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**Pedro Park 2018
Community Design Advisory Committee Meeting #3
Meeting Minutes***

June 21, 2018 6:00-8:00 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: (Welcome and Introductions)
Lynda Hay – Lunds & Byerlys
Sue Ohlrogge – Renodis
Pat Wolf – Commercial Real Estate
Parker Evans – The Ackerberg Group
Doug Throckmorton – Central Presbyterian Church,
Don Keefe – Donerly Inc, Adjacent Parking lot Owner
Jonathan Flory – The Pointe
Scott Miller – Rossmor Business Association
(Joined the group later in the meeting)
John Kavanaugh – MPR
Chris Trost – CapitolRiver Council

(City Staff Intro)

Mary Norton, Landscape Architect; Ellen Stewart, Landscape Architect and Project Manager for Pedro Park; Anne Gardner, Landscape Architect, Alice Messer, Design and Construction Manager. Planning & Economic Development: Lucy Thompson, Andy Hestness, Hannah Burchill, Martin Schieckel.

Beth: In the past, we have had members of the public join us beyond these tables. There are comment cards available at the front table to capture your input, but just want you to know we will continue to focus the discussion with committee members around the table here. Here is overview of where we are to date. At meeting No.1 we tried to identify what kinds of items and activities would the committee like to see in the park. We generally talk about programming. At meeting no. 2 we discussed feedback from the community and did a design exercise.

Today we'll be discussing concepts that have been created for conversation. These are very general ideas about how much space do we want to allocate to these ideas. The designers are still a long way from getting to details like park furniture. The Parking lot, just want to remind people about this process that in an effort to focus discussion we'll use this if we identify items for follow-up. Following last week's meeting, we didn't really have any new questions. We had discussion about the comprehensive plan, the alley, etc. These issues were addressed at the last

meeting. We're at a place in this meeting where we've completed the task at hand for this group after this meeting and Andy is going to help walk us through what is next in the process. Andy: We passed out a sheet that we had the first meeting that outlines the HRA process and how that was kicked off in Nov. 2017. As we get into this process today, we have where we are coming up on the development agreement. We're figuring out what the building project and park project would like side by side. The HRA board would have information on all the terms, agreement, and the work developed by this group that would be a part of that. The time to talk about the building project would be during that public comment process. We don't have dates set now, but we have the process laid out as to when public hearings would be and when public notices would come out. Some documentation would come through with that and opportunity to send email and also in person to talk about the building project. I'm happy to take any questions afterwards today either here or by email any time.

Karl: We're not talking about what happens to the land if the City doesn't sell it?

Andy: So the HRA voted to go into a tentative developer status in November 2017 which is in regards to the building sale.

Karl: No, I'm talking about the park we're looking at, will that be sold?

Andy: No, that is parkland and will continue to be park land.

Doug: So the only recommendation the HRA would make would be to sell the annex building and develop the small parcel for the park?

Andy: Yes, that's the process that they are considering.

Jonathan: When we submit what we want to do with this corner, can we also list all the things we would want to do with this park given the size?

Andy: Yes.

Scott: It was implied in the paper that Pedro park would be sold. Is that not true?

Andy: The park is park land, we cannot and would not sell it.

Beth: We want to let you know that all this information would be available on the website and staff will provide a summary to go to the HRA.

Doug: But not as part of project will that information be shared.

Beth: Your thoughts on all those topics would be included as part of this process. I'll introduce Ellen now to walk us through the design.

Ellen: On the second page we'll discuss the diagram on process. This is the third of these meetings to discuss the park design as part of the HRA process. We used what we have heard to date as a starting point. We have also used what we have heard from the greater community as input and surveys to get feedback. All of those things have informed what we have been working towards tonight. We were looking through the desires of the group and during the first and second meetings we worked on prioritizing these. I want to make sure that

it's clear that once there is a date for the HRA meeting, we will be sending the link to these materials and what the opportunity for comment but we will make sure we get that information to the entire group.

