

Chat questions organized by topic area, asked by the public following a presentation on 5/12/22 by Go Ape at a virtual meeting hosted by the Department of Recreation and Parks, especially addressing Oregon Ridge Park.

A Report from the Baltimore County Commission on Environmental Quality
5/18/22

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A. Report Introduction, Summary of Findings, and Recommendations

(Note that the remainder of this report is comprised of Chat items grouped by the topic area or areas that they address.)

Introduction: An online meeting was hosted by the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks to share a presentation by the commercial firm, Go Ape, on May 12, 2022, at 6 pm. Go Ape is a for-profit, private company that operates adventure rope courses and zip lines in public parks at several locations in Maryland, in other U.S. states, and in Great Britain. The Department of Recreation and Parks is in conversation with Go Ape about potential installations in forested areas of county parks, with Oregon Ridge being considered.

After the formal presentation by Go Ape, attendees were informed that only the Go Ape presentation itself would be made available to the public for later viewing, and that no recording or transcript of public questions and answers would be made available. Attendees were allowed to post questions in the Chat, there would be no permanent record of the range of opinions expressed or the responses to questions and comments. Further, the Chat Monitor did not bring forward all of the Chat questions or comments for response from Go Ape or Ms. Johnson (the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks).

In order to preserve the public's questions and comments that were written in the Chat, Dr. Andy Miller of the Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ) created a file that documents all chat comments and posted the link to that file publicly. Thank you for spontaneously providing this important public service, Dr. Miller.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1y0WwV66NWytihOIItGL_25MYNZ0xJ-oGBBdYVUx2Hg6M/edit?usp=sharing

The goal of this report is to help the reader get a sense of the topics that were raised by the public and the level of engagement and concern expressed by attendees about the potential installation of this facility, particularly in Oregon Ridge Park. In this report, all the items in the Chat are organized by the topic area that they addressed. Some items pertain to more than one topic area, so are listed in each topic area that they address. Every Chat item was addressed “to everyone”.

It is important to mention here that at the beginning of the meeting, Baltimore County Councilman Wade Kach, the elected representative of the district in which Oregon Ridge Park is located, emphasized the importance of protecting the natural resources of the park and stated that it is essential for the planning and decision-making process to include all of the volunteer organizations that have spent countless hours over a period of decades in efforts to preserve and protect those resources, focusing on the forest in particular. Beginning in January 2022, members of those organizations contacted the County Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and requested our involvement as advocates for the natural resources of the park. They were seriously concerned about the potential impacts of a commercial adventure facility in the park, and equally concerned about what they saw as a lack of transparency in the way it was being explained. CEQ responded to those requests and we endorse Councilman Kach’s statement that all of those groups must be involved in the decision-making process. If there is not an agreement about how to proceed with

the groups who have invested the most time and effort in protecting the park, then no agreement should be entered into with Go Ape over the objections of those groups.

Summary of Findings: The comments and questions were wide-ranging and addressed many topics. Some of the comments were focused on specific details while others were more passionate, as can be seen. What is very clear in this document is that the public is very concerned about the chance that a commercial installation such as Go Ape may be allowed to take over a section of the publicly owned land and affect the natural resources and opportunities for undisturbed appreciation of the natural environments of Oregon Ridge Park.

Many comments expressed concerns about risks to the overall purpose and mission of this natural park as well as the peaceful enjoyment of it, the risks to the wildlife, the trees and forest, and the risks to Environmental Education and Research (Topics C1, C2, C3 and Topic D).

Further concerns included the opaque nature of the negotiations between Baltimore County and Go Ape thus far, questions about financial arrangements that may influence the process (Topics F1 and H), and the lack of availability to the public of even the Chat and oral answers at 5/12/22 meeting (Topic B). Questions were asked about the appropriateness of considering a commercial adventure park facility independent of the ongoing Oregon Ridge Park Master Plan process (Topic F). Concerns were raised about the risks to life and safety and the County's financial liability for damages (Topic G).

Lack of equity and fairness was also a concern, as we are facing the prospect of installing a permanent, expensive commercial facility among the trees where heretofore people have been encouraged to enjoy free or low-cost, non-intrusive activities (Topic E, and to some degree Topic C1). The statement by Go Ape that they found support for installing Go Ape in the park by surveying people who had used their product elicited strong criticism (Topic F1). Multiple people asked whether present visitors to Oregon Ridge Park have been or will be polled.

In addition, many questions were asked about the specifics of a Go Ape installation (Topic I), focusing on aspects that were not clearly explained in the formal presentation by Go Ape. These included whether there will be a building, a road, parking, use of County Park staff time or park utilities such as bathrooms and other County-owned amenities, and the financial arrangement between the County and the commercial vendor.

Attention was drawn to Baltimore County Code specifying prohibited activities in the parks and the requirement for consultation with County Administration other than the Recreation and Parks department (Topic F2).

Five people made positive comments about Go Ape and about welcoming this vendor to Baltimore County (Topic J), but none specified Oregon Ridge Park as the location of it.

Of note, in response to Dr. Miller's questions about whether there will be a second meeting before any decision is made and if Go Ape decision will be delayed until after the Master Plan is approved, the verbal response from Ms. Johnson was "yes and yes".

Recommendations: The CEQ workgroup on the Go Ape plan in Oregon Ridge Park recommends that a recording of the meeting be obtained and released for access by the public and by decision-makers in the County Administration and on the County Council. Such a recording would not only document the responses to the public's questions at the meeting but also would serve to illuminate the process by which a major change in the use of the County's largest park, a nature park, is being considered.

