MEETING NOTES

CITY OF SAINT PAUL

MEETING DATE: September 17, 2013
LOCATION: Nova Classical Academy
ATTENDING: Emily Shively, John Yust, Gary Brueggemann, Scott Olson, Kent Petterson, Martin Schieckel, Bill Driver, Jennifer Verbrugge, JoAnna Craighead, Tonya Johnson- Nicholie, Alice Messer, Adam Robbins, Pete Regnier, Don Ganje, Rory Stierler, Halle O'Falvey, Brian Bloomfield, Bob Fossum, Betty Moran, Kelly Mitchell, Liz McMann, Lucy Thompson, David Cargo, Edie Meissner, Julie Andrew, Jennifer Botz, Gregory Bohen, Thomas Frawley, Jane McClure, Dan Pederson

NOT IN ATTENDANCE: Deborah Rose, Karin Misiewicz, Stephanie Vagle, Manual Cervantes, Dave Bredemus, Paula Faughender

NOTES BY: Alice Messer, September 30, 2013

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

Tonya Johnson-Nicholie opened up the meeting.

- Tonya opened up the meeting, went through meeting agenda, and explained meeting format.

Recap of Mtg #6 by Alice Messer.

- Alice provided a brief recap of Mtg #6. She explained the draft master plan highlighting the reasons for selection of the proposed multi-use field location, identifying storm water crossings options as well as showing precedent images and trail loops created within Victoria Park.

Council Member Thune presented accessible playground idea to committee. He is trying to find a home for an accessible playground and asked committee to consider Victoria Park.

- Council Member Thune and Council Member Tolbert have been working on identifying a site for this type of playground in the city.
- Response from Alice Messer: At master plan level, a playground has been identified by the multi-use athletic fields. When funding is received for playground construction, a separate task force group will be developed and the idea of accessible playground will be discussed at that time.

Committee members broke out into three groups to check-in on draft master plan with established Goals and Objectives for Victoria Park.

Each group had 15 minutes to review assigned Goals and Objectives organized by "Connect", "Enhance" and "Activate". Groups reported back to Committee with summary of discussion.

- Connect Group:

    - Views off bluff missed – be nice to see river, Lilydale on other side of river
    - View of ravine from bridge as visual connection
    - Provide more eyes into Crosby
    - Pull back trail along sandy bank of Mississippi River to higher ground. Think about high water/low water parks in St. Paul, seasonal change
    - Enhance tunnel entry under Shepard Road for safety
    - Provide snow shoeing paths to Crosby
    - South side is a different condition for storm water and look at explaining storm water treatment differently (above ground vs. below ground treatment)
    - Did not talk about flyway, but did discuss birds using sandstone for nesting; wetland interpretation
    - Currently stuck with railroad
    - Views of the bluff from below are important
- Enhance Group:
    - Have achieved all 5 areas at master plan level of design
    - Need to protect bluff from erosion
    - Important to get good soil onsite
    - Need to make recommendation on how much of the design needs to relate the site Dakota pre-settlement history. Is history a theme, idea or interpretation? Maybe reflect in pavilion design, education/interpretation kiosks
    - Show storm water treatment on south side
- Activate Group:
    - Providing variety of recreational options for all ages, all abilities and all seasons is reflected in design
    - Explore idea of "pathway to play" – smaller child play area and adult exercise areas dispersed along a trail vs. in one area
    - Natural circuits happen along pathway and do not need plastic equipment, but use natural materials
    - Interpret area through public art
    - Canoe/kayak storage – have storage at top of bluff, but also explore smaller locker closer to river above flood plain
    - Seasonal use of benches – place small roof over benches to keep snow off in winter
    - Start to incorporate benches along trails as well as defined picnic space on south side. Indicate how far apart benches are located.

Alice discussed Follow-Up items. Refer to presentation materials for graphic illustration of follow-up items. Committee members asked to vote via dots on certain follow-up items, Green dot means they like an image. Red dot means they did not like an image.

- Follow-up items included:
    - Parking comparison
        - Discussed parking ratios of Highland Park and Eastside Heritage

Park and related how site compares parking ratios.

