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CITY OF SAINT PAUL

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Pedro Park 2018 Community Design Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Meeting Minutes*

May 3, 2018 6:30-8:00 pm
81 on E. 7th St Paul, MN 55101

*Meeting minutes are intended to capture overall participation and summarize comments from City Staff and Advisory Member participants.

Beth Bartz – Housekeeping items, restrooms. Key items at front table for agenda, comment cards, etc. Echo for noise addressed, asked for side conversations to be minimized.

Intro: Dr. Corrie & Director Mike Hahm

- Welcome, glad to see you hear and part of this process. This process has two components, park and the PSA. Introduction as Director of PED. Acknowledge the need for both in downtown area. Mike, community is important and so is tax base. We've been talking for a while on this and it's time to take this conversation forward. We've asked Beth Bartz to lead process and lead.

Beth: Intro as principal at SRF, in late 80s – worked for PED earlier in career. Happy to be here and facilitate this conversation. Her role is to create a constructive conversation. Operate on a set of ground rules and accomplish a task that has been set out on a time that has been laid out. She will make sure there is ample time for conversation to focus on design advisory. We will be focusing the conversation to the committee, but comment cards are available and please leave these on the way out for staff to pick out. We will also have a survey coming out after tonight to weigh in, anyone in the audience or member will have access to the survey.

“Parking Lot” – sometimes things come up in conversation that come up that are important, but are not germane to the conversation. If it comes up and we are getting off base, we'll put that in the parking lot to come back to later.

Andy Hestness: Andy is the project manager for the proposed redevelopment of the public safety annex building. Everyone in front has a flyer to look at. In anticipation of police vacating this building, the city started a process of looking into a decision to demolish or not for the building. To test the market – put it on until 2017, received 3 offers on the building. After review with staff, ED took to recommend exploring that further. HRA voted to award tentative redevelopment status. This gives time for the developer to look at the process. This Nov. 2017 decision included the charge to work with community to come up with ideas for the park. This process is directed by the HRA, what would come of this would be a design that would go to the HRA as part of the evaluation.



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Beth – A few points for Andy to follow-up with.

Question: Rod Halverson – What I heard you say is that this is an advisory committee to help Ackerberg.

Answer: This process is to advise the park department

Rod – I'd like to understand what our job is on the committee?

Beth: The City of St. Paul Parks is in charge of leading the development of the park. If there are people are very concerned with the PSA. Where should that feedback go?

Andy: My contact info is listed, there will be a public hearing process. That would be an opportunity to speak around the same time of the HRA process to have public comment and public hearing.

Beth: Want to reiterate that this is not the forum for issues with PSA sale, we need to focus on the park design. Andy is here and is certainly welcome to answer these.

Peg Ganey: Where in this chart does the public process part happen?

Andy: HRA(down in lower left) same representatives on the bodies, but both have opportunity to comment.

Doug Throckmorton: So our charge is only to talk about the park? We are operating under that limit?

Andy and Beth: Yes

Rod: Dr. Corrie was implying that they are both important, that is different.

Beth: Deferred to Dr. Corrie for more input on this.

Dr. Corrie: Said this process involved two entities, the building and park.

Into: Ellen Stewart – LA with Parks and Recreation Section. Managing this project. Thank you to everyone for being here. We're referring to the site at the corner. If it were not for the Tentative developer status, there would not be funding for this park. In addition I want to make sure everyone knows we're doing whatever we can to engage stakeholders. We will have a conceptual design as part of this process. We've committed to these three meetings. We're hoping that you as a representative and hope you'll dig in and find more information because we do want to hear from a large body of people. Three meetings, survey – it will be up for one week so we can incorporate feedback into the next meeting. Next meeting will be 05/24, third on 06/21 prior to the HRA vote. We will arrive at a conceptual design, not

Beth: First task – to identify the types of activities to and what do we physically want to see in the park and what types of programming would be. Introductions, please say who you are with and one thing you would like to see in the park. Ellen did go through the project goal (State project goal from agenda). Advise on committee from community, help communicate needs to your organization and relay that back through this design process. Expectations for committee members (Read the roles). Respect everyone's voice is heard, my job is to pull some of those ideas out. If you can't attend a meeting, please send a representative.

(Round Robin)

Bob Spratt – Commercial real Estate Services: Facility Mgr. of this building. More greenery, delineate it more from the street.

Parker Evans: Ackerberg Group – Super excited to learn from community and what we want to see in the park is people. The only thing that makes parks successful is when it's in use. Super excited to be here.

Jeanne Hall: Capitol River Council – What’s important to me is that the area is increasingly residential. It has families and kids. I see a lack of recreation type space in downtown. My priority would be age groups 7-17, and that it remain a sunken park so balls do not get out.