Similarly, it is recommended that complete recordings of subsequent meetings be made available to the public. This is a topic of intense public interest for many County residents, and it would be appropriate and indeed necessary to use the same process as is used by the County Council in recording the entirety of its public work sessions, including all testimony and commentary, and making them public.

It is recommended that additional virtual meetings be held to address the public's concerns, and that such meetings be advertised more widely, to include users of the nature parks, i.e., not only Oregon Ridge but also Marshy Point, Cromwell Valley, and others.

It is further recommended that the statements made by the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks at the meeting 5/12/22 be transcribed and made available publicly as soon as possible. This includes addressing the concerns that Oregon Ridge is the choice location for Go Ape, that such negotiations and arrangements are being made outside of the Oregon Ridge Master Plan process, and that a commercial installation such as Go Ape will compromise the purpose and mission of Oregon Ridge Park. Oregon Ridge Park was designed, planned as, and remains a nature center and education space for the peaceful enjoyment of the wildlife, trees, and forest.

Organization of Chat items by topic areas: In the following sections of this report, all of the Chat items are listed in the topic area or areas to which they pertain. Some items are listed more than once if they address more than one topic, so that if the reader wishes to read the Chat items pertaining to a specific topic then they will see all the Chat items that addressed that topic.

B. Concerns about public notification of this meeting and about public availability of a complete recording including questions and answers

Linda Davis 6:06 PM Will the chat comments be included in the recording?

wadek 6:07 PM Why aren't people online able to participate live? Im locked out. Wade Kach

Linda Davis 6:08 PM Please make sure Councilman Kach can participate. (Note: Councilman Wade Kach spoke to the meeting.)

j blatt 6:43 PM To not post the chat comments or at least summarize them

Andy Miller 6:44 PM I am saving a copy of the comments and will share them with anyone who is interested in being able to review them. This is a public meeting and public information to which all are entitled.

Dr. Carol Newill 6:45 PM I agree with Dr. Miller and thank him for saving a copy of the comments and sharing them from this public meeting.

Donna D Neuworth 6:46 PM Being Transparent includes capturing comments in this chat and posting them, as well as ASKING Park users what they think

Keith Rosenstiel 6:47 PM why weren't meeting notices posted at the park, and why isn't this meeting public and at Oreogn Ridge? You may have gotten some more park users to attend.

Andy Miller 6:49 PM if this is the community input meeting and there is no information about specifics, will there be another community input meeting to discuss the specifics not available here before any decisions are made?

Andy Miller 6:51 PM There are many more questions than you will have time to address. Will written answers be provided to questions that cannot be answered within the time limit of this meeting?

Ladan 6:59 PM I am arriving late to the meeting due to a work conflict. Can you let me know where I can listen to the recording? I'd like to hear GoApe's presentation. And I'm curious why the county is feeling this is a needed addition to the park? I have appreciated the wow factor of nature itself and would like to know

Andy Miller 7:01 PM I have posted a running record of all chat comments and it can be accessed at this link. I will add all subsequent comments until the end of the meeting.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1y0WwV66NWytihOIitGL_25MYNZ0xJ-oGBBdYVUx2Hg6M/edit?usp=sharing

Donna D Neuworth 7:09 PM is this the only opportunity for public input?

Keith Rosenstiel 7:15 PM I talk to dozens of park visitors every day, none of them were aware of this meeting and had never heard of Go Ape. Rec and Parks should try harder to inform park visitors.

sstai_000 7:16 PM Next time post the meeting at Oregon Ridge. !

Andy Miller 7:19 PM Just a reminder that the complete chat is posted at this link for anyone who wants it: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1y0WwV66NWytihOIitGL_25MYNZ0xJ-oGBBdYVUx2

Linda Davis 7:30 PM Will this discussion be available to listen to afterward, or just Go Ape's presentation?

Paulette Hammond 7:50 PM Will all these questions be answered in writing and distributed?

C. Concerns about risks of compromising the Purpose and Mission of Oregon Ridge Park, Wildlife, Trees and Forest by activities such as Go Ape

C1. Concerns that the Purpose and Mission of Oregon Ridge Park will be harmed

sstai_000 6:08 PM They are all nonprofit. Not commercial activities

Polly Walker 6:23 PM A truly environmentally responsible approach and focus would be to leave Oregon Ridge Park as a natural park - for plants and wildlife and people.

Mary Jane Shanks 6:24 PM The goal of the nature side of the park is education and nature. People who regularly use the park go to do birding, search for wildflowers, and hike. They want quiet and peace. Such an adventure mission as GoApe would introduce an entirely different focus. I don't see how the two can co-exist. Such treetop activities would interrupt nesting birds and other wildlife.

Andy Miller 6:26 PM So are you saying that visitors to the park who are there to experience an undisturbed natural forest environment will not see or hear or experience any noise or visual intrusion on their experience of the forest? Also are you aware of the Painted Trees project in Oregon Ridge that raised numerous citizen complaints and led to a bill passed by the County Council requiring consultation with the director of

Environmental Protection and Sustainability on any project in the park that would affect trees? Have you seen those trees and if so what is your personal opinion of what was done there?

j blatt 6:30 PM This activity seems more appropriate to a "playground / park" type setting, not a nature center

Mary Jane Shanks 6:31 PM Families can learn and grow together while hiking through the park and learning about the habitat and the critters that live there. This activity should be placed in an area that does not interfere with that.

Donna D Neuworth 6:33 PM There are so many wonderfully rich programming at the County parks now-teaching and appreciating nature, physical challenges of hiking and weed warrioring, birding and so much more, many free or low cost.

Keith Rosenstiel: 6:40 PM There are no two "sides" to the park. That's a choice that Rec and Parks made in their management of the park.

