

Park & Recreation Commission Larz Anderson Skating Rink Task Force Meeting Minutes
8/19/21

Park and Recreation Commission	Meeting Minutes
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Date: August 19, 2021, 6:00 PM

Place: Zoom Webinar

Commissioners Attending: John Bain, Nancy O’Connor, Wendy Sheridan Ames, Antonia Bellalta and Jim Carroll

Commissioners Absent:

Task Force Members Attending: Jeff Thibault, Avi Urbas, Priscilla Karnovsky, Julie Jette and David Driscoll

Task Force Members Absent:

Staff: Erin Gallentine: Commissioner of Public Works, Alexandra Vecchio: Parks and Open Space Director, Jessica White: Parks and Open Space Assistant, Michael Bartlett: Parks and Open Space Operations Manager, Scott Landgren: Senior Landscape Architect

TOPIC	KEY POINTS/DISCUSSION
<p>Welcome and Introductions and approval of the minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. Vecchio opened the meeting. N. O’Connor moved for approval of the June 24, 2021 Larz Anderson Skating Rink Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Julie Jette. All in favor. A roll call vote was taken. J. Carroll abstained. • Task members introduced themselves • A. Vecchio reviewed the Agenda <p>Welcome & Introduction Task Force Role and Project Goals Community Meeting Recap Existing Conditions Recap Design Concepts Community Polling Community Discussion and Feedback Alternative Site Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task members introduced themselves • W.S. Ames thanked everyone for joining this second public meeting. This task force was created by the Park and Recreation Commission back in June of 2020. The role of the task force is to engage with the public to consider long term priorities for Brookline regarding ice skating. They were tasked to evaluate the future of the Larz Anderson ice rink, discuss and understand the value and importance of ice skating in Brookline, and to listen to and understand community needs. She stated that the task force is considering repair and replacement options for the ice skating rink in Brookline. They will identify short- to long-term range concepts, goals, objectives and rough cost estimates. She stated that ultimately

	<p>the goals are to complete the ice rink feasibility study process with the public and present a report/ recommendation to the full Park and Recreation Commission.</p>	
<p>Task Force Role and Project Goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. Vecchio detailed the project timeline. <p>Task Force Goals:</p> <p>2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate the future of the Larz Anderson Ice Skating Rink - Discuss/understand the value and importance of ice skating in Brookline - Understand community needs <p>2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider repair or replacement options for the ice skating rink - Identify short to long-range concepts, goals, objectives & cost estimates - Present recommendations to full Park and Recreation Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project timeline was detailed <p>Feasibility Study Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Select a site and preferred concept plan (open, covered, indoor) - Define the potential year-round programming and community use - Identify the important support amenities for that programming - Define neighborhood impacts and how to mitigate - Identify permitting/land use requirements - Provide cost estimate for engineering, design, construction oversight, construction, operation and maintenance - Develop a Summary Report that defines above and next steps to move project to design and permitting 	
<p>Community Meeting Recap</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KMDG and JLG introductions were given. <p>Community Meeting 1- A Summary</p> <p>What the consultants heard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community was interested in an open air rink and some degree of enclosure • The most successful components of the current rink are the outdoors, the connection to nature, views, and a sense of magic memories and history • Most people think the elements that need most improvements are the support facilities and closure due to weather 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the ice rink, most people are interested in the team considering year-round programming for the whole community not just those that play hockey • There is a concern for the transportation and parking demand <p>What element of the existing rink needs the most improvement?</p> <p>Polling Percentages of the below elements were shared</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support facilities such as warming hut, locker rooms and skate rental 2. Sustainability and high energy demand 3. Seating to view games and practices 4. Separation between teams that need the ice for practice and leisure skating 5. Evening or night skating support 6. Closures due to weather 7. Access to parking 8. Other 	
<p>Existing Conditions Recap</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing conditions of the facility itself were shown. Randy detailed all the elements that have to be done within the scope of this work. <p>Facility support uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of typical support spaces in a skating facility other the ice rink itself were detailed. • The existing conditions from the site perspective were shown. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Two views of the enlarged maintenance shed were shown. B. Site photos of the maintenance yard interior were shown. C. Site photos of the ice rink from the entry drive were shown. D. Site photos from the ice rink from Avon Street exit. • Existing and future parking was discussed. 	
<p>Design Concepts</p>	<p>DESIGN OPTION ONE - NEXTGEN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M. Klopher stated that this option is the most straightforward. It keeps a pleasure rink in the location of the existing rink, it proposes the new building and puts a new regulation hockey rink on the other side of that building on a raised 	

