

Kathryn M. (she/her) SAPCC

February 11, 2021

MEETING MINUTES

Park at Westgate, 717 Berry Street, Saint Paul MN

Virtual Meeting held on Microsoft Teams, 7:00pm to 8:30pm Tuesday February 2, 2021

This document shall serve as the official record of the community meeting and information shared. If additions or modifications are required, please contact Liz Hixson via email <u>liz.hixson@ci.stpaul.mn.us</u> by Tuesday, February 16, 2021

If you need translation services please email liz.hixson@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Attendees:

Ryan Philippi

Approximately 67 attendees at the virtual meeting, 33 of whom used the sign in web form.

Quaranto, Michele

, , ,		
Aaron	Rennie Gaither (Guest)	(Guest)
Allison Bell	Stakston, Sarah (MIN-WSW)	Katie Houlihan (Guest)
Arnoldi, Andrea	Ted Lee	Lisa VanDerPol
Betty (Guest)	Amber Hill	Mark Gunstad
Courtney John (Guest)	Catherine Reid Day (Guest)	Michael Russelle (Guest)
Dick Gilyard	Guest	NancyGrace N. (Guest)
Franklin Steen, DDS	Guest	Olson, Jane B (DHS)
Guest	Guest	Rick Beeson (Sunrise Bank)
Guest	Guest	Robert O. Straughn
Guest	Guest	Roger J. Purdy
Guest	Guest	Roxy (Guest)
Guest	Guest	Stephen Mastey
Leise, Katie	Joyce Lyon (Guest)	Studenski, Nick
Manu Junemann	Judy Johnson (Guest)	Tara Smith (Guest)
Mark VanderSchaaf (Guest)	karen (Guest)	Unknown User

Link to slides shown at meeting: https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/2021-02/2021%20Westgate%20Revised%20Design.pdf

Introduction

Privratsky, Matt (CI-StPaul)





- Thank you all for joining this meeting, we know people made decisions or sacrifices to be here and we want to be respectful of your time. I also acknowledge that we know the pandemic has brought challenges to everyone, and parks and outdoor space is and will continue to be an important way for us all to stay healthy and connect with each other going forward. I'm excited to talk about this future park tonight, and with that I'll introduce myself. I'm Liz Hixson, I work for the Design and Construction division of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, I am the project manager for the park at Westgate, with 8 years working in Landscape Architecture (4 yrs licensed)
- My supervisor and colleague Anne Gardner is also here, she will moderate questions and join in the question and answer period.
- At the end of this meeting we will also share a link for a survey and voting on the park name, so please stay with us and listen in.
- Meeting Expectations as we begin, I want to make sure Meeting Expectations are clear
 - These guidelines will make the meeting run smoothly for everyone:
 - Keep yourself on mute until the question period
 - Type questions in chat (or raise hand)
 - Presentation will be brief and there is time reserved for questions. I will also pause every few minutes to check the chat and review questions
- Meeting Agenda
 - Project Timeline, construction summer 2021
 - Park context and views
 - Area Plans summary / Summary of work to date
 - Historic site context
 - Park amenities and design
 - Answer questions and share survey for feedback
- Meeting Goals
 - Review previous planning, and design concepts, present the revised design incorporating feedback to date



- Gather additional feedback, and share an online survey for input on priority elements, play equipment, and art, as well as the park name
- Reserve time for live question and answer; and
- Review next steps

BREAK FOR OUESTIONS IN CHAT

- Note: the names and contact information shared for this meeting will only be used to contact you about this park and to follow up after the meeting.
- Expected Timeline
 - We are here to present the updated park concept plan
 - Anticipate construction in summer 2021
 - Future opportunities trail along Wabash
- Project location and context (3 to 5 mins)
 - Busier traffic on Franklin, neighbors note that Emerald also has faster traffic and trucks
 - Future residential (multi-family) to the south
 - Connection east to Sunrise Bank and Curfew Street noted in Station Area Plan
 - When you stand in the park space, these are views of what you see
- Summary of work to date
 - Area plans previous studies of this nearby area
 - Westgate Station Area plan earliest related urban design study of this area and indicated need for open space, including vision of larger park area and framework for transit oriented development (TOD) a dense urban environment where people can easily access transit (bus and train) and can leave cars at home
 - Strategic Stormwater Solutions for TOD report summarizing opportunities for stormwater (rainwater collection, green/blue infrastructure) along the Green Line – notes larger park and "Curfew Commons" concept. Also notes the Towerside district stormwater and park, which City of Minneapolis implemented in 2014 or so (near Propspect Park LRT station, United Crushers/ADM silos).
 - Public Realm Plan (2017) Design Concepts provides framework for the park we have today, the 1.5 acre, one block area and the connecting trail along Wabash



