



March 30th, 2021

OPEN HOUSE MEETING MINUTES

Victoria Park Multi-Use Athletic Field, 852 Thurston St, Saint Paul MN

Virtual Meeting held on Microsoft Teams, 6:30pm to 7:30pm Tuesday, March 30th 2021

Translation services available, please email mary.norton@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Attendees:

Mary Norton- SPPRD Landscape Architect, Project Manager
Brett Hussong SPPRD Lead Landscape Architect
Andy Rodriguez – SPPRD Recreation Services Manager
Adam Robbins – SPPRD Natural Resources Supervisor
Christian Rovn - Athletic Director, Nova Academy
Brian Singer
Katheryn Hoffmann - Resident
Josh Ortiz – Resident, Minnesota Twins Community Fund
Rob Spence –St. Paul Blackhawks
Tanya Beck – District Council Representative
Tonya Johnson-Nicholie – Co-chair during Master Plan
Tony Molaro
Halle O'Falvey - Resident

RESOURCES:

- Meeting Slides: <https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Victoria%20Park%20Presentation%20Slides%20-%20Meeting%203.pdf>
- Meeting Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKkgDx2G9jE>

MEETING NOTES:

Presentation (Mary)

Mary mentioned the meeting is recorded and introduced parks staff. Mentioned this is last of three meetings and FAQ would be developed after meeting.



Mary discussed typical City project process and balancing of the needs citywide. Reviewed the process for Victoria Park, the Master Plan engagement and formal approval of the plan. Shared where the City is at in planning and design for the athletic field as one of the next projects to be implemented in the Master Plan. Shared an overview of the Master Plan and generally how the park is divided into active and passive recreation spaces as well as areas that have taken next steps in either planning, design, or construction since the Master Plan was completed. Discussion about how next projects are selected from the priority list based on strategic funding opportunities and system-wide recreation needs.

Reviewed project composition and evolution of the site for Victoria Park. Shared information on why synthetic athletic turf fields are being implemented here to provide a high-quality field that is durable, low-maintenance, and accessible to meet a demand that exceeds availability system-wide.

Overview provided of the design and construction budget and discussion on how the bidding will be approached with a base project and bid alternates depending on how the cost comes back. Then there was review of the latest concept plan at a site-level, sharing information on what would be included as the 'base' design and the 'advanced' elements or bid alternates. Site characteristics would include natural plantings outside of a mown buffer to allow the field to be surrounded with native and pollinator-friendly vegetation. Site furnishings would be selected for durability and compatibility to system-wide elements for maintenance.

A lighting study was shared to illustrate the illumination on surfaces outside of the field. Illumination from the field would meet or slightly increase the footcandles that exist currently from street lights. Images of fixtures were also shared, showing a comparison of a field set in a wooded context that maintains dark sky and the cutoff shield of lights to minimize glare. Lastly, the parking study was shared to discuss capacity of on-street spaces to meet a maximum need.

Overview of the project timeline, meeting engagement with District Council and reconvening with Design Advisory Committee. Status of the project currently is in final design and will continue towards bidding and construction late spring and early summer, 2021. This Open House is the last of the public meeting series, but people who are interested can stay engaged through the project website, or subscribe for regular updates. Updates will be posted as the project moves through construction. Next the meeting moved to open conversation for a group discussion. Questions from community members and meeting chat are below.

Group Discussion Questions:

(Katheryn Hoffmann) Regarding Lights: The Bell Museum has lights that do not reflect upward, is that what we're expecting here? If so, that is what we'd want to adhere to and follow the dark night sky. Also would like to receive updates and newsletter sent to her.

A: Unsure specifically of the lights at the Bell, but yes with advancement in technology, field lighting has come a long way. We are anticipating using lights that are cutoff fixtures that direct light down to the field,



and shield the light from above. A higher pole also means we are able to control the placement of light much more, keeping the sky dark and reducing spill. We would also design to meet the [International Dark Sky Association \(IDA\) Design criteria](#) for community-friendly sport lighting.

(Christian Rovn) Recommends baseball due to neighborhood demand. What is the largest dimensions, you'd need 230' for a full soccer field? Is there potential for a mound underneath?

A: We generally use portable mounds, but we can consider a built-in mound during design phase. The field is sized approximately 360' long (120 yd.) x 225' (75 yd.). Elliot Park turf field was shown as it is a comparable community park, full-size soccer field.

(Josh Ortiz) Opportunity to add that this would be a great community asset for all sports (soccer, baseball)

(Tonya Nicholie)

Would there be restroom facilities near the field?

A: Yes, that is part of the Master Plan. We are currently applying for a DNR grant for a Restroom/Shelter building in a couple weeks. If we are successful, we will know in Fall 2021, which would give potential for construction in 2022. In the meantime, we would place portable restrooms onsite until a facility is constructed.

MEETING CHAT:

[6:42 PM] Rob Spence (Guest)
RESTROOM!!! YAY!!!