plinth. He stated that one thing required there is the fact that there is a double height entrance. He stated that in order to have both these rinks at the same level, the hockey rink would need to be built up on a raised plinth. There is an opportunity for parking located in the maintenance yard. Randy stated that the option is the next generation of what is already there; it is an improvement and really is an extension of the things people like about rink in current location with better support spaces. This is an attempt to retain those wants and needs. Architecturally, the pleasure rink, building and new ice rink are at the same level, which is the same level as the existing rink. He stated that, to that end, it is driven by the fact that it is difficult for the building to move any further to the north or existing pleasure rink, because it gets so high up in the air that it is hard to get an adequate entry to that piece. A close-up of this design was shown. There would still be an opportunity to have a path that goes up the hill that gets you to the pleasure rink and the site of the old Italian Garden. A cut through of the building going through the other direction was shown. This will help create the need for this retaining wall from the south that wraps around the corner. All uses are on the same elevation, but it is not mitigating that fortress feeling as you come up from below. Randy stated that you have a new building that has an easy to access entrance, the ability to have this outdoor pleasure rink that has all the beauty and wonder that the existing facility does, viewing plaza you could take café items out to, views to the city, the ability to have locker room and have views through the building and to both of the rinks.

DESIGN OPTION TWO- STARS

- Randy stated the remainder of the options have the Italian garden restored and a lot of the design layout is based on that landscape piece being there. The garden is at that 285' elevation, but in order to take advantage of the site, you start to step down a bit and the plinth starts to be at 270' lower level. He stated that when you get to the cross section you can see that the garden and restored pergola are in the same location

	<p>now, but there is drop down with the retaining wall at the edge of the pergola. There would be an opportunity for a nice grand staircase or a wandering path as a way to get to the garden and to step down to the new ice rinks. These are capped by the new support facility at the far end. The retaining wall at the far end is less than of the NEXGEN option.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This option allows for the ability to do a drop-off at nice elevation; easy to get to from a parking area. He stated that you can either go straight through the ice rink space to the spectator seating or into a smaller building that has just the basics. He stated that the side ice is the equivalent of the kiddie pond now- the difference is it is separated from the main ice a little bit and it's given a little more prominence in its own spot. M. Klopher stated that it allows for potential parking and it is closer to the level of the ice, so the accessibility is greatly enhanced from what the conditions are today. Randy stated that even though there is a vertical difference between the rink, platform and garden platform, if you are thinking of this park as a whole you have this nice weather garden that can be experienced and some of the outdoor activities in the wish list can be considered for areas where the ice rinks are for warm weather use. M. Klopher thinks it gives new life to the pergola. <p>DESIGN OPTION THREE- CANOPY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Covered rink with support facilities• Essentially the same thing, but this would put a canopy over the top of the ice rink. It would feel more like an enclosed space, and one end is capped by the retaining wall and the pergola of the garden and the other end is capped by the new support facility. This would allow for views out from this canopy out towards the city and back towards the other direction in the park. This retains a connection to nature, but the biggest issue would be you would have the covered roof. This option would still have a smaller pleasure rink for under the stars events. <p>DESIGN OPTION FOUR- TERRACE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Covered rink with open air rink, split by support facilities	
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- This option takes the idea of different elevations and takes it even further. The Italian garden steps down to a pleasure rink that is now turned at an elevation, and you then access a longer, thinner support building with two levels. The upper level supports the pleasure rink and the lower supports the competition rink. The spectator seating for the second ice sheet is at a lower level as is the lower level ice sheet. This cascades down the hill, has the garden on the left, with the skating pond turned 90 degrees. The support facility has upper and lower levels with the ability to have a covered rink on a lower level. There is the garden at the existing top and lower level ice that times out at the existing elevation of the maintenance yard. The roof canopy as drawn is a fairly tall canopy, and if preference is shown for this type of design feature, they would take a look at the most agreeable elevation/height of that roof canopy. The nice part of this plan is that it starts to check off more of the wish list. The entrance into the facility is very easy, you can come in at the upper level or access upper level double height, and you would go down to use the locker rooms. However, if you were showing up with your family for pleasure skate you would never have to go to that level. M. Klopher stated that this option does not involve that much earth work, the parking is diminished in this scenario, but could be adequate for the rink. Randy stated that with both of these rinks you can look out the ends of rink towards the NE and you could walk up to the plaza seating side and use that space during both seasons and still have views of city and park. Three sides of canopy rink would be open views.

DESIGN OPTION FIVE- LOOP

- A semi-enclosed hockey rink connected to the open air rink. This option has you only step down once from the garden about 15 ft. or so and at that level you have all support spaces and rink. However, they are envisioning this as a covered rink and most round support spaces are tucked into the hill. This way when you are above the garden you will not perceive the building below you. It's the garden, pergola and

terrace space above rooms. The loop comes from the idea that you have this skating pond in a different location, which can be accessed from upper or lower parking. The skating pond takes on its own personality and is separate from the building. There is the ability to have pleasure skating, a loop all around and maybe green space islands all along. This option really puts the skating pond in a different position from all the other. The canopy would have the views through it to the NE and to SE, and the support space is underneath so that the transition to garden, pergola to the roof of the new facility is a lot less dramatic in terms of vertical space.