- Trailhead for Wabash trail
- Two park concepts flexible lawn, rolling mounds
- Flexible seating area with shade
- Berry Festival street concept an area for food trucks, mountable curb so trucks can pull a bit onto the sidewalk, and special paving. City was unable to implement this street design.

Park Concept Plans

- Concepts shown previously developed by City parks staff 2018 concept plans with phasing, presented to SAPCC just over 2 years ago
 - Feedback received indicated a desire to build a simple park and then pursue additional funding or fundraising to build the "vision" or long term park. The more recent concept plans reflect the simple park idea - a simplified design to allow for phased park construction
- Park Concept plans and feedback from SAPCC in November 2020
 - A simplified park concept was sent to SAPCC in summer 2019, and feedback was sent to the city in a report (available on SAPCC's website)
 - I will touch on feedback received for this previous park design, and then review questions next we will move on to describe the revised park design.

BREAK FOR QUESTIONS IN CHAT

-Bricks

Historic Site Context

- Acknowledge this land has a long history, from glaciers carving the nearby river gorge to the first nations that were here long before settlers or pioneers, we know St. Paul sits on the ancestral land of the Dakota and the Anishinaabe, and that we have much to learn of the stories of this place going further back.
- We have this aerial image and basic knowledge of the historic native plant communities found here. This image is from before the highways, and you can see how much the train yards nearby dominated



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- Historic Aerial Detail let's zoom in to a close up of this area, you can see the factory buildings which we believe were the Weyerhauser buildings.
- Weyerhauser Lumber Yards (1953) these images are somewhat more recent and show the extent of the warehouse and storage yards.
- The rail lines were important to bringing raw material to this area. This is what led to the design framework for the park
- Design Concept (5 to 7 mins)
 - Westgate Park Design Rail Crossings / Merging
 - The image at left shows the rail lines before construction of Millberry at Legends, and the image at right is the nearby St. Paul Transfer Yards.
 - Using these arcing, intersecting, and diverging lines as a framework, the design takes cues from the rail line visible in the oldest aerial we have to create a path or spine for the park.
 - Using this as a framework has a dual purpose acknowledge Industrial land is not the first use, but it is what humans imposed on the land for material gain.
 - Reclaiming / re-identify with multiple site histories native ecosystems, native peoples, settlers, industrial expansion powered by trains and river commerce (steam boat, Ford Dam, etc.).
 - Westgate Park Design: Palette and Plant Communities
 - Inspired by native Minnesota plant communities, the design idea is to create three simplified natural communities that serve different purposes.
 - Savanna and double row of trees to evoke the Oak Savannah found on river bluffs, and used as a gentle natural buffer to Emerald Street
 - Two forested areas with different plant communities the Hardwood forest and the Conifer Forest
 - Propose a bee lawn mix for the grass, from the UMN bee lawn guidelines and seed mix
 - Westgate Park Design: Program



- Areas for different activities across the park, and some open area for free recreation
- A central arcing path from the northwest corner with benches and trees,
- Space for art and other amenities at the northwest corner
- Mounded area and play area to the center
- Two picnic groupings, with tables and a grill
- Enlarged Plan
 - Here is a more detailed view of the proposed park
 - Benches small groupings,
 - Diversity of trees and experiences
 - Next we will show more about the components
 - Art: Sculpture- rail sculpture and/or lumber type bench
 - Furnishings
 - Playground and mound
 - Trail Connection to Wabash Ave
 - The City is pursuing the "park 2" or trail connection shown earlier, we are highlighting it on this image in an arcing green line
 - · Parks and Recreation is submitting the trail for a grant this spring
 - We will update St. Anthony Park and anyone who signed into this meeting and shared your email when we know more