[6:42 PM] Rob Spence (Guest)
... not sarcastic.

[6:43 PM] Kathryn Hoffmann
Any more talk of changing the name of the park to reflect the quarry history?

[6:45 PM] Tanya Beck
I'm curious, too, Kathy. I fear that the park has been so long in the making that it is forever to be known as Victoria Park. I think Quarry Farm Park was the other name I heard a few years back.

[6:45 PM]
Tonya Nicholie (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

[6:46 PM] Hussong, Brett (CI-StPaul)



@Kathryn Hoffmann As some of you know, a committee was formed by the District and proposed a name change to the Parks Commission. The Commission decided the recommendation didn't reflect the entire community. The Commission suggested that the Committee continue community engagement to reach the greater community and then propose to the Parks and Rec Director and Parks Commission again.

[6:46 PM] Rob Spence (Guest)
Natural turf is "loved to death" by June.

[6:48 PM] Kathryn Hoffmann
I only heard that the new apartment/condo owners objected. My comment has been the last people to move into the neighborhood shouldn't get to name the park. So I agree with Tanya, we don't know who objected.

[6:48 PM] Rob Spence (Guest)
QUESTION... Nothing against these sports, but why is baseball and softball being included when there are MANY of those fields already available across the city?

[6:48 PM] Hussong, Brett (CI-StPaul)
@Tanya Beck It should be in previous Parks Commission minutes and I'll see if I can find it and post it with the meeting minutes.

[6:48 PM] Rob Spence (Guest)
Also makes the turf footprint much larger

[6:49 PM] Rob Spence (Guest)
... AND requires a big backstop fence

[6:50 PM] Tanya Beck
What will happen to the existing perennials and natives that will have to be removed?

[6:52 PM] Hussong, Brett (CI-StPaul)
@Rob Spence (Guest) By including other sports, we are trying to balance the needs of the entire community, therefore including softball/baseball. We are also exploring a partnership opportunity with the MN Twins.

[6:52 PM] Rob Spence (Guest)
In other words... STRONG SUGGESTION to dump the Baseball/Softball... I can connect you with MN United for Soccer Partnership

[6:53 PM] Rob Spence (Guest)
St. Paul Parks do not need more baseball fields.



[6:53 PM] Hussong, Brett (CI-StPaul)

@Tanya Beck The existing perennials and grasses would be salvaged as needed, and the remaining removed. The site would be restored to similar native varieties.

[6:54 PM] Tanya Beck

Might be nice to give the community an opportunity to dig them if that is feasible.

[6:54 PM]

Tony Molaro (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

[6:56 PM] Hussong, Brett (CI-StPaul)

@Tanya Beck Thanks for the suggestion. Due to liability and utilities, we wouldn't be able to allow digging, but we could consider setting some plants to the side.

[6:56 PM] Kathryn Hoffmann

Public Storage lot is huge and usually empty.

[6:57 PM] Tanya Beck

The St. Paul perennial community is sizable. If that is a real possibility, I'd love to help.

[6:57 PM]

Brian Singer (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

[6:59 PM] Rodriguez, Andy (CI-StPaul)

Rob we have a good relationship with MN United. The ability to add another premiere baseball field to what is already a multipurpose turf field would be a win. Similar to the earlier point of maintenance and longevity of natural grass fields, many of which will likely be grassed and over and converted if they are no longer sustainable.

[7:03 PM] Rob Spence (Guest)

Thanks Andy.

[7:05 PM] Rodriguez, Andy (CI-StPaul)

For sure.

[7:06 PM] Rob Spence (Guest)

New field construction minimum dimensions are 115 yards [105.16 m] (length) by 70 yards [64.01 m] (width). New maximum dimensions are 120 yards [109.73 m] by 75 yards [68.58 m].

[7:06 PM]



Rob Spence was invited to the meeting.

[7:07 PM] Hussong, Brett (CI-StPaul)
@Rob Spence (Guest) Thanks Rob

[7:07 PM] Christian Rovn (Guest)
Another suggestion I have is to do netting for the backstops instead of fencing as that might be more appealing to the eye in the neighborhood.

[7:08 PM] Rodriguez, Andy (CI-StPaul)
yes, netting is a good idea for these types of spaces. Spendy, but good

[7:08 PM] Tonya Nicholie (Guest)
any storage buildings in this project or support structures

[7:08 PM] Tonya Nicholie (Guest)
Toilet?

[7:10 PM]
Halle O'Falvey (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

[7:10 PM] Tonya Nicholie (Guest)
Thanks for the info.

[7:12 PM] Tanya Beck
Thank you for the information.

[7:16 PM] Christian Rovn (Guest)
Thanks everyone!!

[7:16 PM] Kathryn Hoffmann
Thank you

Meeting Minutes are an interpretation of overall meeting content. Please contact Mary Norton, mary.norton@ci.stpaul.mn.us if any items are missing or listed incorrectly.