



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

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October 26, 2011

Pedro Park Meeting Notes (10/25/2011)

Meeting Location: Keys Café, Saint Paul, MN

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Attendees:

Design Advisory Committee: Pat Wolf, Julie Griffin, Tim Griffin, Marcus Young, Eric Anderson, Kisha Dixon, Pat Watkins, Carl Pedro, Jr., Marilyn Pitera, Bob Clough, Bob Spaulding, Bud Kleppe, Hayley Johnson, Julia Schrenkler, Andrew Schleck, Carol Hunn

Other: David Motzenbecker, Patricia Lindgren, Maureen Ramirez (Capital River Council) Marie Franchett (Saint Paul PED), Lucy Thompson (Saint Paul PED), Jody Martinez (Saint Paul Parks), Don Ganje (Saint Paul Parks), Anne Gardner (Saint Paul Parks)

Meeting #1 Goal:

- ***Review up-to-date project background information and discuss preliminary community ideas.***

- 1) Introductions - Jody Martinez welcomed the group and introduced the project. Individuals introduced themselves and who they represented. Two members of the Pedro family were able to attend (Marilyn (Pedro) Pitera and Carl Pedro, Jr.).
- 2) Project Overview- Jody Martinez gave an overview and goals of the project.
 - a. Project Goal- This project will develop a master plan and cost estimate for the phased development of critical parcels for a new downtown park within the block bounded by 10th, Robert, 9th, and Minnesota Street.
 - b. Meeting Goal- Review up-to-date project background information and discuss preliminary community ideas.
- 3) Design Advisory Committee and Design Process-
 - a. Jody Martinez discussed the guidelines for the design advisory committee process including the role, charge, and guidelines for the design advisory committee.
 - b. Jody requested a nomination or a volunteer to be the chair of the committee but none was decided
- 4) Project Schedule and Funding- Jody Martinez reviewed the proposed schedule and funding for the project anticipating a 6-12 month process. Funding for design phase is approved from the CIB 2009 and pending approval from the CIB 2012.



- 5) Parks system plans identify the following needs in the downtown area: Off-leash dog areas, Children's play areas, Public Art, Outdoor Amenities, and Trail connections to Bruce Vento, Swede Hollow, Across I-94, river parks
- 6) Project Background- Lucy Thompson reviewed the project background
 - a. The Fitzgerald Park Precinct Plan adopted in 2006 calls for a park at this location and a vision for the neighborhood as a mixed use, sustainable, human scaled neighborhood with multi-modal opportunities throughout.
 - b. The Park site is an important 'central green' that gives the community a place to gather and provide recreational opportunities for the burgeoning residential population in the neighborhood.
 - c. Central Corridor Light rail station at 10th and Cedar is in close proximity to the park
 - d. Penfield and Lunds construction is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2012 on the north side of the site across 10th street
- 7) Current Site Conditions and Land Ownership- Don Ganje
 - a. The block is divided into 7 parcels owned by three different entities (Donerly Inc., Beneficial, Union Gospel) plus the City owned Police Annex site and the parcel donated by the Pedro family
 - b. Current site use is for surface parking lots, childcare center, and police operations
 - c. The alley ROW includes overhead lines, catchbasins and utility easements
 - d. There is 16 feet of grade change from the south border to the north border as well as places of significant change in grade. Along the 10th street sidewalk, the site is 8' below grade on the other side of the chain link fence
 - e. Existing fences create a barrier to the site
 - f. Pedestrian connections to the west are important and a clear pathway delineation along 9th street from Minnesota to Cedar is needed
- 8) Pedro Park Boundary Presentation – Don Ganje
 - a. 9th street alignment:
 - i. The Fitzgerald Park Precinct Plan (as approved) calls for 9th street to be realigned to go back to the grid, creating a square block site for the park, eliminating the Union Gospel childcare and Naomi center, and creating a new development parcel at the corner of 9th and Minnesota St.
 - ii. As is, 9th street is angled and terminates in a cul-de-sac on the back side of MPR. Leaving 9th Street in its present location gives a larger park footprint and allows retention of the Union Gospel Childcare Facility.
 - iii. Realignment of 9th street as described in the precinct plan is costly and not favored by Public Works. Further discussion regarding the implications of realigning 9th street or leaving it as is are required.
 - b. Options for the Park Boundary
 - i. Parks suggests reconsidering the boundary of the park and presented four options (City Parcels, Half Block, L-Shaped, Full Block)
 - ii. In comparison with the size of other downtown parks, Pedro would be the largest at 2.5 acres if it was built as the full block size. In comparison, Mears Park is 2.1 acres and Wacouta Commons is 1.07 acres.
- 9) Pedro Park Boundary Presentation – Don Ganje
 - a. Suggestion to add a fifth option to the boundary options which is the precinct plan square block plan...but also have a plan to construct the park in phases.
 - b. Question: What is the tax base of the block (PARKS TO FOLLOW UP WITH ANSWER)

