

A Worthwhile Project should begin and stop gathering dust

by Janet Jagan

Recently there was, again, reference to the development of Urban Park, which has been on the agenda for a number of years.

At one stage, a proposal had been made and was on the road to being implemented, to use the area of Durban Park for government buildings. There were protests made and proposals that the area should, instead, be used as a public recreational center, mainly for sports facilities for the nearby low income area.

Out of this suggestion,

the Ministry of Housing prepared a "Project Initiative" which outlined plans to make use, early, of an initial ten acres of the approximately 39 acres of open space for the purpose of "providing the immediate communities, citizens of Georgetown and the country at large with sporting and recreational facilities that can be used at the local, regional and international levels."

This concept was put into phases, the first being to utilize 10 acres of the land, to begin in 2004. This phase would include land filling, clearing, leveling and drainage, then the construction

of a cycling track, courts for tennis, volleyball and basketball, and other items like fencing, public conveniences, etc.

Proposals to have cricket and football fields, jogging, children's playgrounds and even areas to provide space for steelband practice, picnic areas and other facilities have been made from time to time.

The area of Durban Park was once, the site of horse racing which was a popular sport at one time. Now, horse racing has moved to the rural areas and remains a popular sport there.

Unfortunately, despite the

plans which seem to have had the approval of central government and the Georgetown Mayor and City Council, nothing has been done yet to begin this project.

An editorial in the Guyana Chronicle over a year ago had this to say, and it is worth quoting: "We would like to urge that this project move forward. It should not require heavy funding. It is also possible that youths and sports groups could do voluntary work in leveling the fields, constructing fences, etc. It could be an admirable community project. Already young people are using the areas for football

and cricket.

It is also well to keep in mind the benefits accrued to the National Park which the People's Progressive Party Government converted, in the 1950s, from an elitist golf course and now used widely for walking, jogging, cricket, football, tennis and as a delightful picnicking spot.

It is certain that people will appreciate the transformation of the empty D'Urban Park lands into a facility that many, particularly our youths, can use and enjoy."

It is understood that this proposal has already received the approval of Cabi-

net, but for some unknown reason, has yet to be implemented.

Who can doubt the usefulness of this development of unused lands that can be converted, at relatively low cost, into usefulness, particularly to our urban youths who need outlets for their energy and desire to participate in sports activities?

As the Chronicle editorial, noted, a start could be made on a voluntary basis and perhaps financial inputs could come from the nation's Lottery Fund. Certainly a start should be made. The Project paper has been gathering dust for too long!