

Como Regional Park Advisory Committee – August 10, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Como Play Area – Alice Messer, Parks Design:

Alice Messer discussed the Como Regional Park Play Area renovation project with the group. The play area adjacent to the West Picnic Grounds had previously been approved by the CIB (Capital Improvement Budget) Committee for 2011. Additional STAR funds became available through the City Council and the Como Play Area was considered due to the use it gets in the park and the fact that play area equipment is expensive. Alice has been assigned as the Project Manager for this project. Because the CRPAC is a committee that includes diverse representation from the nearby neighborhood as well as broader St. Paul and beyond, Alice thought this was the right group to be involved as a design task force. The group was generally supportive, but had some questions and suggestions:

- Add a bit of time to the agenda at meetings for this topic
- Be sure the play area is listed as an agenda item so members of the public who wish to attend may do so
- Include a couple of public meetings
- Consider a visit to the D-6 and D-10 meetings

Alice also added a couple of other bits of information to assure the group that input and feedback from the public would be encouraged:

- She has a survey that will be made available in a variety of ways, including on site at the Picnic Grounds, through our Parks Permit Office with renters, through e-mail groups that the District Councils have
- The project will have a web page that encourages comments
- The CRPAC will be encouraged to bring feedback to meetings from their respective group affiliations and community connections

Kathy will check-in with Alice. It is very likely that the CRPAC will be involved with this project, at least through preliminary design.

The new project will be in the same location as the existing play area. The project value reported by Alice is \$413,000, which includes design and construction costs.

Update on local issues:

- The Como Pool project is on track. Vandalism and theft reports have quieted down significantly since the July meeting.
- The \$7 million bonding request reported in the July edition of the Como Monitor is not cash the City has in hand. Rather, it was part of the City's legislative agenda this past session. Bonding requests must be entered very early – the June before the bonding year. Since 2012 is not a budget year for the State, this may not be debated for some time. If received, the funds would be used to continue the work of improving traffic and parking issues in the park, as per the recommendations in the Como Transportation Plan.
- The Shuttle saw its best weekend of the 2011 summer on August 5, 6, and 7. Saturday, August 6, the shuttle provided just over 1000 rides and on Sunday, the total was about 1200. We are capturing about 10% of the daily attendance on the shuttle and ridership is up about 20 % over last year, even though attendance at the Campus is down for 2011 due the challenging spring and early summer weather. The next several weeks encompass the challenging time of year when shuttle lots move around due to the Minnesota State Fair.
- SPPD reports that car break-ins are up in the park over the past few weeks. The crime ring responsible is very well organized. Volunteers who are part of the SALT Patrol (Seniors and Law Enforcement Together) are beginning to canvas the park and Police continue to work the case. Remind your friends

and family to lock their vehicles when visiting the park and either keep valuables with them, or keep them well-secured in a trunk.

Como Website Update:

- Meghan O'Hare provided a hand-out with a wish list for web page features. She included some updated material and asked the group to check off 3 or 4 additional improvements they would like to see. The group handed in the completed forms upon leaving. Meghan will make the changes and continue developing the Como Park pages.
- GoRamsey.org is a new interactive website that Ramsey County has developed with some state grant dollars connected to health and wellness. The site was developed in collaboration with Ramsey County Public Health and GIS staff from every city in Ramsey County. It launched only a couple of weeks ago. Saint Paul has been asked to complete bits of information that the site is missing, but all of our parks and trails are included. Meghan will thoroughly review this site and its features. Saint Paul will have the *GoRamseyCommunitates* button on its web page soon. This will incorporate many of the features the CRPAC was looking for and presents an exciting new search feature that will provide information for users about all of the Saint Paul Parks. Committee members were encouraged to check out the site.

Signage and Wayfinding:

Kimley-Horn staff facilitated a continuation of the discussion related to signage and wayfinding. Kimley-Horn was the consultant on the Como Transportation Plan. Their presentation included:

- Background information about the Como Transportation Plan and work of the committee related to traffic and parking issues, signage and wayfinding in the park
- Summary of the findings
- Summary of the recommendations
- Definition of wayfinding
- Examples of sign systems from Philadelphia and Boston

They concluded their presentation by outlining the process for moving forward:

- Identify the signage and wayfinding needs/deficiencies
- Develop a timeline for the project (funds must be spent by 12/31/12)
- Develop goals and an understanding of the hierarchy of signage
- ID the necessary locations for signs
- "Brand" the signage family
- Get buy-in from stakeholders
- Develop a budget for the signage/wayfinding plan – prioritize phasing
- Start building!

Parks will need to secure a vendor to assist with this process. A vendor will be selected through an RFP process that will begin shortly.

Additional comments from the CRPAC members:

- Branding will be very important, especially for consideration throughout the system
- We need to decide what is important for people to find
- Autos and pedestrians may need different signage
- Consider the connection between wayfinding and parking strategies
- There will be ways to incorporate technology into the plan and for the park users
- Connect the graphics on the web pages to the brand of the signs

The Kimley-Horn presentation materials are included on the website.

CRPAC members in attendance:

Glenn Barron
Trieste Brown
Tom Dapper
Nick Eoloff
Paul Kolias
Kathy Korum
Dan Marckel
Kelly Mitchell
Randy Quale
Jess Rosenfield
Mark Ross
Elizabeth Stiffler
Keith Wietecki
Jim Henriksen (D-10 alternate)

Absent:

Lynn Gallandat
Steve Grans