Bertin: O’keefe parking – Would like to see a patio, if it rains there is a cover. Better safety, more personal safety. You want to make sure it feels safe if it’s open until 8-9:00

John Kavanaugh: MPR – Would like to see it be more useable, functional, our employees would like to spend time there.

Bill Collins: Rossmor Association – We’d like to see a space that allows us to expand our business operations. Into the park. Space for entertainment, stage, performance.

Rod Halverson: CityWalk – Original members of Fitzgerald planning process. My guiding hope would be to see how the design fits into the future comp plan of what we expected for block 10. I’m guided by the comments by City Council that wanted to see an extension of the park.

Beth: Clarify – would it be to design so not to preclude expansion further? Rod concurred, with that.

Johnathan Flory – The Pointe: He works downtown, he looks forward to funneling events downtown.

Peg Ganey – Here with Friends of Pedro Park. The position of Friends of Pedro, would still like to see an expanded park and not focus on one corner. If we cannot expand, we want to be is sunken.

Beth: How would you define sunken?

Peg: Seating, stage area, water play feature for kids

Doug Throckmorton: Central Presbyterian – Wants to be clear on charge, if we don’t sell the building we don’t have money for the park?

Ellen: We’re going through this process because we’re tasked with the HRA to work with Ackerberg and Community to figure out what kinds of programs are appropriate for this site. There is funding in proposal to be used for development of park and maintenance.

Doug: If we don’t move forward, we don’t have money for the park?

Beth: Let’s re-frame this, the HRA advertised for proposals. Ackerberg, proposal included X\$ to facilitate development of the park because we believe it’s an amenity. Ackerberg would not own park but for the City to explore this, they asked the Parks to convene a group of citizens to asses this proposal to see if that fits with the community vision. The City has not been able to identify funds up until this point, it is possible that in the future there could be funding.

Doug: We don’t want to deceive the community that we’re supporting Ackerberg. We at Central Pres. Are concerned that there is not an overall vision for downtown St. Paul. Is there an overall vision for downtown St. Paul that takes into account the whole downtown? And if so, how does Pedro Park fit into that?

Beth: You are simply providing advice to Parks and HRA is the proposal goes through this would be a vision for that. Beth put that idea in the “parking lot” to keep focus on the task at hand. Asked if there was one thing they want in the park.

Doug: The idea of making it super-friendly for the use of kids in particular.

Lisa Classen: Rossmor Resident. Happy to be here, it’s in interesting process. Works at Securian. Probably the one thing she would like to see is a shelter.

Lynda Hay: Would like to see functional seating, event space

Jennifer – with Renodis: Anything for dogs, practical needs.

Beth: Asking for any other input

Bill Collins: Want to see it's a place that is not encouraging for people to spend the night.

Jeanne Hall: The park must be a park, the building cannot encroach – correct?

Beth and Ellen: Yes that is correct.

Ellen: Gives some background on process and what we look at as Landscape Architects. What do we need to think about and how this fits into it. We look at the whole system, we look at the immediate needs for context. Geographic context, historic ones, consider the budget and funding requirements. Operations and Maintenance, want to make sure they can continue serving the public for years to come and can last. We have regulatory items to adhere to: safety, access etc. The community – look for advice and input on how this plan develops. Identify the aerial, context and issues. Looking at the edges, making sure we make something that fits the uses of the adjacent areas. Sidewalk, parking, alleyways. We have 3 main areas that will be entry/access and grade to make sure we're accessing the park easily. Looking at the streetscape, how could we widen that space to facilitate movement or enjoy the park to make it more pedestrian friendly. Grade change, how can we use that to be a positive factor to still have it be accessible. (Overview of ownership map)

Rod asked about ownership clarify in map?

Ellen read off the owners per the map.

Overview of ½ mile and ¼ mile park. Go over the scale comparison board – Chestnut, Ecolab Plaza, and Hamm Plaza. Overview of precedent park Spring Street Park – Comparison because it gives an idea of what can be accomplished in a similar space. Identifying boards with existing photographs, looking at different styles of programming – and what some of those programming elements mean. We want you to take a look at these ideas and hope you'll let us know what you think.

Peg Ganey: If the City owns the Alley, why can't they expand in the Alley?

Rod: I want to make sure anything we design has the ability to expand. It's designated by the resolution for the northern half to be vacated of the block. It would be helpful to keep traffic at bay especially with children nearby.

Beth: The alleyway would be under the jurisdiction of Public Works, looked to PED to address further.

Andy: It's on the table, it's outside of the scope of this – but we can keep it in discussion.

Parker: A lot of the images are accessible. The grade of the park now is not currently accessible, that is something to

Rod: The 4th corner is where the City Walk residents access the park currently.