Mary Jane Shanks 6:44 PM No commercial for profit at Oregon Ridge Nature Center. That would conflict with the purpose of the nature side of the park

Polly Walker 6:44 PM The park is actually one whole natural area - with a small more active section down near Beaver Dam Road that predates the purchase of the land as Oregon Ridge Park. A project such as Go APe would extend much further into the park than the current "more active" section aalong the road.

Dave Votta 6:46 PM What goes into site selection within the park? Do you conduct any Natural Resource Inventory surveys to select a site that offers the least amount of impact?

Polly Roberts 6:54 PM Oregon Ridge Park has been a wildlife preserve for some decades now. We need to be the stewards of the flora and fauna there and assure that nothing harms them. Increased changes in the forest as well as noises, etc. will negatively impact this.

Mary Jane Shanks 6:55 PM Has the county consulted the Naturalists working at the Nature parks

Ralph Brown: 6:55 PM Rock Creek and Lums Pond are almost twice the size of Oregon Ridge. Where would you possibly place it where it won't change the nature of the park?

Ladan 6:59 PM I am arriving late to the meeting due to a work conflict. Can you let me know where I can listen to the recording? I'd like to hear GoApe's presentation. And I'm curious why the county is feeling this is a needed addition to the park? I have appreciated the wow factor of nature itself and would like to know

dejarrell 6:59 PM is go ape willing to cancel days if there are large events at the parks? Would it not be better for a private company to purchase private property to install a for profit business rather than utilizing a public park? No matter how it is done it will disrupt the wildlife, the landscape and all the people who use the park for birding, hiking and other more serene pursuits.

Polly Roberts: 7:06 PM Kids today already have constant stimulation. They need to learn the value of the value of peace and contemplation in a quiet nature setting

7:07 PM oops....contemption 7:07 PM CONTEMPLATION

debbie bacharach 7:08 PM There are forests and trails all along the ridge behind the Lodge, which have been there a long time and are well used. So there is no "side" of the park that is not nature oriented.

Mary Jane Shanks 7:08 PM All of the benefits for families that Go Ape has talked about can be duplicated by visiting the park for the natural experience the forest provides and the Nature Programming

dejarrell 7:12 PM Go Ape is a luxury item. I'm glad they donate and give away but it is not something everyone can do. Green space is at a premium.

Linda Davis: 7:13 PM What is the County's process for considering environmental impacts of a Go Ape installation?

Charlie Davis 7:13 PM What is the process and criteria that Baltimore County would use to choose the appropriate site for this activity?

Kathy Lambrow 7:14 PM What other sites are being considered? Wouldn't this be more suited to a Recreation Park vs. a Nature Park?

catherine Morris 7:14 PM +++Charlie Davis questions re criteria

Polly Walker 7:17 PM I agree with Debbie Bacharach - there is no side of the park that is NOT nature oriented. The origins of the park itself were for a natural park. And thirty years ago 200 acres were added to the park that increased the natural area and trails leading to the top of the Ridge. This was possible due to a huge outpouring of public support, volunteers, and eventually State and County Open Space dollars (A total of \$2.5 million) plus \$600,000 of private donations raised by citizens. What motivated all of that action was a belief and desire for MORE natural acreage for the park.

Ralph Brown 7:24 PM People on this call- Dr. Polly Walker, Bob Stanhope, Wade Kach -are responsible for the addition of 200 wooded acres to the park in the 1980's. An undisturbed forest is their legacy.

Mary Jane Shank 7:25 PM The main objection is that the GoApe activity is incapable with the goals and mission of the Oregon Ridge Park, nature side. This is the case no matter how many people participate in GoApe.

Polly Walker 7:36 PM I agree with others above. Having Go Ape at Oregon Ridge Park is not compatible with the goals and mission of Oregon Ridge Park. This is true no matter how many people attend, how much mitigation, how many reservations or walk ins occur.

Keith Rosenstiel 7:44 PM A good competitor is Terrapin Adventures in nearby Savage MD. Better facility, more offerings, better safety record, more affordable price, and they didn't need to use a nature preserve.

Andy Miller 7:50 PM Last reminder for anyone who wants the complete text of the chat, you can follow this link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1y0WwV66NWytihOltGL_25MYNZ0xJ-oGBBdYVUx2Hg6M/edit?usp=sharing

A question was asked on the phone as to how Rec & Parks views this as supporting a community mission for stewardship of natural environment and resources

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 7:54 PM thx Andy

C2. Concerns that peaceful enjoyment of the natural park may be harmed

Polly Walker 6:23 PM A truly environmentally responsible approach and focus would be to leave Oregon Ridge Park as a natural park - for plants and wildlife and people.

Judy Harding 6:24 PM please comment on the added noise level from participants

catherine Morris 6:25 PM And please comment on the level of traffic based on average attendance on a peak day.

Andy Miller 6:26 PM So are you saying that visitors to the park who are there to experience an undisturbed natural forest environment will not see or hear or experience any noise or visual intrusion on their experience of the forest? Also are you aware of the Painted Trees project in Oregon Ridge that raised numerous citizen complaints and led to a bill passed by the County Council requiring consultation with the director of

Environmental Protection and Sustainability on any project in the park that would affect trees? Have you seen those trees and if so what is your personal opinion of what was done there?

Linda Davis 6:32 PM Installation is designed to be thrilling. Noise from the installation will impact areas far from the installation and disturb and distract other uses.

Keith Rosenstiel 6:40 PM There are no two "sides" to the park. That's a choice that Rec and Parks made in their management of the park.

marsha mclaughlin 6:50 PM I love hiking at Oregon Ridge - hearing screams "of joy" from Go Ape customers won't be welcome.