To give everyone some orientation here's an aerial view, Park is located adjacent to Robert street and 10th. The park is adjacent directly to the PSA building. We have been and will continue to look at these contextual influences and connections to the park. We've heard a lot about seating, shade, safe place, a design that is specific to this neighborhood, something that uses the topography to the advantage on the programming.

Jonathan: Didn't we have three groups?

Ellen: We had three tables set up, but only split into two tables. So, we have three drivers based on what we heard for the design: Flexibility, Comfort, and Contrast. Flexibility is to make sure we have multiple uses here, comfort in shade and seating making a place feel welcoming, contract would be a landmark, something that brings vibrancy to the area. We see a mix of old and new architecture together in this area. Elements that could be in the vision are seen here for this. There was this desire for shade, we wanted to consider this and identify areas where we have intense sun. These diagrams show throughout the day where we have primary use area and there really is a lack of shade throughout the area. This is an important thing we wanted to point out as we consider placement of elements in the site.

We have two different concepts, they vary but also have some similarities and consistent pieces that we wanted to make sure we addressed. Each one of them has grade change, but it is less severe throughout the site. Both have raised the grade throughout the site with fill, but must tie in at the edges of the park. Instead of having a concave shape, we have more of a plane and helps us to be easier to see in and out of the site and provide accessibility.

We're also connecting to the context of the site in these. We'll have shade through trees and a structure before the trees are able to grow up. They have different sizes of lawn area. Each design has the capacity to expand south even though these have a wall. Want to make sure we are clear that that possibility is still in play with these two concepts.

The first concept emphasizes open space and puts a water feature at the north. We have two dog areas that are at the edges to hopefully keep them in a designated place. In terms of the play area, we have a wall that would have a railing on it as a protected place and keep them away from the street. The dark line through the middle of the park is a section line, the next graphic shows what that would look like cut through the park. On the right would be 10th street in the section, we would bring the grade up and carry a plane across and then slope down towards the southern edge of the park and would have. We can also have benches or seating there as well. The perspective here shows a little more about the circulation and gathering area in the central open space. This shows the public safety annex building wall is exposed here as well.

The next concept, Concept B – This one is more geometric obviously, it feels a bit more active than the other one to bring people into the park. There is a expanded edge that would allow shade structures and a way to sit and observe the streetscape edge, eat lunch etc. The play area is more centrally located here and has access to the water feature here. The water feature introduces sterraces here and proides a way for the the hillside to act and use the space here. It is a very flexible space but also is contained as well. The section is similar to the grade in the

other one. The previous concept was a more gradual version. The seating steps would be built up at the edges that you can see. The water feature then moves out into the play area and drops down the hillside as an area potential event space area. The Dog area for this one is off of Robert street here, there is a separation between these spaces. The dog is not an off-leash place, but more a designated place for relief.

Beth: So, I believe you each have a worksheet here with questions, if you could take a little time to fill those out now that is what you will leave with us.

Karl: How do you keep the trees healthy and alive?

Ellen: There are several things that we can do to make sure that the soils are suitable, and proper planting methods are followed, to make sure that trees will thrive.

Doug: Ellen are your figures to scale?

Ellen: Yes

Scott: Do you want negative feedback as well, what we do not like about the park concepts?

Ellen: Yes, definitely – any and all feedback would be great.

(Break into working groups at the tables)

Beth: So, I wandered back and forth between both tables and there was some great conversation happening. Could we have a representative to share out what was discussed? We'd like to come to a collective feedback and want to make sure we have time to get your input sheets filled out. With that, I'll ask someone from the front table to share.

Jonathan: I think, I would say that everyone liked A open space in general. We talked a lot about more A than B. Neither idea seems to consider the year-around aspect and talked about ways to have more evergreen plans and things that include fire. We learned how you have to rent those out. Concept B looks claustrophobic, maybe put fewer trees in to open it up more. Lighting, we wanted to make sure it wasn't flooded but softer light that could be at the edges as well. That way it is safe and works into the evening hours.

Don: There were also some concerns that people might linger on the edges in concept A, so we talked about looking for ways to invite people into the center of the park.