- Otto/Shepard Road and Otto/Stewart intersection
  - Presented further detail on Otto Ave. redesign with on-road bike lane and sidewalk. Included connection to existing overlook along Sam Morgan trail and proposed stair connection down bluff as outlined in Great River Passage.
- Connections to trail facilities
  - Provided map with larger trail connections and enlarged view along Montreal Avenue
- More emphasis on Mississippi River
  - Provided excerpts from Great River Passage that depicts access and improvements along Mississippi River. Includes fishing pier, riverwalk using existing booms and trail connections to top of bluff.
  - One green dot placed on riverwalk utilizing existing booms.
- General parameters on shelter and restroom design
  - Had meeting attendee's complete exercise to define picnic shelter and restroom facilities. 23 people completed and the summary of results concludes there is a preference for 6-8 tables on north and for the south side to have a clustered facility. Within the shelter there was a high preference for BBQ grills and separate single tables. Medium priority for a fire place and kitchen space. Low priority for bread oven.
  - Tally of exercise results included at end of meeting notes.
- Integration of public art into plan
  - Possibilities to be inspired from migratory flyway, historical use of site, integrated into landscape and/or intergrated into structure.
  - Two green dots on inspiration from migratory flyway
  - One green dot on integrating art into landscape
- Historical elements of limestone
  - Numerous ways to use limestone in master plan.
  - One green dot placed on storm water
  - One green dot placed on use in amphitheater
  - One green dot placed on use in seating
- Funding possibilities
  - Presented possible funding options that were organized under Water Quality, Natural Resources, Recreation and City of Saint Paul Funds. See presentation materials for full listing.
  - Question in regards to funding status from remediation efforts. HRA has spent approximately $2.3 million of $5 million to date.
  - Additional funding source suggested by Rory and included Alternative Transportation Fund managed by National Park Service. Cargill Foundation was also cited as another option by Kent.
  - Liz McMann indicated that Mississippi Market is interested in

sponsoring the bread oven.

- Remediation update
  - Martin provided handout on FAQ's about remediation and provided update on progress.
  - Anticipate remediation to be completed by end of 2014 or early 2015. Site will then be turned over to Parks.

Meeting opened up for comments by Committee. Committee asked to comment on major park elements and process to date.

Pete Regnier – Questioned if trails will be separated down to river where steep grade exists. Alice responded that site constraints of river bluff will not allow space for separated trails. However, signage and stripping to define pedestrian and bike use along trail will help define space. Similar to that installed along Ohio Street for Cherokee Regional Trail.

Jennifer Verbrugge – Commented on how she liked design. Felt process was respectable and thinks everyone is getting what they wanted. She is excited to see plan get implemented.

Scott Olson – Program is fantastic. Concerned with bread oven as heard that bread oven at Silverlake Park was discontinued and would like to learn about what happened.

Bill Driver – Youth are looking for more opportunities and there were more opportunities earlier, but still appreciates active space.

Halle O'Falvey – Likes native plant materials because birds and wildlife have a place to live and eat. Make sure plant selections do well and maybe involve the community in removing buckthorn.

Liz McMann – Excited about ability to build community within space by setting up areas for people to gather and use park with community gardening and cooking in park. Happy with how plan looks and excited to see art integrated into plan elements.

Kent Petterson – Looking forward to specifics of plan. Would like to see more water on south side. Not convinced that athletic field is in the right location. Feels Montreal and Adrian is the entrance into the park. May need to add signage on West 7th to direct people to the park. Troubled by bridge over ravine on south side. Work with Stonebridge for strong easement and emphasis off Otto Avenue.

Gary Brueggeman – Echo's Kent's comments regarding entrance on Montreal. Like to see more water on south side. "Limestone, limestone, limestone." Include history on south side. Parking is necessary evil and explore ways to lower parking lot and hide. Re-endorse Council member Thune's accessible playground idea; destination for seniors and children.

Martin Schieckel – Nova parking lot to be used by park users as well and was intentionally planned for shared parking (has 86 parking spaces). Develop ideas to utilize Texaco property as connection to Crosby Regional Park. Incorporate access to that area into design.

John Yust – Not comfortable with water and multi-use field. Like to see two elements flipped. Troubled by depth of water feature (looks terrible now – too much like a holding pond for water and deep ditch) and would like to be closer to Mears Park scale. Like to see more water on south side. Pleased with looking at connections to Mississippi River and incorporation of Great River Passage elements. Like to see canoe locker at base of bluff because will not portage down the hill (explore location above flood plain so boats would not need to be moved during high water). Reinforce interest in Stonebridge easement. Like to see south side less flat with more terrain and sledding hill. Mentioned the High Line bird houses. Raise the bar with public art- Andy Goldsworthy type installations.

Bob Fossum – Happy with process and feels scale of water feature like Mears Park is appropriate for storm water on north side. Explained that existing storm water infrastructure is a way to manage existing water onsite and final intent is much smaller in scale and accessible to public not the industrial scale it is now.

Brian Bloomfield – Likes process. Able to incorporate a lot of ideas into plan. If Parks is committed to building a usable athletic field, then wants it to be something Nova can use and need to look at artificial turf. Water is lovely on the north side. Most excited about robust and lively community that will develop from park and ability to have something beautiful to look at from building.

Lucy Thompson – Been involved in the process since development of area and has seen it evolve from the original small park proposal to the large area it is now. Having the opportunity for public features within the neighborhood is a great asset and cool to be at this point. Conversations with Stonebridge will continue. Able to help identify funding opportunities to make the park happen as public spaces add value to public development.