BREAK FOR QUESTIONS IN CHAT

- Share Your Thoughts
 - Vote on the Park Name VOTE HERE
 - Vote on park name can scan this QR code with your phone or click on the link shared in the meeting chat
 - We will check the voting results (in 10 minutes or so) and during the discussion we will share the preliminary results



- · Art options
 - Rail reuse into sculpture
 - Poetry engraved onto rail associated with the location
- Priorities which of the following options should the City allocate \$40,000 toward?
 - Shade structure/pavilion
 - More play equipment
 - Additional money for public art and artistic benches
 - Additional funds for the Wabash Ave trail
- Vote on the Park Name
 - Boundary Lands
 - Unity Park
 - Westgate Park
 - Write in (other)
- Next Steps
 - Survey online https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Westgate2021 (QR code shown in meeting slides as well)
 - If people email for translation, the City will follow up with a focus group smaller meeting with a live translator
 - We will take your feedback and refine the design and our project timeline
 - Later in February St. Anthony Park community council will provide written feedback on the site plan
 - Develop construction documents later this spring
 - Bidding and construction this summer
- Questions and Thank you
 - Live question and answer period, Anne and I will moderate



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• Check the city website (you can search google or go to www.stpaul.gov and search for Westgate) for a digital version of this presentation, and a link to the survey.

Transcript of chat questions is below, responses in italics

[7:16 PM] Catherine Reid Day (Guest)

It will not just be residential. New business buildings on their way (note: this comment in regards to the future residential south of the park)

[7:17 PM] NancyGrace N. (Guest)

Many Semi Truck Cabs park on Van Buren Ave (note: City staff and St. Paul Police are aware and are working to address this)

Is brick paving part of any concept? When did "Festival Street" concept go away? The festival street idea went way due to decisions made in 2017 and early 2018; the City was unable to

The festival street idea went way due to decisions made in 2017 and early 2018; the City was unable to implement it as envisioned. The City generally does not use bricks or unit pavers, you can see deterioration of pavers in Downtown St. Paul as an example. If you feel strongly about bricks please comment in the chat or provide written feedback in the Online Survey, we will share the link to that survey.

General comment: I live just east of 280 and am eager about the "park 2" path down to wabash! I often jog and bike across 280 at Franklin and it's feels very unsafe. It would be great to have a path to make the wabash crossing more accessible

This looks nice

Hope the park 2 future trail can at least be mowed so it could be a rough path - likely good railroad base rock still there, so should be decent hiking path at least

The City is following the Rethinking 94 work that MNDot is doing, that will affect the 94/280 interchanges and the Wabash Bridge is technically under MNDot jurisdiction and railroad control. We do not have a timeline for this process or bridge reconstruction.

Older maps show the Red River oxcart trail passing through the NE corner of the park. (note: City will look for this map)

Love the bold design moves that pay homage to the historic rail lines I also like this design, very simple and elegant

Is this showing all phase 1 items, or are some of these phase 2? And what about more prairie native species (outside of trees and shortgrass) in phase 1?

This looks really nice. Do you have enough room for all of these amenities?



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This is showing phase 1 items, but there will be some revisions pending feedback on the online survey and written comments on the site plan from St. Anthony Park Community Council.

What mix of trees are you proposing?

For the conifer forest you can expect white pines and spruce such as black hills spruce, and some red pines. For the hardwood forest we anticipate some aspen and oak trees. We will consult with City Foresters for recommendations on all trees, the street trees generally are preferred to be a mix of species, not all one species along each street. We want to avoid over-planting of any one species so we plant a mixture to be more resilient and avoid another situation like Emerald Ash Borer or Dutch Elm Disease.

We will look to plant some understory species to create a height difference, and some groundcover as well, but we need to be mindful of sightlines for safety and security.

Anything related to stormwater management (clean, store, reuse)?

The City is looking to study stormwater more carefully with the trail development. We know there is a low point near the storage facility we must address this to prevent water impacting our neighbors. Potentially linear stormwater features such as tree trenches can be employed along Berry Street, between the trail and the street, or along the trail at other points. We will work with partners to determine grants or other funding sources to support this, and will update the community when we know more.

