



MEETING NOTES

CITY OF SAINT PAUL

MEETING DATE: August 3, 2016

LOCATION: Palace Recreation Center, 781 Palace Avenue

ATTENDING: Anna Bruesewitz, Jennifer Verbrugge, Julie Faltsek, Karen Misiewicz, Minda Holst, Pete Regnier, Renee Pritzker, Shirley Estad, Tonya Nicholie, Alice Messer, Chee Yang

NOT IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Gibbs, Dave Thune, Dusty Thune, Halle O'Falvey, Laura Sopeth, Lynda Anderson, Mark Toupal, Patricia (Pat) Salmi, Paula Faughender, Shamus O'Meara, Thabiso Rowan

NOTES BY: Chee Yang, August 4, 2016

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

Alice Messer welcomed the design advisory committee. Refer to page 2 of Presentation Materials.

- Alice briefly outlined the meeting's agenda

Alice recapped the first meeting. Refer to pages 3-8 of Presentation Materials.

- Overview of walking tour.
- Went over the project schedule – two more meetings and one public open house
- Reviewed the master plan, site analysis, and 2016 construction.
- Goal of first meeting to establish goals and objectives.
- Addition of goals and objectives include:
 - Use of colors to define space without physical barriers
 - Encourage early literacy through play

Alice presented three concepts. Refer to pages 9-11 of Presentation Materials.

Concept 1: Sculptural

- There is a 40' setback where no structures and buildings can be built due to Critical Area.
- Gateway to play area is formed by artistic and sculptural restroom facilities with one main entrance to play area.
- Play area is entirely fenced
- Central play event that branch out to other smaller events
- Picnic area in the northwest
- Sand and water play off to the side
 - Textile and texture provide colorful visual cues and artistic form
 - Important play feature for socializing, building relationships, and playful element.
- 2-5 play area in own space

- Rock scramble
- Vegetation help define and form the play spaces

Concept 2: Natural

- Restroom facility and picnic area are located outside of the play area
- Use of vegetation as a natural buffer
 - Use of vegetation and fencing to keep children in the play area
- Misting boulders for cooling from heat
- Seat wall/bench set in the back of play element to allow room for children to play while parents/guardians watch
- Different kind of sand/water play with gate valves
- Integration of play mound for play value
- Central entrance into play area
- Other play elements come off from the play mound such as a slide and netted play features
- Off to the side is a “nature” path for children to get away from other activities
- A cave-like structure formed by rocks/boulders
- Separated from the play area is a swing area near the bluff

Concept 3: Traditional

- Visitors are greeted by a picnic shelter raised from the ground
- The shelter is connected to play structures as it branches out
- The restroom facility is off to the side away from play area
- Use of fence and vegetation
- The double zip-line play element
- Seat walls create nodes for play elements
- A separate picnic area on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River

Questions and comments from the Design Advisory Committee regarding the concepts

- Concern about the parking lot being too close to the play area.
- Many liked and agreed on having one main entrance into play area
- In concept 1, many like having the sculptural restroom facilities as gateway to the play area.
 - Restroom to be unisex-family facility with accessible facilities
- A concern about the possibility of children running off by having the restroom as a gateway. Recommend having a gate at entrance.
- Consider having the entrance to play area from west versus directly off the parking lot.
- Like picnic area along bluff side of path.
 - Provide a variety of picnic space; group gatherings and individual use
- Like having trees and vegetation form the play area. Could use trees with different shapes and forms for sensory experience.
- A concern of visibility in the play area if there is high vegetation.
- Like sculptural and artistic sand and water play element as in concepts 1 and 3.
- Like the “nature” path in concept 2.

- Fond of concept 2 and the natural play features.
- A comment regarding using natural elements as much as possible. The example was building a hide-away space from rocks/boulders with room enough for people in wheelchair.
- The “misting” boulder element would be nice to have for children to cool down, climb, and sit on.
- The play mound is a great idea and has many opportunities for play.
- A concern about the future development of the north side play area being a traditional play area and the two play areas being similar.
 - Currently no design element or themes of the north side play area.
- A question about what disabilities the play area is designed for.
 - Answer – for all type of disabilities. The play area is for everyone of all abilities ranging from physical (wheelchair), sensory (autism, hearing), and developmental.

Alice asked for comments and questions from Design Advisory Committee about the three design concepts. Refer to page 12 from Presentation Materials:

- Like having sculptural and artistic element with the sand and water play element.
- Having natural elements as much as possible
- There is a concern about the noise volume from Shepard Rd.
 - Best way to block out as much noise as possible is to use vegetation as a buffer.
- The “misting” rock is a very nice idea.
- Like to use limestone to reflect the natural rocks of the bluff.
- A concern that rocks will become slippery when wet.
 - Recommend using rocks with surfacing that will not become slippery when wet.
- Like the bird-cage-nest play element in concept 2 – could add a ramp element.
- Like natural gradation instead of ramps.
- The shelter in concept 3 makes a statement but raises a concern about funding. Weighing the costs of the structure and play elements, it would be preferred to have more funding go towards play elements.
- Concern of the sand and water play element regarding sand clogging the filtering system.
 - Alice mentioned having a hand-held water pump instead.
 - Make the hand-held water pump easy to use and child-friendly.
- A question about separating the water and sand element and to add the water element with the misting boulders.
- Comment about including a splash pad in the play area.
 - The master plan has the splash pad in the northern play area.
 - Splash pad is not part of this project.
- In concept 2, the play mound has the potential to include multiple play elements such as climbing, sliding, accessibility, and connection to other play elements.
- If there will be native plantings, recommend keeping it out of the play area. Easier for park maintenance.
- Concern about sun and need to have shade.
- A comment about the play area’s identity. The play area is to open to the bluff and river.
 - Alice mentioned about designing the spaces to make it flow and connecting the

spaces together as one piece.

- Would like to have a fully accessible merry-go-round as seen at the Thomas M. Merino Park, Boston's universally accessible park.
- Would like to have the same type of movement for all such as structure (ramps) and material (rubber surfacing).
- Would like to have rocks/boulders scattering together making it more interesting.
- Planning for the play area to be a destination, the picnic shelter plan to include 6-8 tables with about 6 people per table.
 - Would still like to see single scattered tables along bluff.
 - Could have benches instead of tables.
- A comment about metal slides becoming too hot for children.
- Concern of stray/feral cats using the sand area.
 - Utilize raised sandboxes to reduce the possibility of cats using the sand area.
- Comment about the zip-line play element not being as efficient as swings since they provide similar motion.
 - Comment to consider the different play value of both elements.
- Include bike racks and drinking fountain.
- Many liked concept 2 – nature based.
 - More calming for children.
 - Natural color palette.
- Recommend to look at the play area at Elm Creek and the use of slopes.
 - May have similar slopes but not to that extreme.
- For easy access, would like straight paths instead of meandering paths.
- Brief conversation about public art include:
 - Restroom facility as in concept 1
 - Ceramic textile wall
 - A mosaic
 - Interactive glass structure
- Log tunnels for children
- Musical elements and moving panels would be great for people with only hand motion abilities
 - Can incorporate with other play elements
- Private funding includes grants and corporate sponsors
- Discussion on park renaming process. Need to finalize name before fundraising occurs.
 - Alice to provide Parks Commission information to Fort Road Federation.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 7, 2016 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Palace Recreation Center.

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