



Euclid Square Park Community Meeting #3

Location: Oak Park Conservatory, 615 Garfield Street
Date: June 2, 2009
Time: 7pm

Minutes of Meeting

Mr. Gary Balling, Executive Director of the Park District, welcomed the attendees to the meeting and introduced Park District Commissioners, members of the Park District Citizen Committee and staff that were present. He stated that the Euclid Square Park Site planning process was the 11th park planning process undertaken by the Park District. There have been two focus groups and two community meetings already held where the design consultants received initial input on the current conditions of the park. Mr. Grandy then confirmed the schedule for the process as follows:

A 4th meeting would be held if necessary.

A consideration of the master plan by the Park District Board will take place at the Park Board Committee of the Whole Meeting on July 2nd.

Residents can contact the Park District through telephone, Emails and Mail.

Website: <http://www.oakparkparks.com/>

Contact: Diane Stanke Email dianes@oakparkparks.com

Mr. Balling noted the increased public turnout and welcomed feedback from all at the meeting and encouraged them to tell their friends and neighbors about the planning process. He presented the web address and Park District contact information to the meeting..

He then introduced the design team and handed the meeting over to John Mac Manus of Altamanu, Inc. who made a PowerPoint presentation and requested comments from the attendees. Mr. Mac Manus explained that the design teams role was to look at this park with the residents and then to come up with an image of how this park should look 20 years from now. He reiterated the information already



collected and presented at the previous public meetings. Josephine Bellalta of Altamanu Inc. went into some detail about the current unfortunate condition of the trees, informing the meeting about the threat to the many ash trees in the park; the aging and deteriorating condition of the crab apples and the how the pines are infested with borers and Diplodia. Please see the PowerPoint presentation for more detailed information

John then showed the meeting the 4 designs for the future park that were discussed in the second community meeting and reviewed the general comments and feedback received in regard to these plans. Following this review, John presented the new master plan based on the feedback received about the previous 4 plans. After describing the new design John opened up the floor comments. The following is a synopsis of these comments:

General Comments

Great job incorporating comments into the design

Where are the boulders?

- John states that they are tucked away at the edges instead of standing out as a bold prominent feature. They are incorporated into the edge of the mounds and are something to discover and something to sit on.

Are there bike racks in the park?

- There are bike racks near the baseball field on the south end and one east of the tennis court. These locations are not finalized.

Taylor has bike racks around the street and no kids use those. Kids want bikes within five feet of where they are.

Josephine Bellalta of Altamanu reported on a telephone conversation that she had with a resident who was not able to attend the meeting. The resident stated the following:

- There was too much focus on organized sports and not enough on the more bucolic aspects of our parks.
- Liked the curved paths
- Tennis courts are often full and all courts in use by Fenwick students resulting in people going to other parks to play.

Trees

Are the existing trees along Fillmore to remain? They took a big one down two years ago and I could not figure out why.

- These will remain. The one that was taken out was due to disease. No healthy trees are taken down in Oak Park unless there is a very important reason. This parkway is technically village property and not under the control of the Park District but we have a good relationship with Forestry and the parkway will be replanted.

Play Center:



The designers have incorporated comments from the last meeting and the play center now focuses on smaller children.

The seating on the south end faces into the park but not the play area?

- We could put in a backless bench there

I like the equipment chosen. It hits the sweet spot for the intended age group.

I like the equipment as well. A picnic table incorporated in this area might be nice.

Mr. Balling: No fence on south end, correct?

- No fence, the equipment for the older kids 5 to 8 years old is located on the south end of the playground, closest to the area with no fence.

Tennis Courts:

Are the tennis courts moved at all?

- They are moved slightly west to allow for a straight path through on the east side.

Are you keeping the short walls in the corners of the tennis courts?

Budget permitting, yes

I think they would look nice and give the park a more refined feel.

I was not aware that it was contractual for Fenwick to leave one court open for the general public.

- Mr. Balling comments that Fenwick has been very cooperative.

A sign that says one group can't use more than 3 courts at a time would be nice. Many people are unaware of the rule with Fenwick and when a group is taking up all four courts they would feel they had a right to ask to use one.

Southern Mound & Ball Field

How far south is the baseball diamond being moved?

- Josephine states that it is not moving south so much as west. Straightening the paths and moving the field gives more space for playing and for more mounds.