How is stormwater handled? Are you seeking watershed grants? [7:44 PM] Ted Lee
That makes great sense regarding grants. Thanks

What have you learned about the people who live around the park, and how has that affected the design? We know that this area has a growing residential population, by some estimates at least 700 housing units – both an action and condos – within the last 10 years. We know that there are a large number of young families in this area that need access to open space for walking, play, and recreation. We also know there is a significant East African population in some nearby buildings and are attempting to connect with this population.

[7:45 PM] Ted Lee

Are there any issues with contaminated soil or compaction?

Are there plans to institute more native plants (outside of trees and shortgrass) in phase 1? [7:42 PM] Catherine Reid Day (Guest)

How do your tree plans meet the needs of the changing climate pressure

St. Paul Forestry has plans for adapting to our changing climate, and this includes planting trees from more southern areas that can withstand greater variations in temperature and more heat, and are tolerant of urban conditions. We will work with Forestry to ensure the trees planted here are chosen with climate resilience in consideration.

[7:45 PM] Rennie Gaither (Guest)



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Where are lighting infrastructure pieces? Lamp posts, etc.

[Tuesday 7:46 PM] NancyGrace N. (Guest)

I am also interested in plans for lighting

The City has street lights around the edge of the park, we typically consider our parks closed after sundown. We can get a lighting study to check if light levels are sufficient. This park will be designed with attention to CEPTED safety principles including maintaining open sight lines.

Attentive to and pay attention to indigenous culture -

Joyce comment: Art could have more than one purpose- educational- talk about Dakota history

Betty- infiltration gallery. Would be helpful to have good stormwater control on site considering the surrounding the impervious surfaces

[7:43 PM] Rennie Gaither (Guest)

Are there plans to institute more native plants (outside of trees and shortgrass) in phase 1?

[7:45 PM] Kathryn M. (she/her) SAPCC (Guest)

Nature play was mentioned at previous meetings as a desired play area option. Can you please speak to that?

The City will look into what we can add here for nature play, we feel the wood globe is trending toward more natural materials. We have heard a mixture of comments about play from previous engagement. If you feel strongly about nature play please write your feedback into the online survey.

[7:47 PM] Michael Russelle (Guest)

I think we need to do a bit more than just acknowledge orally that this is the land of the Wahkepute. Can't more of the area be planted to adapted native species typical of the Oak savanna? This was tall grass, not shortgrass, which is more typical of the western Great Plains. Mowing can replace fire for the perennial herbaceous plants.

[7:47 PM] karen (Guest)

Ted Lee -Dominium did environmental investigation when they bough property, there wasn't much found

[7:47 PM] Ted Lee Karen - thanks

[7:48 PM] Catherine Reid Day (Guest) agree with Michael's comments.

[7:48 PM] Amber Hill (Guest)



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I like the idea of more native grasses as well, and I wonder if a seeded and slow growing prairie area would be acceptable to the community... I would love it, and could wait for the full growth effect

[7:48 PM] Michael Russelle (Guest)

It may be preferable to have a subsurface storm water infiltration gallery installed ahead of time -- far less management than raingardens.

[7:48 PM] Amber Hill (Guest) since there's a smaller budget

[7:49 PM] Betty (Guest)
I agree with both of Michael's comments. Thanks--Betty

[7:49 PM] Katie Houlihan (Guest) I agree with Michael's comments as well

[7:50 PM] Ted Lee Love the wood and rail references (1 liked)

[7:50 PM] karen (Guest)

Neighborhood kids have been playing in parking lots for lack of anything else. Perhaps Berry along park can be closed to traffic on weekends for bikes and such, given there is no car parking allowed there already and road no buildings/residents on this block (2 liked)

Note: The City can look into the possibility of this.

[7:50 PM] Catherine Reid Day (Guest)

Who would you partner with to develop the call for art and to shape the tone of the creative expression

[7:51 PM] Aaron (Guest)

@Amber & Michael, though I appreciate the thought of turning the space into more of a native prairie, I feel it runs the risk of becoming more of a 'look but don't touch' interaction. We're excited about a space for our family to have green space to explore and interact with - without concern for trampling too much. (3 liked)

[7:51 PM] Tara Smith (Guest) I, too, echo Michael's comments

[7:51 PM] Allison Bell (Guest)

7- and 8-year-olds here say "YES! The Globe!"





