



MEETING NOTES

CITY OF SAINT PAUL

MEETING DATE: July 6, 2016

LOCATION: Onsite Tour – Parking Lot 1455 Victoria Way West & Victoria Park Apartments, 740 Victoria Street South

ATTENDING: Anna Bruesewitz, Halle O’Falvey, Jennifer Verbrugge, Mark Toupal, Minda Holst, Pete Regnier, Renee Pritzker, Alice Messer, Cheeneng (Chee) Yang

NOT IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Gibbs, Dave Thune, Dusty Thune, Julie Falteseck, Karen Misiewicz, Laura Sopeth, Lynda Anderson, Patricia (Pat) Salmi, Paula Faughender, Shamus O’Meara, Thabiso Rowan

NOTES BY: Chee Yang, July 7, 2016

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

Alice Messer welcomed the design advisory committee in parking lot prior to walking tour. Refer to page 3 of Presentation Materials.

- Alice led a walking tour of the project site
 - Provided overview of project layout and explanation of future development within park
 - Walked the location of the future universally accessible play area
 - Ended tour at Victoria Park Apartments for informal presentation

Alice opened up the meeting.

- Begin with introductions – state name and brief introduction with statement of interest in project
 - Anna Bruesewitz – A therapist at Children’s Hospital – work with all kinds of children
 - Halle O’Falvey – Neighborhood Representative
 - Jennifer Verbrugge – Neighborhood Representative
 - Mark Toupal – Director of City of Saint Paul Adaptive Recreation
 - Minda Holst – Physical Therapist with Saint Paul Public Schools
 - Pete Regnier – Representative of Saint Paul and Ramsey County Parks and Trails
 - Renee Pritzker – Attorney, has a child with a disability with personal understanding of the need for a safe play space for children with disabilities. Private funding committee leader for the play area.
- Alice provided overview of expectations and role of Design Advisory Committee (DAC).
 - *Respect for different perspectives with an open-mind*
 - *Willingness to listen and hear views/ideas*
 - *Courtesy of one another*

- *Understand and balance needs of all park users*
- *Contribute in a positive way*
- *Attendance at every meeting*
- Community Vision and DAC is piece of design process. Other components go into design including safety, maintenance/operations, fiscal realities and existing plans.
- Overview of current project schedule and budget.
 - Received \$200,000 for the design of the play area.
 - \$2 Million project with private fundraising committee
 - \$1 Million for play area
 - \$1 Million for picnic shelter & restroom facility
 - Project to break ground in spring 2018.
 - The design process is expected to conclude fall 2016. This will allow the fundraising committee to use renderings of the site to assist with fundraising.
 - Project will be on-hold until the fundraising efforts are complete and we are able to bid out the project for construction.

Alice presented Site Analysis. Refer to pages 5 -8 of Presentation Materials.

- Overview of site context to existing neighborhood, surrounding potential park users, facilities and academic institutions with children who may utilize universally accessible play area
- Review of approved master plan for Victoria Park
 - Active north side of park & passive south side of park where play area is located
- Review of site analysis with present conditions within park
 - Critical access points and critical connections within the park (trails, parking) and to the Great River Passage Plan
 - Important to understand the site as existing conditions, zoning restrictions, and site requirements all come into play during the design process.
 - Redirecting drainage away from the bluffs to engineered water system and wetlands
 - Protection of existing wetlands
 - How do you make the park feel like a public space when surrounded by private residential housing? Need to make as many connections as possible.
 - Thinking about access – how will people get to the play area? Where are park entrances? How do you connect the site to adjacent facilities including transit, regional trails and sidewalks.
- Presentation of Current Status
 - Outline of trail to be completed summer of 2016
 - Completion of road and parking lot end of summer 2016

Questions & comments from Design Advisory Meeting during Alice's site analysis presentation:

- Question regarding fundraising on who should be contacted if interested in helping to fundraise. Renee P. replied anyone interested can help.
 - Renee P. is interested in setting up an online fundraiser with a video interviewing people for the need of a universally accessible play area. Renee P. needs help in finding interested people.
- There was an initial concern about the play area being segregated – meant only for children with a disability away from the rest of the community. After discussing and clarification, this play area is meant to be inclusive and for everyone to enjoy and have fun.
- Question about the setback of the playground to the bluff – how far can the play area surfacing extend to before the bluff?
 - Alice to clarify Critical Area rules for next meeting
- A concern of how accessible it is to the universally accessible play area and its location.
 - Unsure about how the location was chosen. It was pointed out this location is ideal for children with sensitive sensory because it is away from the active northern part of the park and in a much more calm area.
 - Regarding accessibility, Alice responded the new parking lot locating directly across from the play area.
- A question regarding Victoria Park's priorities. The universally accessible play area made 12th on the list during the master plan committee and was wondering how it came before other priorities on the list.
 - The parks and recreation department received a notice that people were interested in this type of play area and there will be private fundraising funds towards the universally accessible play area.
- What kind of surfacing will be at the athletic field?
 - To be determined when advisory committee developed for multi-use athletic field.
- A question about what age range children use the playground next to the Nova Academy. A neighborhood representative responded that it is a playground suited for older children, not for 2-5 year olds.
- Question regarding the paths if they will be plowed during winter to prolong the use of the park?
 - A comment if it is for accessibility purposes will most likely it will be plowed but not all trails are plowed in the winter.

Alice asked for comments regarding the goals and objectives. Refer to page 9 of Presentation Materials.

- All agreed on current goals & objectives
1. Promote an active lifestyle for ALL play area site users
 - There was an agreement to separate the play area from younger children to older children providing play equipment that are suited for the appropriate age
 - Have several different play spaces
 - An idea of fitness equipment for adults near the play area

2. Promote access, safety, and comfort for all users
 - For the different play spaces provide seamless transitions with no physical barriers. Instead, have distinct changes like visual cues, materials, and color.
 - Universally accessible play will be an enclosed space with on entry and exit point.
3. Promote the educational opportunities of play
 - Alice mentioned the workshop she attended where studies have found that water and sand has a high impact on children and their sensory experience.
 - Suggestion for raised sandboxes instead of ground sandboxes for accessibility
4. Promote the therapeutic opportunities of play
 - Would like play area to include literacy. The example given was at the science museum exhibit where children were allowed to draw and be creative.
5. Promote the environmental opportunities of Victoria Park
 - Opportunity to educate children about wildlife, the Mississippi River. Include a visual signage or map to indicate important locations and river
 - Include brail and sign language play pieces or signs for children to learn
 - If possible, incorporate limestone.

Alice asked for comments about Public Art and to start thinking about what kind of art will fit the environment of the park and neighborhood.

- Mural
- Words, phrases, or poetry in paved paths
 - An example is an existing art with a berm shaped into a dragon with poetry being part of the art.
 - Poetry could be included at the site of the amphitheater.
- Question about what is public art?
 - 1% of budget is required to go towards art. It can be anything ranging from play features to sculptures.
- It would be good to get the neighborhood involved.
- Possibly look into the artists who are designing Can Can Wonderland – indoor mini golf course in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood.

Other comments, concerns, and questions.

- Question on status of name change. Alice to follow – up with Fort Road Federation to check on status. Concerns with fundraising efforts if name of the park changes mid-fundraising.

Alice concluded meeting. Next meeting is Wednesday, August from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Preliminary concepts to be presented based on goals and objectives from Mtg #1.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 3, 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.