- c. Members of the Fitzgerald Park Precinct Planning Task force described how the full block plan came to be:
 - i. The planning task force settled on a full block and believed a half block where development would front on the park would result in a ‘privatized’ feeling
 - ii. The full block related more closely to the Penfield and Rossmor façades
 - iii. The full block seemed to give better connections to the LRT stop at 10th and Cedar
 - iv. By straightening 9th street, the planning process felt it improved the pedestrian experience and created a better development parcel and MPR was committed to creating a pedestrian park or connection through to Cedar
 - v. Minnesota street pedestrian bridge over I-94 is closing and there will not be a sidewalk on the bridge
- d. A comment on the realignment of 9th street is that it still terminates at the backside of MPR. Maybe a pedestrian walk could follow the realignment concept as a way of upholding the vision of the precinct plan and creating the direct pedestrian link.
- e. Greenspace can help build a tax base and be as beneficial as a new development (TPL lecture)
- f. Example of Mears park is that the businesses on the perimeter are more successful because of the activity in the park
- g. Parking is a concern for the surrounding businesses, especially with light rail construction and closed parking stalls QUESTION: How many parking spaces are there within the block now and around? (Parks to follow up on)
- h. Comments from the Union Gospel staff-
 - i. The Naomi Center is a place for transitional families
 - ii. At the Naomi Center, there are 33 adults and 50+ children plus it houses Executive offices and the Human Resources Dept.
 - iii. Residents can stay for 90 days-2 years with up to 4 children
 - iv. The Childhood Development Center accommodates about 127 children including 10% Naomi residents and 90% community children
 - v. There are issues with parking especially at graduation and for special occasions
 - vi. Very little access to greenspace is available for Naomi Center families and children
 - vii. Director is Ken Peterson (Parks to have a meeting with director to discuss future plans of Union Gospel)
- i. Discussion on what people would like to see in the park:
 - i. Consider a convertible street, either on 10th street or in the alley right of way extended through the site
 - ii. Field House concept- the Childcare center remains as the only building surrounded by park
 - iii. “Clone Mears Park”- characteristics that are appreciated: secluded, an oasis in the middle of the city, water element, event and performance space, ‘dark/exciting’ side at night
 - iv. Include event space and outdoor performance space for MPR and McNally Smith- consider including a raised stage area or an amphitheatre using the grades on the site
 - v. Pedro Family- a Garden with Fruit trees has been suggested in the past by Pedro Family. Carl Pedro, Sr. was an avid gardener and loved to garden and grow fruit.
 - vi. Include space for a community garden

- vii. Outdoor eating areas- places to sit in the shade and in the sun (consider Lund's deli)
- viii. Reference to Centennial Park in Atlanta- water element and performance space
- ix. Dog Run
- x. Open lawn
- xi. Bob brought a list of ideas and elements to include in the park from Central Towers renters association:
 - 1. a fountain
 - 2. a playground with slides, merry-go-round, swings
 - 3. tables and benches for parents to sit by the play ground and picnic tables
 - 4. a gazebo or a stage for entertainment
 - 5. a basketball court
 - 6. 1 or 2 tennis courts'
 - 7. a co-op project with the music school
- xii. Need for a transition park to make use of the Pedro Parcel- so that it can be used right away
- xiii. Suggestion to design the park as a masterplan and build it in phases.

10) Moving Forward – Don Ganje

- a. Suggestion to start the meeting off with a clear set of questions for the community to answer
- b. Request for a volunteer to be the chair person of the committee...
- c. Next proposed meeting is November 29, 2011 at Keys Café- 5:30-7:30pm

Notes by: Anne Gardner