Bob: Th NE corner could be something that can serve as a safety barrier for traffic as well.

Bill: Can we find out what the city plans to do with Robert Street Development 2020.

Ellen: We can talk to Public Works if they're doing the streetscape. I want ot make sure we're all aware that we're considering future expansion. It's something that is being considered.

Beth: For all on the design committee – you should have a list of dots. You can think about the dots as money. If there is one thing that is really important – you can put them all on one place. This will help us understand what we want to see in this park, help to identify priorities.

Jeanne: How will anyone know about this survey?

Beth: We are hoping that you can share this with your organizations. The City will also post on website

Doug: In the area of communication – I saw an announcement of this meeting. You can't announce it the day before and hope to have people here.

Beth: At some point there will be here, we wanted to focus this group but let the public know they were welcome to listen. We'll take about 10 mins. to use your dots.

(Dot Exercise)

Beth: regroup and look at the dots – what do we see?

- It's an active place, entertainment places
- Seating is important – what kind, more of functional and age-appropriate. Possibility of seating that can be recreational

Beth: Other thoughts or reflections? Did you have clarity or were you struggling?

Jeanne: I really think there are not any parks that offer recreation. It's not the same downtown that was here 20 years ago. We need to pay attention to who lives downtown. One of the saddest thing I've experienced was talking with kids at Wacouta Commons who didn't have a place to play basketball.

Beth: Entertainment came up a lot – what do we think of that?

Doug: there are some divided feelings about Mears Park, some like the activity some think it's too much.

(Committee Member) Are there ordinances on this for noise? How would you address acoustics?

(Committee Member) Movies in the park would be valuable.

Bill: Some things that are just a baseline assumption (cleaned, accessible, etc.) we can all agree here.

Jon: We are trying to do a lot of things with limited space. If we have a venue for entertainment, it's still space for people to use otherwise.

Jeanne – Friends of Mears Park or an organization like this, there could be another group to collaborate with. Could something like that be an option? If there is ongoing community involvement it can make the park more successful.

Beth: Jonathan made a great Segway, we have a lot of great things to see in a small space. How do we accomplish that? Parks will go back and see these lists and come up with concepts as to how we get to these areas. Ellen – can we talk about some of these precedent images, did anything stand out to you?

Jon – does not like the rolling hill recreation area, it's not very multi-functional.

Lynda – A mix of these pictures would be great.

Beth – We talked about green and landscaping, do we see something more natural, should it be more urban. What do you think of balance of green and hardscape.

Doug – What are the challenges to maintain these parks spaces, Mike to address?

Mike – What we need to spend to anticipate the durability of the space?

Beth -From a regulatory point, stormwater and how do we address that. With the sloped site, how do we address that and erosion.

Jennifer – How do make this place nice in winter months as well?

Peg – I think we have a distinct lack of trees, trees would be a nice addition for shade.

Bill – also with the edges of the street. If What I understand will happen with street recon, there will be more trees.

Jon – Would it be useful to get information for Rice Park reconstruction?

Ellen – Yes, we are currently doing some work here adding planting here, reinforcing the lawn there. It is a lot of what is happening already, but improved.

Jeanne – Wacouta Commons, what is happening here?

Ellen – We are looking at funds here to see if there is half-court basketball and potentially a water feature. Looking at new trees and plantings.

Jeanne - Asked for confirmation on size of Wacouta as compared to Pedro Park.

Ellen – read off confirmation of size from boards (1.07 vs. .45ac)

Beth – Evaluation form – please fill out and provide comment for us and how did this meeting here go? If you have questions about the PSA process, that is Andrew's jurisdiction. Question if you have specific letters to get to the process – and they can come to Ellen.

Ellen – Your information name/contact information will be on the website

Rod – We have ground rules, is this the ground rules? Pointing to the half page handout. Will this be determined by consensus and voting?

Beth: No, this is an advisory committee

Rod: How do we know that our words are transmitted through the process? The Dot exercise was helpful.

Beth: The input will all be documented as part of the Park Process. If you have formal comments, these would be transmitted through the HRA process. Want to be clear that the input here is more of a soft input as advisory input.

Jeanne – Will there be a document at the end that we are okay with?

Ellen – there will not be a formal process and vote of approval.

Mike – To that point, the input from this group is valuable and the success of the outcome will be clear if this is an element. In terms of the output of the group will be coming up with a concept.

Ellen – If Ackerberg does develop the building, we would move forward to have more meetings to get into design decisions. This would not be the final idea.

Beth: Ellen will bring forward examples about programming, circulation, plaza spaces, program elements that we're hearing from you.

Doug: At what time will we address the items in the Parking Lot?

Beth: The City Staff will gather and come up with more information to you for the next meeting.

Wrap up and thanks for participation!