Alice: There was a comment about spunk and the vibrancy of color, making reference to the existing mural on the wall.

Jonathan: The reason we said to add color would be to add interest year around.

Beth: Great, thank you for sharing. The back table?

Pat: Not to make your job harder, but we liked B better. We thought both were nice, but I think what pushed us over to B was that we were able to see that something similar to A now in the park and it might be used that way. Instead some of the intentionality of the functions would

not be as respected. There was some concern that we should not have too many trees from one person in the group. We liked the intimacy of the spaces.

Scott: We liked the moveable furniture too.

Pat: We thought that there was not enough space for the dogs in plan

Karl: I want to make sure this is seen as a City Park and not Ackerberg's park and making that obvious. I'm not sure that's appropriate to have stores and such on the sides.

John: I came in late, but I think but plan B seems to align more with what city employees would use. I think both would function well for the downtown area. A is like what we have now.

Beth: Well, we heard we like some of A and some of B -maybe if we can just put the letters aside – what were the things that you really liked?

Chris: I think the private spaces and separate was what we like best. The fact that there were different kinds of seating, a water feature, different kinds of spaces whether they be private or communal and that was much more obvious in B than A.

Scott: The performance space jumped out to me right away

Pat: I like the intimacy of what plan B did versus a big wide open area

Jonathan: A looks like just another park, but B looked like something different than anything else downtown. It seemed like it could be "our park" for the neighborhood

Don: I think this site is smaller than it conveys.

Doug: We don't have any space and when we start cutting it up into rooms, it feels crowded

Jonathan: It's almost as if we had twice the space we could do more

Karl: I would say that big open space is intimidating and the smaller ones are more inviting for people to come in and being more welcoming.

Beth: Let's keep in mind that we all respond in different ways to space and how we perceive them.

Sue: I think residents respond very differently than someone who works in downtown. You're trying to please very different needs here. I want a quiet place to have lunch

Scott: One thing that it reminded me of with Open space is that we already have that in Wacouta commons, and they hardly use it. The kids use the play areas but otherwise not so much.

Chris: Two afternoons a week the parks department has been having events there.

Scott: In concept it seems like open space works, but I'm not sure it would in reality be used that way

Beth: Let's flip that, is there anything you would recommend to City staff to stay away from?

(No response)

Karl: It's a great thought to think of a 4-season park, we didn't think of that at our table.

Don: We did like the shallow seating terraces that was a great idea for seating.

Jonathan: We also talked about how high should it be to be good for seating.

Beth: Is there any other questions with city staff for the group?

Ellen / Mary: Nothing additional at this time, we appreciate all the feedback. It will be really helpful in guiding the further development of a concept.

Beth: One thing we struggle with is scale, are there any parks downtown that meet this scale?

Ellen: Chestnut plaza and Ecolab Plaza have similar footprints to this park. We have scale comparisons from the first meeting that would be available online.

Beth: We do have comment cards if anyone from the audience would like to fill out these. We also have a sheet that is available with dates of the next states.

Jonathan: One of the first slides alluded to a 4th meeting – is that still pending?

Ellen: The HRA process is what Andy was talking about. If the vote goes through and the City goes through with the development, that's when we would be talking about more advanced design concepts. We're just getting to a point where we can provide information to the HRA and Ackerberg. We would have at least one more, but for now we would be stopping but if/when we move forward all would be welcome back.

Doug: I, like a few other people, recognize that this committee is not being asked to do this. But since no one can commit to this I have to withdraw from the process and cannot be a part of this. Because I don't know what City council will do with the information, I will be resigning.

Beth: Thank you, you've all provided some great input and we so appreciate your time.

Ellen: We really do want to get the best result out of this as possible and putting the energy to the feedback.

Karl: I am not going to resign, but I don't want you to go to City Council and say this is what the "community wants" because that is not true.

Jonathan: Yes, that's true.

Ellen: We really appreciate all of your time and energy being put into this. I would encourage you to share your thoughts and feedback through the HRA public process that Andy has described going forward. We will continue to keep you informed and share the packet of materials developed going to the HRA as part of that process. Thanks again.