Mary Jane Shanks 6:53 PM Noise of any kind disturbs wildlife and those who are in the woods to enjoy nature.

dejarrell 6:59 PM is go ape willing to cancel days if there are large events at the parks? Would it not be better for a private company to purchase private property to install a for profit business rather than utilizing a public park? No matter how it is done it will disrupt the wildlife, the landscape and all the people who use the park for birding, hiking and other more serene pursuits.

Polly Roberts 7:06 PM Kids today already have constant stimulation. They need to learn the value of the value of peace and contemplation in a quiet nature setting,
7:07 PM oops....contemtion, 7:07 PM CONTEMPLATION

Rob Frier 7:13 PM Would they consider a design without a zip line so as to eliminate any need to remove trees and reduce noise? (Pearlstone does not have a zip line.)

Mary Jane Shanks 7:14 PM Oregon Ridge has always been an oasis to visit in an area that is highly developed. Among the housing, offices, shopping, and highways, one could escape to Oregon Ridge for a peaceful and quiet experience in the forest, field and streams that make up the park. Why would we be considering an activity that
would change the character of the Park?

Ralph Brown 7:40 PM Are you saying that you would use existing trails at Oregon Ridge?

C3. Concerns that the forest, trees, other plants, and birds and other wildlife may be harmed

Polly Walker 6:23 PM A truly environmentally responsible approach and focus would be to leave Oregon Ridge Park as a natural park - for plants and wildlife and people.

Mary Jane Shanks 6:24 PM The goal of the nature side of the park is education and nature. People who regularly use the park go to do birding, search for wildflowers, and hike. They want quiet and peace. Such

an adventure mission as GoApe would introduce an entirely different focus. I don't see how the two can co-exist. Such treetop activities would interrupt nesting birds and other wildlife.

wendy olsson 6:25 PM What about the birds that would normally nest in these trees? People around all over the circuits that are built will keep birds from nesting in the area. There was a video from a course in Costa Rica where a kid ran into a sloth. Granted we don't have sloths, but this is still a disruption to wildlife that lives in Oregon Ridge. Help me understand how taking away large trees (which are most valuable to wildlife) from birds is going to help the environment?

Martha 6:25 PM Does Go Ape assess potential environmental impact and actual impact on flora and fauna, e.g., breeding birds, wildflowers?

Dr. Carol Newill 6:26 PM At least 52 bird species have been documented at Oregon Ridge Park, of which 5 are "at-risk". Will a Go Ape installation compromise the birds' health and survival?

Polly Walker 6:27 PM 1000 acres is the current acreage of Oregon Ridge Park and that size is important for many wildlife species. Development of the woods such as with Go Ape would reduce the acres that could be counted as wildlife habitat.

marsha mclaughlin 6:27 PM Can you show on a map where in Oregon Ridge you would propose to locate Go Ape? How many trees would be need to be removed?

James Curtis 6:28 PM How much clearing of the forest is required to set up the course.

Joe Corcoran 6:48 PM How are bird nesting activities affected by the ropes courses?

Ralph Brown 6:50 PM You say you are environment stewards. I recently visited your site at Rock Creek and saw trees growing around boards and the woods were mostly filled with barberry and oriental bittersweet. Please comment?

Mary Jane Shanks 6:53 PM Noise of any kind disturbs wildlife and those who are in the woods to enjoy nature.

Polly Roberts 6:54 PM Oregon Ridge Park has been a wildlife preserve for some decades now. We need to be the stewards of the flora and fauna there and assure that nothing harms them. Increased changes in the forest as well as noises, etc. will negatively impact this.

wendy olsson 6:58 PM What about warblers and small bird species that you don't see as easily as owls and hawks? Do you choose what trees you use based on those trees value to wildlife?

Polly Walker 6:58 PM Mitigation of impacts cannot equal doing nothing. Sometimes the best use of land or forest is to leave it alone.

Shannon Davis 7:01 PM What about removing branches,, shrubs, and plants to instal the course? I saw soil compaction and vegetation trampling around the Rocks site.

Mary Jane Shanks 7:03 PM How would it be possible not to damage the flora and fauna with an activity like this?

Keith Rosenstiel 7:03 PM For those of us who spend a lot of time in the park know that most of the park's wildlife exists in that tertiary space between forest and field, which is the entire north face of the park. This is exactly where Go Ape would be located

Dr. Carol Newill 7:08 PM Besides the concerns about the wildlife and the tree trunks and branches, compaction of soil over and around tree roots is a very real risk to the trees' health and survival. Compaction by foot traffic as well as any equipment. Tree roots are crucially essential factors for the health of the forest itself. See: <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/damaged-tree-roots>, and <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/construction-damage>, and <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/problems-caused-compacted-soil>.

Rob Frier 7:13 PM Would they consider a design without a zip line so as to eliminate any need to remove trees and reduce noise? (Pearlstone does not have a zip line.)

Dave Votta 7:13 PM But I am not just worried about the trees as the only determining factor for site selection, is habitat and rare/threatened or engangerd species assessments conducted by Go Ape?

Ralph Brown 7:24 PM People on this call-Dr. Polly Walker, Bob Stanhope, Wade Kach-are responsible for the addition of 200 wooded acres to the park in the 1980's. An undisturbed forest is their legacy.

Charlie Davis 7:30 PM Would the Go-Ape activities discourage white-tailed deer from using the park?

Jessica 7:33 PM I thought the earlier presentation stated that the trees are drilled into - could someone please clarify this detail if I misheard?

Dave Votta 7:34 PM The white-tailed deer are all ready overpopulated, I won't list them as a species of concern.