Rory Stierler – Impressed with process as every group has their own interest in park and plan represents all interests; good blend of ideas and interests. National Park Service perspective is that the bluff is emphasized as an overlook and migratory flyway; birds are already there and plan will provide even more for them. Lighting along bluff was removed. Trail connections are great and Great River Passage elements along river are great. Possible opportunity to interpret paleontology with limestone/sandstone along trail to the river.

Adam Robbins – Commented on views from bluff edge. Not as easy as getting rid of buckthorn. Would need to remove trees to create viewing opportunities. Entire length of bluff is too long to manage and encourage specified viewing opportunities and not vistas

along the entire bluff as too much to manage. Some river views might only be available during winter seasons.

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

Dan Pederson – Likes mown turf open space on south side to play hurling. Also likes flexibility of open space on south side to move around space if being used by community members. Great to have spaces to allow that to happen.

Tom Frawley – Seeing plan all coming together and well done.

Public – Had question about how plan was taken into the community and developing a survey or focus group of people who will truly use the park. Concerned the committee is not representative of community. Flexible open space is good. Suggesting doing a survey to get broader input.

Public – Plan looks fantastic. Lives on West 7th Community Center and commented on turf to be used on athletic field. Likes open space at community center and kids use to play football, lacrosse and it is all good fun.

JoAnne Craighead – Excited about plan and hopes it is done soon.

After close of meeting; Kent Petterson submitted the following questions/comments about proposed Victoria Park Master Plan. City response shown in *italics*.

1. Do we have basic principles to guide our conclusions? *Yes, see Goals and Objectives.*
2. One of the reasons the multi-use playing field was preferred more to the east was the existence of the sewer manhole. Where is the manhole in relation to the multi-use field? *The manhole is located within in the field. A manhole cover will have to be designed which will be integrated into the turf.*
3. Why does the plan not show access for the less able and handicapped to the river bottom? *The plan provides ADA access from Sam Morgan Regional Trail connection to the edge of the river under Shepard Road. The existing river bluff makes it structurally impractical to design a trail at an accessible grade.*
4. Why is so much water shown on the north active use area and so little in the south passive use area of the park? *The north side of the Victoria Park is responsible for treating storm water from Victoria Way and the shared use parking lot. The south side of Victoria Park will treat storm water that is collected on site as well as proposed impervious surfaces.* Does artificial turf require additional water area provision? *No.*
5. Have there been discussions with Stonebridge Development about the easement to describe Advisory requested features in the easement? When will specifics be available? *The City of Saint Paul is waiting for Stonebridge Development to present a site plan for their proposed development. Stonebridge is aware of the desire for an easement and wants to work with the City to secure.*

6. Will there be two entrances to the Park? Is an entrance near Sholom/Mississippi Market the more effective and visible public access point from West 7th? *There are 3 entrances into Victoria Park. Otto and Shepard Road, Victoria Way and Adrian Street, and Montreal and Adrian Street.*
7. Will we have a discussion of the pros and cons of artificial turf and protective fences? Who made the decision to add those expensive items to the park budget? *Artificial turf has been discussed due to the high use anticipated on one multi-use field. Fencing is required for safety reasons to prevent users and balls from running into adjacent streets, and interfering with other park users.*
8. Have we determined that the RR tracks will be considered dangerous? If so, will they be fenced? *The rail road tracks are currently not fenced within Victoria Park or the surrounding neighborhood. Parks is not suggesting fencing of the tracks. This recommendation would have to come from the railroad.*
9. Do the contours and spaces of the park determine program uses, or does the program use determine the contours and spaces designed into the park? *They work in tandem with each other.* Do we have a narrowed down proposed list of park activities? *Yes. See Goals and Objectives.*
10. Why are bridges of little purpose that cost money shown on the plan? Did we even discuss a bridge at the bluff edge? *Bridge was proposed as element to connect people from top of ravine to lower area below overlook. Bridge is an interesting way for people to view river ravine from above if they are not able or willing to walk down to the bottom of the bluff.*
11. Endorse Dave Thune concept.

Next Steps:

Staff will refine the plan to add more detail and the final master plan will be presented at Mtg. #8. Prioritization exercise to occur so as to assist Parks in pursuing funding and implementation of master plan.

Next Meeting: October 29, 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.

9/18/2013

Picnic Shelter Exercise Summary

	High	Medium	Low
Fire place	7	**9**	6
Kitchen space	3	**10**	8
Single tables	**12**	6	3
BBQ grills	**10**	9	2
Bread oven	5	5	**10**
	2-4 tables	6-8 tables	12-15 tables
North side	3	**11**	4
South Side	7	**10**	3
Single facility	8		
Clustered facility	**11**		