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## CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Mayor Christopher B. Coleman

400 City Hall Annex  
25 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102  
www.stpaul.gov/parks

Telephone: 651-266-6400  
Facsimile: 651-292-7311

### Jimmy Lee Play Area : Community Advisory Committee Meeting #1 : Meeting Notes October 12, 2016, 5:30-7pm – Multipurpose room, Oxford Community Center

Attendee (per sign in sheet): Dave Peterson, Adrian Perryman, Ronnie Copeland, Michael Bridgeford, Sheraye Johnson, Dan Elenbaas

Parks and Recreation City Staff: Andy Rodriguez, Dan Berchem, Kirsten Lindsay, Oxford Rec Staff Member, Anne Gardner- Project manager

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Anne Gardner, Project manager, started the meeting. Attendees went around the room to introduce themselves and who they are representing as a committee member (attendees listed above).
- b. **Project Goal Stated: Create a concept plan for improvements to Jimmy Lee Play Area to improve the play area and create a vibrant public space.**
- c. Role and Expectations of Community Advisory Committee
  - i. Outlined in the power point presentation
  - ii. The key is that the committee members are the 'liaison' between the project process and the community.
- d. Meeting Goals:
  1. Introduce project and review survey results, analysis, and concept plans.
  2. Determine a desired organization of the site for moving forward
  3. Identify committee preferences for play area and other site features
- e. Meeting schedule & Tentative| Project Schedule
  - i. Next meeting date will be in mid-December
  - ii. The goal is to construct the project next summer

#### 2. Project Background

- a. Jimmy Lee /Oxford Recreation Center has the **highest recorded attendance** in St Paul (343,364 annual visits). There are roughly 6,183 children that live within a 1/2 mile radius. The neighborhood within a couple of blocks is 53% white, 30% African American, 5% Asian, 5% Hispanic or Latino, 5% two or more races, and 5% other (according to recent census data from the Wilder foundation). The Facility and Inventory Evaluation (2010) indicated that the playground could be upgraded to have more city wide appeal, small parking lot could be repurposed, etc
- b. Funding Source- CIB funding for \$600,000 for 2016/17 cycle to “replace the existing play area and add park improvements”. Funding will not allow everything, so the committee will have to help prioritize the key improvements.



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- c. Aerial Photos
  - d. Community engagement to date
    - i. Attended Family Fun Night- July 29, 2016 (with Pop Up meeting)
    - ii. Mailed postcards
    - iii. Managed an online survey
    - iv. Project website [www.stpaul.gov/JimmyLeePlayArea](http://www.stpaul.gov/JimmyLeePlayArea) will be maintained to share project information
    - v. Assemble design advisory committee to represent community
  - e. Survey Results- the online survey was open for 2 months- 82 people participated. 51% live within a 5 minute walk of the play area. Positives: size, shade, climbing structures and monkey bars. Generally, people like the idea of a combination of modern and traditional equipment. Also, preference is for climbing, swinging, sliding components in the new play area. Drinking fountain, more shade, landscaping and extra seating and picnic space are also desired by survey participants.
3. Site Analysis & Concept Planning
- a. Parks and green space nearby: Hamline-Hague play area, Dunning rec center, JJ hill Montessori, 1-94 functions as a distinct barrier. To the East and south- primarily Single Family Homes or small multiplexes. Across 1-94, more apartment buildings and condo buildings including the skyline tower. Also, Central High School and Concordia further to the west.
  - b. Opportunities: - Play area is nestled within the bowl created by surrounding topography;- Trees provide ample shade;- Play areas are ample for each age group;- Picnic Knoll gives nice views to surrounding fields and neighborhood
  - c. Constraints: Sidewalks are deteriorating; - Many trees are ash trees requiring treatment;- Sand gets kicked around;- Weeds growing in sand indicate unused areas;- Equipment needs to be upgraded to current safety standards;- Erosion on hillside from trees and steep slopes;- Parking Lot for 11 cars is deteriorating;- Previous reports indicate soil contamination is present and will need to be addressed during play area renovation;- Signage needed to give Play Area an identity
  - d. Considerations: Removal of parking lot creates opportunities for more play space;- Topography could be utilized for interesting play opportunities;- Celebrate the connections to the field space, the Jimmy Lee building, and the neighborhood and create safe access ways;- Seating and picnic areas could be increased to accommodate larger groups;- Create a unique play area that will have it's own identity; Celebrate this vibrant space and community!
  - e. As a response to the analysis, three site "organization" concepts were developed including: organic, grid, and diagonal
  - f. Organic:
    - i. Curvilinear pathways and play spaces
    - ii. Parking lot is converted into an open lawn space for flexible uses
    - iii. Toddler zone is nestled into the hillside
    - iv. Big kid zone utilizes the hillside topography
    - v. Seating and picnic areas are scattered throughout
  - g. Grid (preferred option)
    - i. Pathways have strong geometric lines
    - ii. Parking lot is converted into an open lawn and picnic area
    - iii. Larger picnic area divides the big kid and toddler play zone
    - iv. Big kid zone utilizes the hillside topography
    - v. Two larger picnic areas to accommodate multiple gatherings
  - h. Diagonal:

- i. Pathways are similar to current configuration
- ii. Parking lot remains with 2 less stalls
- iii. Larger picnic area divides the big kid and toddler play zone
- iv. Expanded paving to give more space at the Jimmy Lee Entrance
- v. Larger toddler zone is nestled into the hillside

#### 4. Discussion

- a. Parking lot could go away-
    - i. It could be an open space for throwing a ball around.
    - ii. Safety and enclosure is very important so kids do not run off towards street
  - b. The tree in the play area- kids climb on it, but there is no safety surfacing below it. Preference is to remove the tree
  - c. Picnic areas are used- add seating throughout
  - d. Wayfinding would help to locate the bathroom, drinking fountain, know the name of buildings and field, and to know the identity of the space
  - e. Basketball- why did the court go away? Can we add it back in? Can we add in a half court in place of the parking lot?
    - i. Basketball court was removed between 2008 and 2011.
    - ii. Park staff indicated that basketball near play areas/tot lots can be problematic- with attracting undesirable activity, poor language near small children, and games continuing late at night
    - iii. Possible addition of a small basketball hoop and half court for young kids
  - f. Firepit- can this be added to accommodate group gatherings (like a condo shared firepit)
  - g. Football and basketball are important sports to this community. Accommodate as much as possible for all ages
  - h. Use Art to express the history and culture of this community
5. Design Preference Activity- three small groups gathered and used imagery to fill in the categories of Preserve, Add, Remove, Keep out
- a. Preserve: picnic area (move), slides, swings, large, connected equipment to run around on, coal dump station, more seating areas throughout, basketball, fire pit
  - b. Add: fire pit, drinking fountain, vertical/tall play for big kids, climbing wall, using the hill (embankment slides), basketball, outside water fountains, basketball, open field
  - c. Remove: sand (x3), parking lot (x2), tree from the middle
  - d. Keep out: active use (near corner) for safety reasons, metal slides (x2), sand,
6. Next Meeting will be December, 2016 (date to be determined)