Shannon Davis 7:41 PM tree pruning would be necessary and visitors to Go Ape create trails to watch the activity

D. Concerns that Environmental Education and Research currently carried out at Oregon Ridge Park will be compromised by activities such as Go Ape

Mary Jane Shanks 6:24 PM The goal of the nature side of the park is education and nature. People who regularly use the park go to do birding, search for wildflowers, and hike. They want quiet and peace. Such an adventure mission as GoApe would introduce an entirely different focus. I don't see how the two can co-exist. Such treetop activities would interrupt nesting birds and other wildlife.

Judy Harding 6:24 PM please comment on the added noise level from participants

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 6:25 PM I have taught at ropes courses before for Inner Quest and have enjoyed them at many camps. I am also the Chair of the Greater Baltimore Group of Sierra Club and love Oregon Ridge for what it is. I taught Environmental Education and cooperation games. Is this part of the experience or is it just for the high of zipping and getting over fear of heights?

Judy Harding 6:26 PM what is the education value of Go Ape

Mary Jane Shanks 6:31 PM Families can learn and grow together while hiking through the park and learning about the habitat and the critters that live there. This activity should be placed in an area that does not interfere with that.

Dr. Carol Newill 6:32 PM Have you engaged (with) the many schools and groups that utilize Oregon Ridge Park's forest, streams and meadows for Environmental Education and for research? For example, Balt County Public Schoo

Linda Davis 6:32 PM Installation is designed to be thrilling. Noise from the installation will impact areas far from the installation and disturb and distract other uses.

Linda Davis to everyone: 6:33 PM

Installation will interfere with education, research, and nature center programming.

Dr. Carol Newill 6:37 PM continued- Environmental Ed by public schools including Baltimore County Public Schools as well as private schools, and the training program that the State carries out at Oregon Ridge for teachers who are training to become Environmental Educators. Research and education are also carried out with undergrad and grad students at Johns Hopkins, UMBC, Towson Univ, other colleges including one from Delaware and NJ. In addition, the National Science Foundation, a very prestigious organization, has many research projects that utilize Oregon Ridge Park. In my opinion, sacrificing the quality and quantity of Environmental Education and research opportunities for our younger generations would be a very egregious wrong.

Polly Roberts 6:39 PM I hope the playground will have a nature/educational theme and not, for example, a "Disneyland"-type theme. Natural materials asap - no plastic, etc.

Dr. Carol Newill 7:00 PM Thank you Councilman Kach for your interest and concern. Ms. Johnson, has the County Executive weighed in on the idea of Go Ape at Oregon Ridge Park? When he was running for office, he specifically said that he has great concern for the health of our Environment, including concerns such as our deficit of publicly accessible Open Space, and the importance of Environmental Education.

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 7:15 PM Please address Dr Newell's question about research in the park

E. Equity and Fairness concerns about costs of using a for-profit recreational facility on public land

ssai_000 6:08 PM They are all nonprofit. Not commercial activities

marsha mclaughlin 6:30 PM Understand your prices are very high. Will you offer affordable rates for families and students?

Martha 6:30 PM At \$40-\$60 per participant, who are the primary users?

debbie bacharach 6:32 PM What is the cost for a family of 4 with 2 adults and 2 teens?

Ralph Brown 6:33 PM What do you tell a working class family of 4 picnicing at Oregon Ridge who do not have the \$280 to spend on Go Ape and have to tell their kids they can't participate?

Donna D Neuworth 6:33 PM There are so many wonderfully rich programming at the County parks now-teaching and appreciating nature, physical challenges of hiking and weed warrioring, birding and so much more, many free or low cost.

Linda Davis 6:44 PM Equity: The high cost to participate (\$45.95 and up per person) excludes many families in the County.

catherine Morris 6:50 PM how are you addressing equitable access for those who can't afford \$200/family?

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 6:50 PM This is too expensive for school trips from Baltimore County and City

Martha 7:04 PM What % of users are subsidized?

Ralph Brown 7:05 PM What percentage of users get free tickets?

dejarrell 7:12 PM Go Ape is a luxury item. I'm glad they donate and give away but it is not something everyone can do. Green space is at a premium.

F. Questions about Process used to assess public interest, and County law affecting commercial development in Public Parks

F1. Concerns about the process by which Recreation & Parks decided to focus on Go Ape, including carrying out negotiations with Go Ape outside of the Park Master Plan; and comments on the survey by Go Ape

Ralph Brown 6:16 PM Did you ask people who use Oregon Ridge whether they want Go Ape there?

j blatt 6:17 PM a more appropriate survey would be of all users of the parks where they are located to get feedback on the impact of GoApe on the parks. Surveying only those who have paid for and use the services is inherently biased and does not get a balanced perspective of the impact on the community

Donna D Neuworth 6:19 PM Agreed--very biased survey if you asked GoApe users vs those park members who access County park users and program participants

Marc Schabb 6:21 PM There is a similar facility in operation at Savage Mill. How did Baltimore County choose to partner with Go Ape in particular, and would it make sense to evaluate competitive plans?

Mary Jane Shanks 6:25 PM I doubt if you did a survey of the hundreds of members of the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council. I find your survey suspect. 99% of how many people?

Ralph Brown 6:28 PM Are you considering other sites in Baltimore County besides Oregon Ridge?

Linda Davis 6:29 PM The Master Plan process for Oregon Ridge Park has just started and any decision about a Go Ape installation should not be made outside that process

Dr. Carol Newill 6:29 PM Jeff, have you taken your children to the zipline/ropes courses already present in Baltimore County? Pearlstone is 13 miles west of the park, near Reisterstown, and Genesee Valley is 15 miles north, in Parkville.

j blatt 6:30 PM This activity seems more appropriate to a "playground / park" type setting, not a nature center

catherine Morris 6:31 PM Has GoApe ever looked at a potential site and said 'no'? If so, why? What would make GoApe decide a site is not appropriate?

