



MEETING NOTES

CITY OF SAINT PAUL

MEETING DATE: August 13, 2013

LOCATION: Nova Classical Academy

ATTENDING: Emily Shively, John Yust, Gary Brueggemann, Manual Cervantes, Scott Olson, Kent Petterson, Paula Faughender, Martin Schieckel, Bill Driver, Jennifer Verbrugge, JoAnna Craighead, Tonya Johnson- Nicholie, Alice Messer, Adam Robbins, Dave Bredemus, Brian Bloomfield, Bob Fossum, Betty Moran, Kelly Mitchell, Liz McMann, Lucy Thompson, Diane Voyda, Jerry Rothstein, David Cargo, Edie Meissner, Kathy Hoffmann, Julie Andrew, Shawn Devine, Jon Beck

NOT IN ATTENDANCE: Deborah Rose, Karin Misiewicz, Stephanie Vagle, Pete Regnier, Don Ganje, Rory Stierler, Halle O'Falvey

NOTES BY: Alice Messer, September 3, 2013

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

Emily Shively opened up the meeting.

- Emily opened up the meeting, went through meeting agenda, explained meeting format and held brief introductions.

Recap of Open House by Alice Messer.

- Alice provided brief recap of Open House and comments received at Open House events and summarized major plan elements and preferred concepts. These included:
 1. Active recreation on the north side
 2. More passive recreation on the south side
 3. Connections to park
 4. Need for restrooms and trailheads on both sides of the park
- Prior to presenting master plan, Alice explained a few design modifications to the concept plans. These included:
 1. Relocating multi-use athletic field to be parallel with Adrian Street. This maintains existing storm water infrastructure already in place and pulls athletic field away from edge of Victoria Way.
 2. Inclusion of bird habitat south of RR trestle. To be designed in conjunction with storm water requirements on south side of park.
 3. Relocation of community gardens close to intersection of Victoria Way and Adrian Street.

Presentation on draft Master Plan by Alice Messer

Alice Messer presented draft Master Plan. Plan features include:

- Water plaza demarking entrance into park at Victoria and Adrian Street. Sets the tone for importance of storm water onsite.
- Re-circulating storm water stream that collects storm water from Victoria Way, Nova/Parks parking lot and proposed park features. Water feature is constant source of water. Flows into existing wetland.
- Proposed picnic shelter with restrooms, bread oven and fire place located in center of site. Becomes central gathering point in park. Is centrally located to play area, water feature, community gardens and multi-use athletic field.
- Multi-use athletic field located off Adrian Street. Field large enough for high school soccer, football, lacrosse and baseball.
- Community gardens proposed by intersection of Adrian and Victoria Way. Good access for Mississippi Market and close to water and restrooms.
- Boardwalk through wetland. Boardwalk becomes divide between open water wetland and shrub carr wetland. Open water to be used in winter for skating and shrub carr wetland great for bird habitat.
- Small amphitheater that overlooks wetland.
- Creation of moist soil cells that connected to existing wetland on south side of park. Creates planted buffer to Twin City Tile and also provides bird habitat.
- Trails create loops on south side that meander through native plantings. Combined bike/ped trail along edge of bluff with trailhead/interpretive signage opportunities. Trails extend down to the Mississippi River and provide connections to Crosby Regional Park.
- Trail connection over ravine providing views down to river and access to lower part of the site.
- Flexible mown turf open space on south side. Allows for community pick-up games and un-programmed play.
- Picnic shelter/restrooms/overlook and canoe/kayak storage proposed on south side. Parking lot proposed.
- Overlook along combined pedestrian/bike trail with views of Mississippi River.
- Trail connection to Sam Morgan Regional Trail and neighborhood at Otto Avenue.

Alice presented precedent images illustrating what plan elements could look like.

Alice presented drawing illustrating trail distances within park. Also, briefly presented larger trail connections from Victoria Park to downtown, Highland Park and other existing bike networks.

