

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND
RECREATION



CITY OF SAINT
PAUL

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May 2, 2012

Pedro Park Meeting Notes (05/01/2012)

Meeting Location: Keys Café, Saint Paul, MN

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Attendees:

Design Advisory Committee: Julie Griffin, Tim Griffin, Bob Spaulding, Hayley Johnson, Kate Swenson, Karl Karlson, Vince Gillespie, Pat Wolf, Bud Kleppe, Julia Schrenkler, Denise Scarlett,

Other: John & Lani Joosten (Pointe Residents), Rita Adams (Resident), Patricia Lindgren (City Council Staff), Melissa Martinez- Sones (Capital River Council), Lucy Thompson (Saint Paul PED), Don Ganje (Saint Paul Parks), Anne Gardner (Saint Paul Parks), Karin Misciewicz (Saint Paul Parks), Eriks Ludins (Saint Paul PW)

Meeting #3 Goal:

Review on-line survey results, establish design goals, determine preferred activities, and outline a phased approach to the park construction.

- 1) Welcome & Introductions
 - a) Individuals introduced themselves and who they represented.
- 2) Anne Gardner gave a brief recap of the first two meetings (Oct 25, 2011 and Nov 29, 2011) and reviewed the goal for Meeting #3
- 3) Survey results – Anne Gardner presented the survey results beginning with how the survey was distributed, where people lived or worked related to the site, and the age group of responders. 883 people took the survey and the majority of people work or live within 4 blocks of the park site.
- 4) Anne reviewed questions 4-8 from the survey which asked people's preference for style, activities, elements, and planting style. Additionally, the survey asked what

people thought of the new developments (Penfield/Lunds and LRT station at 10th and Cedar). Conclusions from the survey are as follows:

- i) Overall, most people thought a “Natural” style is most appropriate.
 - ii) Passive recreation and gathering spaces for socializing or community events are most desired
 - iii) Survey participants recognized that the community would benefit from play areas, dog walking, and active recreation.
 - iv) Overall, preferences for the top three activities followed the same trend between residents and non-residents by preferring passive recreation, socializing, and gathering space. There is a slight difference in the rating of dog walking, recreation and play areas.
 - v) Seating areas, a shade structure, ornamental plantings & water features are preferred elements for the park.
 - vi) The trend in preferences for elements were similar, though residents rated performance space, gardening and inclusion of a dog run higher than non-residents.
 - vii) Shade Trees, Gardens with Flowers and Lawn Area are most preferred
 - viii) Both developments will bring potential park users to the neighborhood and will be considered in the park design.
- 5) Comments from the survey – in total there were 556 comments from the survey
- i) Most comments related to the style of landscaping, the desire for seating, performance space, and to create a kid – friendly park.
- 6) Survey Summary:
- a) The survey response reached a significant number of residential and working community members who represent potential users of the Pedro Park site.
 - b) The preferred style of the park is a ‘natural’ style defined as organic/circular form, natural materials, and vegetation replicating a natural setting. A ‘traditional’ style is also valued.
 - c) The preferred activities and elements lend itself to a “Passive Park” to accommodate gathering spaces, seating for individuals or small groups in a family friendly setting.
 - d) Attractions to the park might also include ornamental plantings, a performance area, a shade structure or gazebo, a dog area, and a water fountain.
 - e) The preferences for style, activities, elements, and planting will be used to guide the next stage of the design process.
- 7) Next steps for Park implementation.
- i) State of the block- Anne Gardner reviewed a diagram showing the current land ownership on the block:
 - (1) The block is divided into seven parcels owned by three different entities in addition to the city.
 - (2) The Pedro family donated the parcel in the northeast corner of the site
 - (3) The donated parcel will be used for construction staging for the Penfield/Lunds development site until Fall 2014 (approx).