Mary Jane Shanks 6:34 PM How did this idea come about? Who is asking for such an activity.

debbie bacharach 6:34 PM Why is the county doing this now when the Oregon Ridge Master Plan is in process and no decisions made about the Lodge or Nature Center area?

Mary Jane Shanks 7:35 PM Sounds like Marshy Point is the place for this.

debbie bacharach 6:40 PM What other properties are being looked at besides Oregon Ridge? I think the county taxpayers are entitled to know.

Donna D Neuworth 6:41 PM Since revenues from GoApe would go towards all County Parks and Rec, it does not make sense not include this in the Master Plan, among other reasons

Jeff Brazier 6:35 PM They have not been to Pearlstone as that looks like a camp and not something that could be done as schedule allows. They have been to Genesee Valley through a school event, but I don't think they are set-up as a "go when you want" location as it looks like Go Ape would be.

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 6:36 PM I believe there is a high ropes course at Leakin Park in West Baltimore and an Outward Bound.

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 6:37 PM What about Watkins Park in Prince Georges County? I heard Go Ape has a site there.....

Dr. Carol Newill 6:39 PM Ms. Johnson, are you saying you have already signed a contract with Go Ape?

Linda Davis 6:39 PM This installation should not be outside the Oregon Ridge Planning process.

Keith Rosenstie 6:39 PM Why in the world would you not include Go Ape in the Master Plan process?

debbie bacharach 6:40 PM What other properties are being looked at besides Oregon Ridge? I think the county taxpayers are entitled to know.

marsha mclaughlin 6:41 PM Why is this such a rush? Wait for the Oregon Ridge Master Plan!!!!

Donna D Neuworth 6:41 PM Since revenues from GoApe would go towards all County Parks and Rec, it does not make sense not (to) include this in the Master Plan, among other reasons

Mary Jane Shanks 6:41 PM That is good news to know other locations are being considered. Please go to one of the others.

Donna D Neuworth 6:42 PM Before you share info about the other sites to be considered, will you be doing outreach to those park users to get their input?

Nancy 6:42 PM Has go ape reviewed the sites?

Martha 6:45 PM Is Rec & Parks saying that Go Ape would not proceed at Oregon Ridge before considered as part of the master planning process?

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 6:46 PM Ms. Johnson, you worked for Prince Georges County. Did you work with Go Ape in PG County.

Ladan 6:59 PM I am arriving late to the meeting due to a work conflict. Can you let me know where I can listen to the recording? I'd like to hear GoApe's presentation. And I'm curious why the county is feeling this is a needed addition to the park? I have appreciated the wow factor of nature itself and would like to know

Mary Jane Shanks 7:00 PM Did Mrs. Johnson consult the County Naturalists about this idea. Has Mrs. Johnson visited Oregon Ridge and other Nature Parks to become familiar with their. goals?

Martha 7:01 PM Did Go Ape reach out to the County based on its survey or did the County reach out to Go Ape?

ssstai_000 7:03 PM Hard to decide to let Ape in without a specific site in the park.

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 7:06 PM Please address the Master Plan and how this project is related....

Andy Miller 7:10 PM But if it is decided that Oregon Ridge is the preferred site, will you wait until the Master Plan is complete to make sure this use of the park is consistent with the new Master Plan?

Kathy Lambrow 7:10 PM What was the impetus for even considering Go Ape in Oregon Ridge Park?

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 7:11 PM Why do we know about Go Ape at Oregon Ridge then? Doesn't make sense

Ralph Brown 7:12 PM My understanding was that Go Ape already evaluated Oregon Ridge and preferred that site. Is this correct?

Keith Rosenstiel: 7:12 PM An outcome of the Master Plan process might be a Go Ape like offering, but to make these decisions outside of that process, and BEFORE that process, makes no sense at all.

Linda Davis 7:13 PM What is the County's process for considering environmental impacts of a Go Ape installation?

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 7:13 PM Have you talked to their competitors?

Charlie Davis 7:13 PM What is the process and criteria that Baltimore County would use to choose the appropriate site for this activity?

Kathy Lambrow 7:14 PM What other sites are being considered? Wouldn't this be more suited to a Recreation Park vs. a Nature Park?

catherine Morris 7:14 PM +++Charlie Davis questions re criteria

Andy Miller 7:18 PM Two key questions have been asked multiple times already and have not been answered. First, will there be a followup public information meeting before any decision is made? and second, if it turns out that Oregon Ridge is the preferred site, will Rec & Parks wait to make a decision until after the Master Plan is completed in order to make sure this use of the park is consistent with the Master Plan? 7:24 PM Thanks for that answer.

Dr. Carol Newill 7:22 PM Please address the question about the County Executive's position or input on the question of Go Ape at Oregon Ridge.

catherine Morris: 7:25 PM Sounds like P&R is trying to find a place for GoApe. One way or another.

Donna D Neuworth 7:27 PM Good luck trying to find parking on a weekend at any of the County parks. It would be poor planning on the part of the County not to take make this part of any plan

gail meerdter 7:27 PM What other sites are you considering? Did go ape approach oregon ridge or vice versa? In other words, who initiated the idea of a go ape at oregon ridge? Thanks

Linda Davis 7:43 PM Would the County Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability be part of the environmental impact evaluation?

Keith Rosenstiel 7:44 PM A good competitor is Terrapin Adventures in nearby Savage MD. Better facility, more offerings, better safety record, more affordable price, and they didn't need to use a nature preserve.

Ralph Brown 7:47 PM Is the County exploring any other commercial companies as full time residences of our parks?