Questions and comments from the Committee

Meeting opened up for comments and questions from Committee members. Committee members allowed 3 minutes to speak. Each committee member was given the opportunity to comment or pass. Comments and questions received were:

Emily Shively – Question regarding future involvement of Committee after development of Master Plan. Response: Future design input on picnic shelters, restroom, play area,

but will depend on timeframe for implementation. If within 2 years will re-engage the Committee for design input of shelters and play area. But if longer, then have to connect with Committee and see if still interested.

Tonya Johnson- Nicholie – Stated the Mike Hahm stated at a Federation meeting that he would abide by Task Force and design process. Is concerned with the water feature being not kept when it was not in any design before now. Doesn't think that six bridges is the right 'front door' for the park. Feels like draft master plan is concept C which did not get the positive feedback that options A and B did. This version splits the active space between north and south side. Synthetic turf has not been discussed as a group. People she talked to thought that is wasn't on the table. Synthetic turf proposed and not comfortable with synthetic field. Concerned with process.

Adam Robbins – Passed.

Lucy Thompson – Passed.

Brian Bloomfield – Really likes concept and feels like it pulls it all together. Felt master plan reflected A and B more than C. One multi-use athletic field on north side and thrilled to share and not big deal to cross the street. Like water idea and have water movement onsite. Like community garden. Believe south side under developed. Impressed with plan and pulled a lot of elements together. Nova is thrilled.

Bob Fossum – Likes the amount of water in the master plan. Commented on ability to manage storm water better with artificial turf than natural turf for such high demand on field space which would need to be aerated and fertilized if natural turf. Know what you are getting with artificial turf.

Manuel Cervantes – Feels like is similar to plan B with open fields for any kind of use on south side. Likes design and thinks looks good.

Bill Driver – Multi-use athletic field to be shared by Nova and the community. Commented on natural turf not being able to sustain natural turf and field would be unusable within a year.

Liz McMann – Overjoyed and feels that plan looks gorgeous with water flowing through site. Like community gardens by the picnic shelter and parking accessible. Would like natural turf, but doesn't like need to fertilize.

Kent Petterson – Lot to like in the plan. Still work to be done. Parking data needs to be figured out. Connectivity of near and far trail connections. Feels illogical to not have grass on athletic fields. Need for two entrances into park and Otto entrance has been de-emphasized. On the right track, but get closer with detail on bathroom and shelters.

Gary Brueggeman – Concerned with turf on the south side and would like as natural as possible. Like to see limestone used in park. Asked about overlook by Twin City Tile building. Statement about can't having it all and willing to make a trade off on synthetic turf with reality of use on field. Liked trail mileage. Like to see water explored on south side.

Dave Bredemus – Would like south side to remain passive and take advantage of view of St. Paul. Feels plan is a compromise from 4 soccer fields to 3 and concerned about access for neighborhood use. Feel is a mistake to go in direction of draft master plan. Feels process is frustrating and no give and take.

Jennifer Verbrugge – Thinks great idea and likes water element as similar to Mears Park. Likes the boardwalk idea. Mown turf area allows for playing tag, kite flying and need space to play. Concerned with bread oven. Would like to see public art incorporated into site with inter-active climbable art that ties into community. Feels master plan is concept B, not C. Was concerned about having small children in close proximity to the bread oven. (See comments from David Escargo below for response.)

Diane Voyda – Diane filled in for Karin Misiewicz from Parks Operations. Commented on state of natural turf fields within park system and need for artificial turf as site with high demand.

Martin Schieckel – Feels master plan more like concept 1 or 2 than 3. Views from bluff not great because overgrown along bluff. Stronger connection to river with purchase of Texaco property. Stonebridge development built right up to edge of parking lot. Explore trail connection from backside of development. Is not expert on water and synthetic fields and will defer to those who work with it.

John Yust – A number of things to like and a lot to find missing. Relationship to Mississippi River is limited. Worked hard to connect to river and feels overlook is premier spot to develop. Commented that would not carry canoe down the bluff. Like to see bicycle and trail connections to 35E, Shepard Road and Highland. Still upset about overlook and potential for spectacular relationship. Wants bread oven at overlook and not picnic shelter. Not in favor of multi-use fields with fencing. Not in favor of synthetic turf and doesn't want flat plane that could be converted to hockey/soccer fields.

