



## MEETING NOTES

CITY OF SAINT PAUL

MEETING DATE: March 19, 2013

LOCATION: Nova Classical Academy

ATTENDING: Emily Shively, John Yust, Gary Brueggemann, Manual Cervantes, Scott Olson, Pete Regnier, Kent Petterson, Paula Faughender, Martin Schieckel, Bill Driver, Jennifer Verbrugge, Tom Frawley, JoAnna Craighead, Tonya Johnson- Nicholie, Alice Messer, Don Ganje, Adam Robbins, Jim Leinfelder, Rory Stierler, Halle O'Falvey, Dave Bredemus, Brian Bloomfield, Bob Fossum, Matt Gravelle, Jess Gravelle, Kevin Skerrett, Betty Moran, Ken Page, Kelly Mitchell

NOT IN ATTENDANCE: Deborah Rose, Liz McMann, Lucy Thompson, Karin Misiewicz, Stephanie Vagle

NOTES BY: Alice Messer, March 28, 2013

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### DISCUSSION TOPICS:

#### *Emily Shively opened up the meeting.*

- Emily opened up the meeting, went through meeting agenda and requested that individuals hold their questions until after the presentation.

#### *Presentation on existing hydrology and storm water by Kevin Biehn, EOR.*

- Alice provided brief introduction for Kevin Biehn and stated Kevin's task of presenting storm water at high level to Design Advisory Committee
- Kevin's presentation focused on celebrating water onsite and was organized around the following 6 boards:
  1. Hydrology – What is the existing drainage area to the park; How is water currently moving on the site; Considerations (how & why) more storm water be collected and brought to the site? Kevin also discussed how water could be stored and reused
  2. Wetland Types – Kevin discussed the existing character of the SW wetland onsite. Wetland is currently comprised of three wetland types Deep Marsh, Shallow Marsh and Shrub Carr. Due to thin amount of soil present within wetland (shallow depth to bedrock), Kevin explained what options were possible for wetland enhancement. Monetary and jurisdictional constraints aside, the Deep Marsh could be converted to a Shallow Open Water wetland. The existing Shallow Marsh could potentially support wet meadow, mud flats and shrub swamp plant communities. Kevin discussed habitat draw for mud flat and unique wetland community of shrub Carr. Shrub Carr wetland best experienced

by boardwalk, due to limited sightlines. Tamarack bog not possible due to soil pH. Kevin pointed out that with the change in the water level in the wetland the current trees in the wetland might die off.

3. Water Treatment and Movement – Kevin presented the need to treat storm water and how this could be achieved through different methods depending on level of treatment. Also discussed movement of storm water on site and role that plays in activating site; versus designing site that is only activated when it physically rains. Discussed renewable energy sources for powering circulation as well as UV treatment of storm water to kill some waterborne parasites, bacteria and virus.
4. Interactions, Play and Public Art – Kevin presented several methods storm water could be used artistically on the site and collected and stored from other pervious surfaces.
5. Water Plaza – Kevin discussed desire of City to have water plaza that allows for year round use. Interactive water feature for children to splash and play in as well as serve winter use for skating or hockey.
6. Water Cycles – Kevin discussed idea of continuously moving water through the site powered by alternative energy; and using wetland cleansing bench to provide water treatment and wildlife habitat. He explained how opportunities for storm water treatment are based on new innovations and expects Minnesota will take cues from European and Canadian precedents in the coming years, as public interaction with treated storm water would not be approved with current regulations.

***Recap from Meeting #4 and presentation on common ideas by Alice Messer***

Alice recapped Meeting #4 and discussed common ideas that emerged from design charrette and follow-up comments. She stated that it is important to recap common ideas because they lead into the concepts to be presented. These common ideas are shown on the attached presentation.

Alice explained that Parks currently does not have a policy on community orchards so they are not shown on the concepts. This doesn't mean fruit bearing trees could not be planted within Victoria Park, but the idea of a community orchard would not be supported by Parks until a policy is in place.

Alice explained Parks' policy on community gardens. Parks can identify an area in Victoria Park as a potential community garden site, but Parks does not build community gardens. Community members interested in a garden site, need to submit a proposal for its use and Parks makes final determination on approval.

Parks is open to the bread oven idea, but currently does not have a policy for them. Committee was provided with draft policy from City of Toronto as an example of the type of policy and requirements the City would need to develop.

Alice explained the need to see examples of a publicly operated funicular. Parks is concerned about operating costs, vandalism, and safety issue when there is not a critical mass of individuals who would use the funicular.

Alice read additional comments received that provided direction on concepts prepared.

### ***Presentation on Concept Plans by Don Ganje***

Don Ganje presented three concepts developed from design charette work and feedback received. He began the presentation by zooming out and looking at larger trail connections to and from Victoria Park.