Is there a plan to increase the actual diamond size?

Josephine states it is drawn according to standards and the diamond actually shrinks a bit in size

The base paths are currently not long enough for the kids. They are currently short by about 5 feet.

Is a reach-in cabinet provided for equipment storage?

- The equipment storage will be placed next to the port o potty. Upon the suggestion of Mike Grandy, both will be housed in a structure so that they look a bit more permanent.

How do you keep the clay on the baseball field and keep it from running onto the paths? This is currently a problem at Lincoln.

- Jamil Bou Saab from Terra states that this will be dealt with in the same way that they are currently dealing with it at Field and Ridgeland. At these fields a small concrete gutter that collects the clay is placed at the edges of the diamond. Maintenance is able to then go in and shovel out the collected debris.



I like the passive viewing area. It is good for viewing games for those that do not want to be too close

People watch games from about where the passive area is located already, except on the other (north) side of the path.

I like the passive area because it is not just for baseball. Baseball is only occurring for a small fraction of the time, and when there is a game going on, you have to watch out for fly balls no matter where you sit.

Lighting

Last time we talked about the lighting plan. A promotional piece in a paper or something made a statement about an extensive lighting plan.

- There are currently seven lights in the park and the redesigned plan also incorporates seven. These may be shifted slightly to accommodate other changes, but we don't want to light the park anymore than it is lit today. We will try to keep the existing lights in place as it is an added cost to move them.

Paths, Bump Outs and Street Plaza

Why bump outs on Wesley but not Euclid?

- Jamil says that this is due to the fact that Euclid is a busier street than Wesley and also a bike route. Bikers do not like bump outs. They are also an increased maintenance cost.

Part of the reason for bump outs on Wesley was because of the perceived blind spot on the corner.

When I am going west on Fillmore at Wesley there is a big blind spot, worse than going east. It is a blind spot until I get out into the intersection. Slowing traffic on Wesley would be reassuring. Can you put a 4-way stop on both corners?

- Jamil says that is an issue that needs to be taken up with the village, and traffic counts would have to occur.

Police seem to know that there is a situation there. Cop cars are parked there once a week stopping people.

Wouldn't bump outs be good (along Euclid)? Baseball games make it very crowded. There is a real concern for child safety, particularly with the playground on that side.

Are the bump outs on Wesley only on the west side? I would like to see them on both sides. I live on the east side and parking is light enough so that it won't affect residents. Parking is only bad when Fenwick is over there. Baseball tends to park on Euclid.

Paths

Gary brings up the issue of snow clearing. Park Districted started trying to do a better job clearing snow two years ago. What you see in this park are paths that are not wide enough for plows. Gary asks if there is a lot of walking across the park in winter when people are trying to get to public transportation.



Is it necessary to continue clearing walks?

- The Park District can get cited and fined by the Village if the District doesn't clear the walks.

There is not a lot of movement across the park. People that live on Wesley cut across to go to CVS but not a lot of crossing to get to public transit.

It looks like the promenades would be wide enough to plow.

I know we talked about plowing the serpentine walks. Why plow at all? I wouldn't expect it to be plowed in the winter. These technically aren't village sidewalks so what is the issue?

- Mr. Grandy says that this is a gray area and there is a possibility of complaints.

Is there some sort of material that can distinguish the curvy paths from the right of way? This would make them seem more integrated into the park.

- All walks would be concrete as it is durable
- Gary states that this is what the Park District has called for
- Mike says that concrete can sometimes be cheaper than asphalt and will require some regular maintenance.

John asked if there were any more questions or comments

Some of the attendees praised the plan and the process.

As there were no further comments John thanked the attendees.

Mr. Gary Balling outlined the next steps in the process. The next step would typically be a fourth meeting. It seems like a consensus had been reached so there was no need for another meeting. The next step would be consideration of the plan by the Park District Board. This will happen on July 2nd. If it is accepted, \$380,000 has been set aside in 2010 for the first phase. The first phase would address drainage issues with the baseball field. With a plan like this, Mr. Balling stated, there were additional funding possibilities which the Park District will be watching out for. With no more questions of comments, Mr. Balling once again thanked the attendees.

Minutes compiled by Sean McKay and checked by John Mac Manus of Altamanu Inc.