Dr. Carol Newill 7:50 PM The County Executive was elected to a significant degree related to his stated positions on the importance of the Environment. What has been his position or input on this Go Ape at Oregon Ridge?

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 7:54 PM Johnny O's stand? Do we know?

F2. Comments on aspects of Baltimore County law and regulations pertaining to installing a commercial development like Go Ape that uses County Park land and other resources, and infrastructure

Andy Miller 6:26 PM So are you saying that visitors to the park who are there to experience an undisturbed natural forest environment will not see or hear or experience any noise or visual intrusion on their experience of the forest? Also are you aware of the Painted Trees project in Oregon Ridge that raised numerous citizen complaints and led to a bill passed by the County Council requiring consultation with the director of

Environmental Protection and Sustainability on any project in the park that would affect trees? Have you seen those trees and if so what is your personal opinion of what was done there?

Carol Schreter 7:00 PM - Environmental Impact assessment needed? For what? Done yet? - Permits needed? From whom? For what? -Environmental impacts to be assessed? for what? Permits needed? For what? From whom? Need to consult with State DNR? Who at DNR?

Brian Fath 7:02 PM reiterating what Dr. Miller said earlier:

BALTIMORE COUNTY CODE

ARTICLE 30. - RECREATION AND PARKS

§ 30-1-201. - PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES.

(g) Damage to park property. A person may not damage, deface, destroy, injure, disturb, defoul, dump upon, in any way misuse or remove or vandalize any part of a park or any building, sign, equipment, or other park property.

(h) Disturbing or damaging wildlife or flora prohibited. A person may not, unless otherwise authorized by the Director, in consultation with the Director of Environmental Protection and Sustainability:

Andy Miller 7:44 PM In reference to the previous question, are the Go Ape representatives aware of the bill passed by the County Council requiring this for any activity that might affect the forest?

G. Concerns about Public Safety and Legal Liability Issues

Dr. Carol Newill 6:22 PM As a physician, I am of course concerned about safety, and as you know there have been deaths at Go Ape facilities. What was the equipment problem in May 2021 that led to the closing of 25 Go Ape sites in England while they worked on the problem?

j blatt 6:23 PM Where exactly would this be located in Oregon Ridge? And, from a liability perspective, what would the county financial liability be if there is an accident. Is the county held harmless?

Dr. Carol Newill 6:24 PM Very sadly, a woman died at the Delaware park location using Go Ape.

j blatt 6:25 PM Thank you. What were the implications of that accident for the park/state/county?

Mary Jane Shanks 6:27 PM I wonder about county liability as well. In the past the County has had accidents---employee disabled for life when a horse kicked him, a drowning that closed the swimming area --- If an accident happens from GoApe, chances are the County will suspend it.

Dr. Carol Newill 6:30 PM Please address the questions about safety as well as liability.

Mary Jane Shanks 6:32 PM How many accidents have occurred in your parks.

Mary Jane Shanks 6:42 PM How will the county respond should there be an accident?

Linda Davis 6:48 PM Liability –

- Death in 2016

<https://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/local/2016/09/27/operator-error-go-ape-fall-delaware-tina-werner/91134836/>;

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/how-mum-plunged-35ft-death-8710118>;

- Fall in 2018 <https://wjla.com/news/local/maryland-zipline-fall-man-shares-story>

- Injury May 2021:

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/go-ape-closed-injury-bracknell-adventure-park-b936985.html>;

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/go-ape-closed-injury-bracknell-adventure-park-b936985.html>

Dr. Carol Newill 6:48 PM I understand the equipment that failed in England was the harness.

Donna D Neuworth 6:49 PM There was a woman in DE GoApe who fell 35 feet to her death in 2016 per Fox news article--is this correct

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 6:52 PM What would happen to BC Parks and Rec if someone died?

Mary Jane Shanks 6:52 PM If there is an accident, the county would be sued along with GoApe. It is inevitable should an accident occur.

H. Concerns about financial arrangements between Go Ape and Baltimore County and others, and use of County personnel and amenities

catherine Morris 6:28 PM Can you address the financial arrangements with Oregon Ridge/Baltimore County should you locate here?

Dave Votta 6:31 PM Catherine, I believe a portion of every ticket sale goes to the county parks as well as other charitable conservation causes.

dejarrell 7:15 PM What kind of finances have other Go Ape sites generated?

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 6:43 PM How much will Go Ape Cost and how much will parks get? Please talk about traffic as well. What do workers get who work at Go Ape?

dejarrell 6:46 PM How much money will Rec & Parks generate from this partnership?

catherine Morris 6:47 PM please ask about the financial arrangements

Mary Jane Shanks 7:20 PM Who takes the reservations? Who collects the money? Nature Center Staff. Go Ape staff. Will the Nature Center building house staff for GoApe?

Dave Votta 7:28 PM What kind of charitable donations do you make to local conservation organizations?

gail meerdter 7:34 PM Does the park lease the land to go ape?

gail meerdter 7:48 PM How does the park benefit monetarily from go ape revenue?

I. Requests for specific facts about Go Ape and the plan for it on Oregon Ridge property, beyond the general description that was provided in the formal presentation

catherine Morris 6:22 PM Appreciate that you don't obstruct existing paths. Would facilities potentially be adjacent to existing trails?

Ralph Brown 6:22 PM Or go over trails?

Martha 6:23 PM How many acres are part of the course? Do

j blatt 6:23 PM Where exactly would this be located in Oregon Ridge? And, from a liability perspective, what would the county financial liability be if there is an accident. Is the county held harmless?

sstai_000 6:26 PM What is ACCT (Note: this question was asked by sstai 4 times)

Dave Votta 6:26 PM I believe they are planning for it to be in the high use area of the park near the band shell and ski slope which is already an existing use area of the park, especially with the annual festivals.

marsha mclaughlin 6:27 PM Can you show on a map where in Oregon Ridge you would propose to locate Go Ape? How many trees would be need to be removed?