(1 liked)

[7:52 PM] Katie Houlihan (Guest) Aaron Good point, and I think it

[7:52 PM] Katie Houlihan (Guest) is possible to find a balance

[7:52 PM] Amber Hill (Guest)

@aaron - agreed, I have a toddler too, I wonder if "kid trails" trhough a prairie could be fun

[7:53 PM] Judy Johnson (Guest)

I think you have done an excellent job on this design. (1 liked)

[7:53 PM] Rick Beeson (Guest)

Thanks Liz. In case you don't mention it, does improvement of the trail depend on creating dedicated bikeways over 280?

Our plan is to develop the portion of trail on city owned land and then work with MnDOT about the Wabash Bridge and Rethinking 94 work. For now we are aiming to provide a connection to the Wabash bridge and bikers/walkers would need to use the shoulder until the train bridge is re-built. Like we said earlier in the presentation, this trail work is contingent on a grant and we do not have a fixed timeline yet.

[7:53 PM] Judy Johnson (Guest)

Very excited to see it happen.

[7:53 PM] Stakston, Sarah (MIN-WSW) (Guest)

Excellent design and features. Thank you for thinking of families/children, open space and picnic space.

[7:54 PM] Amber Hill (Guest)

Excited about this too!

[7:54 PM] Roxy (Guest)

I'd like to reiterate the previous question about lighting plans for the park

[7:54 PM] Tara Smith (Guest)

Might there be an opportunity for Wahkepute acknowledgment in the Art? (1 liked)

[7:54 PM] Katie Houlihan (Guest)

I agree with Tara - art should reflect the native roots of the land, not a corporate entity



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[7:55 PM] karen (Guest)

Will there be restrooms, or at least portable facilities?

The City will look at priorities from the survey. It costs around \$250,000 to create a permanent restroom building with sewer, water, and electric lines. That would be the majority of our project budget and we feel it is more important to provide recreational amenities and get some open space for the neighborhood. We can look into portable facilities.

[7:55 PM] NancyGrace N. (Guest) Pls see Roxy's post re; lighting

[7:56 PM] Michael Russelle (Guest)

I wonder whether consulting with Dakota elders would reveal ideas for name and design.

[7:56 PM] Betty (Guest)

How about using "Wahkepute" in the name, and then an interpretive sign?

[7:56 PM] Rick Beeson (Guest)

What is the estimated cost of the trail? Ballpark

[7:56 PM] Michael Russelle (Guest)

It appears the the list of names in the general survey and name voting survey are inconsistent.

[7:57 PM] Judy Johnson (Guest)

I suggest stronger emphasis on the Native roots to the land in the park name and art rather than industry. We are surrounded by industry already.

[7:58 PM] Unknown User Weddington, D'Marie (CI-StPaul) added Ann Verme (Guest) to the meeting.

[7:58 PM] Michael Russelle (Guest)

I agree with Judy, Seems to me that there is plenty of hard things around the area already.

[7:59 PM] Catherine Reid Day (Guest)

More emphasis on native roots and art. we have plenty of hard edges in this district

[7:59 PM] karen (Guest)

Since 2017 people have been asking for climbable boulders, logs, its come up at every meeting, the natural wood structures at Nokomis mentions, there is little for kids in this park now, nature play would be cheap way to add active structures. We could get stones from local suppliers, donate sticks and logs. (2 liked)



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[8:01 PM] Betty (Guest)

I agree with previous questionner about the possibility of restrooms. Please consider them. It would help young kids and older people, especially.

[8:01 PM] karen (Guest)

This park is near Native American trail from river by Town and Country, upt to Gibbs Farm area.

[8:03 PM] Robert O. Straughn

Dakotah Trail was probably at Pelham. Crossed the oxcart trail within the I-94/280 intersection

[8:04 PM] karen (Guest)

Thanks Robert

[8:05 PM] karen (Guest)

Can we get an ADA curb cut from Sunrise Banks' parking lot to Myrtle so people can enter from the east (3 liked)

[8:10 PM] Arnoldi, Andrea (Guest)

will the survey link be posted to the project website?