- Don discussed connection to Highland Park via Montreal Avenue to Crosby Regional Park via Elway.
- The connection to Sam Morgan Regional Trail via Otto or the existing tunnel under Shepard Road was identified.
- Concept 1: Don presented the site elements shown on Concept 1 and explained that both concepts 1 and 2 were based on the two most popular ideas from the charette while concept 3 was an alternate vision from Parks staff.
  - He explained the need for fencing around the multi-use athletic field due to location between Victoria Way and existing RR tracks. He also explained mowed turf open space on the south side of the site. This would be flexible open space to play soccer, fly a Frisbee or relax in the sun. Open space is surrounded by native grass planting area and ½ mile trail circuit around the site.
  - Image provided to show contrast between mown turf and native planting.
- Concept 2: Don presented site elements as shown on Concept 2. He explained similarities to Concept 1 and highlighted unique site features. These include:
  - Mowed turf open space on south side that is separated by “fingers” of native plantings. This allows for various activities to happen on the south side in more defined space. Also, allows for more undulation of the landscape and planting of trees and grasses between mown turf areas.
  - Circular trail system removed and replaced with direct trail along bluff.
  - Image provided to show how mown turf surrounded by native plantings and activated by athletic uses and trails.
- Concept 3
  - This concept was prepared to explore relocating multi-use athletic field from the north side of park to south side due to staff concerns that locating so many active uses on the north side tends to lesson available space for all activities.
  - Placement of multi-use athletic field on south side allows for more flexible open space on north and ability to place mown turf open space along rail road tracks.
  - Able to create trail loops on south side as well as have more space for landforms and potential sliding hills.

### *Review of parking lot items by Tonya Johnson Nicholie*

Tonya went through each “parking lot” item and provided the following information:

- SITES – explained pilot stage of SITES and how current regulations and requirements in place for Victoria Park will result in City meeting majority of the requirements.
- Funicular – City needs to see example of public use of funicular. Also concerned about critical mass to support.
- Basketball – placed basketball court on Nova property, but concern for noise associated with basketball courts.
- Funding – Committee is not designing park to funding as funding requirements change. Charge of committee is to design park then go after funding.
- Cooperative Maintenance – City open to “Friends Group” for site, but first need to design park.
- GRP – Work of Committee will inform what goes into Great River Passage.
- Critical Area – is zoning requirement set in place to protect the river. Committee’s charge is to not get into the details of all zoning requirements.
- Water and Bluff – Kevin Biehn attended meeting to present storm water ideas. Capital Regions Watershed District is represented on the Committee and able to offer input and direction.
- ADA – City has to follow ADA requirements. Not Committee’s charge to understand all the elements of ADA.
- Native History – City hiring historian to developed interpretive information for entire 17 mile stretch of river. Victoria Park included in this.
- Name Change – City open to changing name of park. There is formal process for this that goes through District Council and Parks Commission for adoption.
- Easement on HRA - Trail connection and overlook to be included in easement on HRA property.
- Reminder that master planning committee is an advisory committee, not a design committee.
- Bread Oven – currently no policy for bread ovens, but draft policy from Toronto provided if interest in bread oven continues.
- Community Gardens – current policy from Parks provided.
- Bluff overlook – included in HRA easement. Very noisy and ideal for photo opportunity; not long lingering.
- Railroad tracks – City and County currently having discussion on future of Canadian Pacific rail line as Ford Plant no longer active. Discussions happening and will not know future of line until end of 2013. Currently, there are three potential options being explored; conversion to trail, keep as rail or conversion to street car.
- Patrick’s Memorial – Tonya explained who Patrick was and process to name a component of the park in his memory. This process occurs after master plan developed.
- Immediate neighbors – Tonya, Jennifer, Paula, Stephanie and Gary are all on the committee and immediate neighbors to the site.
- Spring Lake Park (Char’s Bluff) – Tonya explained unique character of Spring Lake Park, but not relevant comparison for Victoria Park.

### *Questions and comments from the Committee*

Meeting opened up for comments and questions from Committee members. Committee members allowed 2 minutes to speak. Each committee member was given the opportunity to comment or pass. Comments and questions received were:

**Bill Driver** – Comment to make sure accommodating 397 units of housing surrounding Victoria Park as well as 247 Artist Lofts at Brewery and important to provide space for kids to play.

**Martin Schieckel** – Comment on community gardens needing to be closer to Mississippi Market to take advantage of the proximity of the two.

**Halle O’Fawley** – Comment on name change and importance on exploring Dakota name. Comment on desire for basketball hoop on site.

**Brian Bloomfield** – Comment on how only get one shot to develop the park and site needs to be useful to the City as well as its neighbors and not be held back from nostalgia or emotion.

**Adam Robbins** – Passed

**Pete Reigner** – Question on why trails not identified as biking, walking and jogging. Response: Oversight on labeling. All trails shown are intended for joint uses of walking, and biking.

**Rory Stierler** – Comments on Critical Area and how regulations are in place to protect the bluff and river. All the concepts shown tonight would be allowed with critical area and concerned with negative tone of critical area. Critical area is good thing and should be portrayed in positive light. Comment on connections provided to Crosby and ability of NPS to bring events down to Crosby and talk about unique features of the river and environment.

