should pay the same management fee as the largest revenue generator.

Sligo Creek Golf Course is a 65-acre, nine-hole golf course located inside the Beltway in Sligo Creek Park. The course has been in operation since 1927 and became the County's first public course in 1946. The vast majority of Sligo Creek Golf Course users are County residents and more than half are 50 and older. Beginning golfers and youth also utilize the course to learn the game of golf.

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