[8:10 PM] Betty (Guest)

It seems to me that it is better to develop the park correctly, than to rush to finish this year. An infiltration gallery would be most cost-effectively done early in the first part.

[8:10 PM] Michael Russelle (Guest)

Liz, I suggest you contact the Capitol Region Watershed District for more information on subsurface infiltration galleries. They can handle a lot more stormwater and are essentially invisible. They would need to determine whether this strategy will work at this site.

City will follow up about this with the Watershed District.

[8:11 PM] Amber Hill (Guest)

I don't think this small park warrants buried infrastructure to handle stormwater (1 liked)

[8:13 PM] Gardner, Anne (CI-StPaul)

Arnoldi, Andrea (Guest) The survey link will be on the project website.

[8:14 PM] Allison Bell (Guest)

Thank you!

[8:15 PM] Ted Lee



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I applaud everyone who has spent time getting this park off the ground, from very early vision to the current design iteration. Special thanks to District 12 committees and P&R designers who took the information and synthesized it into this design!

(1 liked)

[8:17 PM] Roxy (Guest)

Emerald Gardens is another nearby community of stakeholders

(1 liked)

The City has a contact for Emerald Gardens and will reach out and request that information be shared with residents.

[8:17 PM] NancyGrace N. (Guest) Emerald Gardens Condos (1 liked)

[8:18 PM] Arnoldi, Andrea (Guest)

You could also contact Suntide for them to share with their tennants

(2 liked)

[8:18 PM] Arnoldi, Andrea (Guest)

this will be a great amenity to the neighborhood!

(1 liked)

[8:19 PM] Michael Russelle (Guest)

Thank you for your work on this project. It's obviously important to a lot of people. Good night! (1 liked)

[8:19 PM] NancyGrace N. (Guest)

Several hands us

[8:19 PM] NancyGrace N. (Guest)

us = up

 We reminded attendees to take their hands down if they already asked a question so that we can see who is asking a new question. Click the hand again if you want to take your hand down.

[8:19 PM] Leise, Katie (Guest)

Can't wait to use a park during the work day (as someone who works in the Case building)! (2 liked)

[8:19 PM] Arnoldi, Andrea (Guest)

Thanks for all your great efforts on this design!

(2 liked)



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[8:19 PM] Rennie Gaither (Guest) Thank you, Liz and Anne! (2 liked) [8:21 PM] Bruce (Guest)

I spoke with Bob Fossum at Cap Region on Monday and talked about opportunities related to this Towerside Innovation District 'Focus Area' . . . he/they are interested!

City will follow up about this with the Watershed District.

[8:21 PM] karen (Guest)

Can we remove ugly old fence along east side of park?

Yes the fence could be removed as part of future trail work, would require permission from neighboring property owners. Will have to wait until funding for trail work is identified and secured.

[8:22 PM] Ted Lee

Is there any Weyerhaueser foundation grant money available to fund the park?

As far as I know, the Weyerhauser Foundation was asked and declined, they were asked about naming rights for the park as well. We are searching for additional funding sources, if you have other ideas of who we should contact please send a chat, email Liz, or write comments in the online survey (link in chat).

[8:23 PM] Ted Lee

Huge opportunity there.

[8:23 PM] karen (Guest)

Thanks Bruce, would love to see Cap Region involved in trail work

[8:23 PM] Roxy (Guest)

Looking forward to having this new amenity in the neighborhood - thank you for the presentation tonight.

[8:23 PM] Rick Beeson (Guest)

Let me look at that further.

[8:23 PM] Gardner, Anne (CI-StPaul)

Bruce (Guest) We will follow up with Bob Fossum at CRWD regarding to these opportunities. Parks and Rec often partners with them.

[8:24 PM] Rick Beeson (Guest)

Thanks guys!

[8:24 PM] Betty (Guest)



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In negotiating about the fence on the east side, if a small fence is needed yet around the cell tower, please do not leave the chain-link. Use similar wood or wood-looking composite to match what you use in the design components. Thanks!

[8:25 PM] Bruce (Guest)

Anne - let's have a conversation about Towerside at your earliest convenience - thanks very much! (1 liked)

[8:25 PM] karen (Guest) Thanks!