- (a) Discussion regarding whether or not there is a better location for construction staging on an adjacent block. The city ‘owns’ the Pedro parcel so it benefits the city to use the site for construction staging.
- (b) **Protect the existing historic foundation wall during Penfield/Lunds construction and investigate the possibility of incorporating the wall into the park design.**
- (4) The city is considering where the Police operations building might be relocated
 - (a) Discussion regarding why the police building has not moved yet. It is expensive (multi-million dollar expense) to build a new facility to house the police operations. The building is in active use and until there is money to rebuild a new facility and demolish the building, it will remain.
 - (b) Questions asked as to when removal of building might occur. City staff indicated that no timeline has been established due to uncertainty of funding source.
- (5) Funding for future land acquisition has not been secured.
 - (a) Questions regarding whether or not other land owners might consider donating property, but city staff is not aware of this. The donerly and Beneficial parcels are income- producing so it is unlikely that the parcels would be donated.
 - (b) Suggestion by Pat Wolf to use a program called **crowd funding** under the JOBS ACT (April 2012- Obama) where individuals donate small amounts of money to fund raise- Would this work for Pedro Park?
 - (i) **City Staff to consider all possible funding sources for land acquisition – grants, federal funds, etc.**
- ii) Proposed buildout of Pedro Park
 - (1) Four stages for buildout:
 - (a) Temporary- Pocket park – create a useable area for the neighborhood, construct a community space that is relatively low cost investment yet will set the stage for creating a community gathering area. Complete in coordination with Penfield/Lunds opening
 - (i) **Ideas:** Movies on Police Annex Wall, Temporary Art Installation, Lawn, trees, seating should be included
 - (ii) Create a barrier so cars do not park on park site.
 - (b) Short term- City Parcels – After the Police Annex building is removed, expand the pocket park on city owned land to create a community gathering area with permanent tables and seating for small gatherings , include a multiuse element that will allow for gatherings or performance, implement plantings and streetscape on 10th street that relates to the Penfield site.
 - (i) **Ideas:** Work with land owners to ‘shift’ parking areas so that the park could take up the north half of the block
 - (c) Mid Term- Extension- Accommodate pedestrian movement through the park by bridging over existing sunken parking area at 10th and Cedar

corner, vacate alley and make park continuous along Robert St., add streetscape elements including lighting, trees, paving and signage along Robert St.

- (d) Long Term – U shaped – Add fill at 10th and Minnesota so the site is level with the sidewalk elevation, Design a family friendly greenspace with artful elements to encourage play, community interaction and accommodate small performances. Find alternative parking options for childcare center and Naomi, improve streetscape plantings along Minnesota and 9th street.
 - (i) Ideas: Create a smooth transition between the Childcare Center and adjacent park site.

8) Discussion:

- a) Tim Griffin posed the question: Does a phased approach make sense and should the group accept it? A phased approach is not uncommon for parks. Until funding is identified for land acquisition and to relocate the police annex building, phasing is the best (and only) option.
- b) Performance space: MPR and McNally could use the space for concerts, outdoor classrooms, and practicing. However, a source for electrical power would need to be found. **Park Staff to find out more details regarding electrical/infrastructure requirements to support performances.**
- c) Could parkland dedication funding from Penfield be used for land acquisition?
- d) Wall on site could be an archaeological remnant and feature in the new park design.
 - i) Use opening in wall to hang baskets (similar to Wacouta)
 - ii) Safety must be considered since the wall is well below grade of sidewalk, resulting in a ‘sunken park design’ for a large portion of the site.
- e) WiFi hotspots and electric car plugins on site
- f) Light therapy option on site
- g) Dogs: Create a designated dog area on park site. **Parks staff to explore how to best integrate a dog area (fenced in or not, gravel or lawn, etc.**
- h) **Parking:** What is the vacancy rate on surrounding parking ramps? **Parks to follow up with Pat Wolf who has conducted studies on available parking in downtown St. Paul.**
- i) Underground parking- could the site accommodate an underground parking ramp with the park on site and balance out economically? Would current land owner support this option? **Park staff to explore costs of providing underground parking beneath all or a portion of the new park.**
- j) Donation agreement indicates that the Pedro family parcel must be converted into a park within 5 years after donation (Fall 2009). **Parks staff is reviewing agreement and will make sure that actions are in keeping with agreement. It may be necessary to request an extension of 5 year agreement since funding is not yet in place for a full block or large scale park.**
- k) Comment from committee that the survey results are helpful and guide the community desires, but Park staff should use best judgment in selecting the key priorities, especially where the survey indicated varying opinions.

9) Next steps:

- a) City Staff to develop concept designs for park phasing.
- b) Meeting in mid- late summer- 2012 Parks staff proposed 2 more meetings and one open house.

Bold items indicate *action items* for city staff.

Notes by Anne Gardner