**Jennifer Verbrugge** – Comment on liking the mud flat and shrub carr idea for wetland as well as water feature. She agreed with Brian on the park offering small nods to history of the site, but to not to leave the site wide open prairie. Like to see shorter grass along the paths due to abundance of grass hoppers.

**John Yust** – Comment on including trail connection to existing 35E bike trail. Comment on negative comments associated with funicular. Feels funicular is cool idea that should be seen as positive. Comment on not wanting canoe storage at top of the bluff, but instead enclosed and locked storage racks at bottom on bluff that are out of the floodplain. Comment on history of the site and extension of Stewart Street as old Fort Road. Comment on Williams Ferry as unique historical element. Comment on not waiting for GRP to tell history of the site. Comment on HRA easement and how important for

Committee to define easement for HRA. Comment on bread ovens being a larger program element than simple dot on the plans

**Scott Olsen** – Question in regards to comment heard about fencing surrounding multi-use athletic space. What is reason and type of fencing? Response: Fencing required for balls that would leave field adjacent to Victoria Way and RR tracks. Fence would be similar to what installed at Jimmy Lee with approximate 10-12' height.

**Dave Bredemus** – Commented on how likes south side more passive with activities on north side. Glad to see no longer 4 fields on south side. Concern with word fencing around multi-use field. Mentioned cooperative agreement with Nova, Hurling Club, HGA to get site going. Would like to know amount of money spent on clean up and what remaining funds to put towards the park will be.

**Gary Brueggeman** – Commented on name change and history of the site in regards to Native Americans. Feels that forcing Native American issue and should be looking at rich history of site from European settlers. Commented on how would like to see more rugged area and topography on south side that reflects quarry use of the site. Like to see rock outcroppings.

**Manuel Cervantes** – Commented on liking open space available on schemes. Question on size of mown space on Concept 2. Response: Mown open space approximately sized for high school size soccer.

**Kent Petterson** – Commented on preference for multi-use field on north side. Commented on SITES and how we need to follow and refer to as the site is developed. Funicular doesn't have to happen right off the bat, but should be considered. Question on comment in regards to ADA to river and how that access provided from Shepard Road. Response: ADA does not require every trail to be 5%. Existing site constraints of the bluff will not allow for regrading of trail down the bluff. Access would be provided to the river via a trail connection off Shepard Road.

**Paula Faughender** – Commented on how she likes the funicular idea. Commented on how appreciative of the work City staff puts into each meeting and their work to understand the site. She commented that she felt her role on the committee was to be a "gate keeper" for the community and happy to say she was wrong. She has been very happy with the process of the Design Advisory Committee.

**Bob Fossum** – Pass

*Questions and Comments were then heard from members of the public.*

**Kevin Skerrett** – Connected with Twin Cities Gaelic Football Club and expressed interest in using site like Twin Cities Hurling Club. Organized non-profit organization based in St. Paul.

**Ken Page** – Resident of 4 ½ years and expressed comment on sensitive ecosystem on south side of the tracks with wildlife. The idea of original soccer complex on the south side upsets him. Sees the South side of the park as a soft edge between the urban and the natural

**Scott Krizan** - Has children who attend Nova Classical Academy. Commented on how placement of tennis courts and basketball on Nova property will remove the only open space available for Nova students on their property to run and play during recess. Commented on how Nova will be at the site for a long time and to consider their presence with the site design.

**Tom Frawley** – Commented on appreciating the process for Victoria Park and how not just soccer, but multi-use field that brings active use to St. Paul.

**Kelly Mitchell** – Resident with children in the neighborhood. Commented on importance of having park in the neighborhood where she doesn't have to guess where her neighborhood kids are playing; they can meet and interact at the site. Comment on importance of having play area adjacent to multi-use field so able to watch younger child while older child plays. Question on if site would be a joint programmed site with adjacent Rec centers like Palace. Response: Gary Brueggeman spoke to Palace Rec Director and they would be interested in using space at the park for program elements.

*Next Steps:*

Plan City wide Open House to receive comments on conceptual plans for Victoria Park. This would not occur in conjunction with Fort Road Federation Annual Meeting, but be larger city-wide open house.

After we receive comments on the conceptual plan; the City will further develop a final master plan for Victoria Park. This concept will be presented to Committee for additional comment. Discussion on phasing and implementation of master plan will then occur. Design Advisory Committee is concluded after completion of master plan for Victoria Park.

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**Next Meeting: Community Open House – May 14, 2013 at  
Nova Classical Academy from 6:00 to 8:00 pm**

**NOTE: Fort Road Federation Annual Meeting to be held Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013, 7:00 pm at Summit Brewery. Please note this meeting is not required for the Committee, but you are welcome to attend.**

Please contact Alice Messer at 651-266-6412 if any items are missing from the meeting notes or items were listed incorrectly.