Dave 6:28 PM We visited Go Ape in Delaware and had a blast! My kids liked it so much that we went back the next weekend. Would love to have one in Baltimore County. Which activities would be available?

James Curtis 6:28 PM How much clearing of the forest is required to set up the course.

Jacob Smith 6:33 PM If approved, how soon could Go Ape open in Baltimore County?

Keith Rosenstiel 6:33 PM What percentage of customers are repeat customers?

dejarrell 6:38 PM How many cars and busses need to be parked on week days and weekends? As for Oregon Ridge, where do you plan to park the vehicles?

sstai_000 6:42 PM Where is proposed area for 6:42 PM Go Ape and how many acres are needed?

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 6:43 PM How much will Go Ape Cost and how much will parks get? Please talk about traffic as well. What do workers get who work at Go Ape?

Dave Votta 6:46 PM What goes into site selection within the park? Do you conduct any Natural Resource Inventory surveys to select a site that offers the least amount of impact?

Joe Corcoran 6:47 PM What percentage of profits are donated to underserved community tickets?

Donna D Neuworth 6:54 PM Will you be adding ax throwing and other activities other than ropes crossing?

Jennifer Haire 6:56 PM Are all activities essentially above ground?

Mary Jane Shanks 6:57 PM There is very little parking on the nature side of the park. There is no where to install more parking. What happens when the Nature Center is having an event that requires all parking spaces?

Jessica 6:57 PM That sounds like quite a bit considering how busy the park already gets on nice days/weekends.

Mary Ryan 6:57 PM Currently on the weekends, the Nature Center parking areas are completely full.

to everyone 6:57 PM Would GoApe host corporations for example, challenge retreats?

Mary Jane Shanks 7:20 PM Who takes the reservations? Who collects the money Nature Center Staff. Go Ape staff. Will the Nature Center building house staff for GoApe?

dejarrell 7:21 PM If the parks have a big event, lacrosse splash, concert, haunted house, will GA shut down for the day?

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 7:23 PM Did Go Ape folks say up to 12 folks every 1/2 hour?

catherine Morris 7:23 PM let's be clear... They DON'T require reservations.

Donna D Neuworth 7:27 PM Good luck trying to find parking on a weekend at any of the County parks. It would be poor planning on the part of the County not to take make this part of any plan

gail meerdtter 7:34 PM Does the park lease the land to go ape?

Dr. Carol Newill 7:35 PM Are you saying that a building will be built in the forest? How big? Will there be a road to it? What about rest room access? Please describe the installation more completely. Thank you.

Ralph Brown 7:40 PM Are you saying that you would use existing trails at Oregon Ridge?

Daniel Golombek 7:40 PM What training is required for the staff?

Shannon Davis 7:41 PM tree pruning would be necessary and visitors to Go Ape create trails to watch the activity

Mary Ryan 7:44 PM GoApe at Rock Creek costs \$45 or \$65. Does that buy a half hour of time?

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 7:45 PM What about Go Ape's employee ownership program? would this apply to Oregon Ridge>

Deborah Spice Kleinmann 7:46 PM How much does staff make per hour? Insurance?

Corey Johns 7:46 PM If GoApe were to leave a location, what would the remaining impact be? If any.

J. Comments supportive of Go Ape in Baltimore County

Jacob Smith 6:03 PM I'm hearing positive things about Go Ape and excited to have them possibly come to Baltimore County. Looking forward to this meeting!

Jeff Brazier 6:26 PM As a lifelong resident of Baltimore County (40+ years) with two young boys, Covid has brought back the idea of being outdoors on a more regular basis. We have found ourselves going to parks that I never knew existed, which has been a welcome activity for our family. As you can imagine, although our boys are very active they are looking to do more than just hike in these parks and for the longest time, they have been looking for an adventure that Go Ape provides. As you may have seen, there is nothing like this for them to currently participate in without having to travel a long distance, which is not feasible for many. Having this in our backyard would allow everyone to continue to grow the appreciation of the outdoors that this could provide. I am hopeful that the county looks to bring in Go Ape for all the families in our county and look forward to bringing our boys on a regular basis.

Dave 6:28 PM We visited Go Ape in Delaware and had a blast! My kids liked it so much that we went back the next weekend. Would love to have one in Baltimore County. Which activities would be available?

Jacob Smith 6:32 PM I have 3 kids who will love this, personally looking forward to possibly having a location so close to home here in Baltimore County

Dave Votta 7:55 PM I think its a good idea to learn more about Go Ape, Oregon Ridge may not ultimately be the site but having activities like what Go Ape provides could be a catalyst for many of our young people to get into nature. A lot of young people are locked onto their screens so getting them out and in nature is a net positive.

K. Chat questions and comments not categorized

*Deborah Spice Kleinmann 6:07 PM Hello, Deborah "Spice" Kleinmann here. Chair of Greater Baltimore Group of the Sierra Club

*Mary Jane Shanks 6:38 PM You are correct Mr. Wadek

*Paulette Hammond 7:29 PM incompatible with...

*"Thank you" from Jessica: 7:35 PM, from Linda Davis 7:55 PM, Ladan 7:55 PM

*Molly Pickel 7:55 PM recparks@baltimorecountymd.gov

Respectfully,

Dr. Carol Newill, Dr. Brian Fath, Dr. Andy Miller for the CEQ Workgroup on the Go Ape plan in Oregon Ridge Park

May 18, 2022