Scott Olson – Concerned with long term maintenance cost of maintaining water on north side. Park needs to age well without a lot of maintenance costs. Feels upkeep on south side with mown lawn too much upkeep for the City.

Paula Faughender – Feels soccer fields are back on the table. Would like less access from Victoria Street due to traffic concerns. Feels community is already using and enjoying the park. Would like to see Committee be involved until the park is open and wants to stay involved until the end. Wants a successful park and due best job to enjoy. Would like more natural state to south side with no lights.

Questions and Comments where then heard from members of the public.

David Escargo – Commented on bread ovens not wanting heat to leave the oven because then they are ineffective. The outside of the ovens should not be hot to the touch.

Jerry Rothstein – Feels like he could spend the day in Victoria Park exploring. Opportunity for social interaction at bread oven with its location within the park. Feels like south side is similar to open meadow in Crosby and enjoys this space. Overall feels that it is a positive plan.

Julie Andrew – Concerned with parking and traffic on south side. Stonebridge is committed to continued discussions with City on overlook and making it a special place. Comment on public art in park.

Betty Moran – Passed.

Edie Meissner – Sad about distrust in process and feel like not being heard by City. Thinks that the connection to Montreal and the residents to the southwest is ignored.

Kelly Mitchell – Loves the plan with all the opportunities to walk, hike within backyard of neighborhood. Wants her neighborhood to be a place for families to live and park will help. Excited by the idea of having a family reunion in the park and never thought that possible

Resident – Happy fields are not on south side. Feel pressure for playing fields and concern with having open green space and not be a place where nets will go up.

Shawn Devine – Agrees with Gary on give and take necessary with process. Plan looks great on paper, but will take 20 years for trees to be that large. Would like to get in writing that south side never be programmed.

JoAnna Craighead – Echoes Paula's comments.

Jon Beck – Feels like limited parking and would like parking study to be looked at so parking not overflow into neighborhood. Feels that the Stewart Ave. entry is under designed, especially for pedestrians.

Alice Messer responded to the following comments:

1. Parks would look into a parking study for the park
2. The south side of the park needs people in it to feel safe. All native grass on south side is not an option.
3. Alice clarified statement about bridges crossing water feature. Misspoke in presentation as not all crossings over water feature would be bridges. Envisions

large limestone blocks. Also, could imagine use of limestone in creation of water feature and feels limestone is an important element in the design.

4. Agrees with comment on need to emphasize entrance into park from Otto.
5. Question to John Yust on need for more trail connections as feels a lot of connections provided to larger St. Paul. Also, asked question about canoe storage at base of bluff because John previously stated that he would not store a boat down by the river. Alice to look at mid-bluff storage options that out of floodway.

Tonya added that the Federation has asked the City to do traffic counts for Victoria, Stewart and Canton after Nova is back in session for a baseline for traffic through the neighborhood. Then once the apartments are full we can look at how traffic patterns change, and again when the park opens.

Additional time remained and discussion continued regarding plan.

Brian Bloomfield - Commented on some committee members distrust regarding the design process. Brian encouraged Committee members to carefully consider if the issue is the process or if it is that they are not getting what they want.

Kent Petterson - Commented on Brian's statement and said we need to finish the process and do it well. Getting close, but not done yet.

John Yust - Loss of Island Station resulted in mistrust with Parks. Great River Passage is focused on the river and we are ignoring it.

Scott Olson - Commented on mown open space and who would use it as feels Minnesotan's will not sit in the middle of open space; they inhabit the edges.

Bill Driver – Question on relationship between Nova and the City for use of field.

Brian Bloomfield- Responded that Nova rents athletic space across the City.

Dave Bredumus – Stated that he would like to see the contract for permitted use of the site.

Next Steps:

Review draft Master Plan after comments heard from meeting and rework plan as needed.

Next Meeting: September 17, 2013 at Nova Classical Academy from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Please contact Alice Messer at 651-266-6412 if any items are missing from the meeting notes or

items were listed incorrectly.