DESIGN OPTION SIX-HEARTH

- Fully enclosed hockey rink with open air rink.
- Pros are that the building operation costs will be the most efficient for ice operation and personal comfort. It is environmentally protected and you can control quality of the ice. The disadvantage is that you are closed and don't get any outdoor feel unless you are using the pleasure rink. All rink elements are at 270 ft level. There is a main entrance, a main drop off and a lobby. It is indoor, climate controlled and one level. He stated that you can then access the cold part of the box and listed what would be there. The community room is placed in the corner, this space could be like a living room and you could get to the space from a connecting plaza. It offers options depending on the weather. A cut through of what it could look through from the side of the design was detailed.
- M. Klopher stated that we have done preliminary passes at the parking. He stated that it should not be a controlling factor yet. There are lot of possibilities to achieve the parking and stated that we haven't explored the full sense of what that is yet. He stated that we will be sensitive to the historic landscape. He stated that all these schemes are looking to maintain view to skyline and park, they all have some component to skate under stars and have varying degrees of coverage and enclosure.
- Jen stated that we heard a lot of great feedback from past meetings. She stated that we will take all the comments, merge them and start to think

	<p>about what the space could look like in spring, summer and fall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Randy stated that he wanted to remind everyone that the options that have a fully open rink, would use a compressor equipment to make artificial ice. All options use artificially refrigerated ice. • J. Carroll wondered about the overall impact on maintenance facilities with any one of these designs, and wondered if we would we have to plan on something to change that operation. J. Carroll and Randy discussed operating costs between fully indoor and outdoor covered in terms of operation of ice equipment. • E. Gallentine stated that with any all of these options the storage space would need to be relocated to the transfer station. She stated that we would have relocate that function to the other DPW facility. • P. Karnovsky and Randy discussed the fact that the Nextgen Option could accommodate a covered roof. • A. Urbas and Randy discussed that in option 1 that existing rink is replicated in size. In option 4 it is slightly smaller about 170 feet long vs 200 and about 65-70 ft wide versus 85 feet. • J. Bain asked if all these sites require an elevator. Randy stated that Nextgen would and option 4 would require an elevator. Randy discussed where the ice mechanical space is in each option. 	
<p>Community Polling</p>	<p>DESIGN CONCEPTS - COMMUNITY POLLING Which design option was your favorite? Which design option was your least favorite? Which ice rink typology or mix do you prefer? What should we consider as we continue these studies?</p>	
<p>Community Discussion and Feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P. Karnovksy asked if the garden area is imagined like the passive rink. Randy stated that one of reasons for including the first option was to leave things relatively as they are and the garden is not restored. In that option, because a lot of the uses are moving to a new support building, additional rink space may allow for the garden to be restored and allow for a splash pad in the summer. Randy stated that all of the 	

	<p>rest of the options assume the garden is restored in some form or fashion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• J. Jette noticed the garden is part of most of the designs and stated that it's a lovely idea. She asked if this was envisioned as part of this project; she wonders if it is a baked in option the Town wanted to have or wonders if there has been some discussion among departments to have this option shown.• E. Gallentine stated that part of contemplating the entire space was being respectful of the historic nature of the landscape. She stated that there have been comments in the past on this area needing an investment and to be restored, and that it is inaccessible to the public. There have been conversations with the team and the Park and Recreation Commission in the past in terms of a business opportunity to put the ice rink in a place that is more appropriate where the maintenance facility is and restore that top of the hill so that the public could access year round. It is a very special part of the park that overall she thinks is worth contemplating whether it should have free and open access year round. M. Klopher stated that we have drawn the historic plan of the garden in there not really imagining this as the garden the Anderson's had. He stated that that the idea that it would be something that would honor the historic structures of the walls and stairs. He stated that with the rink being at a high elevation it is difficult to have access in an easy way.• E. Gallentine stated that she is concerned about the options that have rinks at different elevations and what that means in terms of maintenance. She worries about safety, potentially having stairs and thinking about the public recreation skating/etcetera. She wondered about having skating on two levels with stairs and what that might mean. She finds that options she would want to understand in terms of expense and safety.• Sandy Batchelor is pleased with the designs that preserve the garden. He would like the Committee to think about when designing the garden how it will be used, and in other	
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	<p>situations he believes the masked horticulture society has taken over a garden like this and turned into an event space. He was once a hockey player so he thinks he would come down with a covered rink and it comes down to cost. He thinks option 4 or something that has an outdoor component preserves what we now have and adds a hockey rink. His group is concerned with parking and traffic. He thinks a traffic study definitely needs to be done and has been brought up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avi Urbas stated that he loves the options and appreciates the creativity. The charter was to focus on skating options and what else could be done with that. He stated that tonight he is hearing a combination of indoor and outdoor options. He is seeing five options as having the Italian garden on a limited piece of real estate; he thinks we are constraining our ability to maximize the options. He is wondering if there is a way to solve the garden issue off this footprint in the large park area, to utilize the space to advance the objectives of the task force and the feedback around preserving the magical outdoor option with the indoor options to maximize playing time. He would love for us to reclaim that space and if the garden is a priority, not to necessarily have it in this spot, but do it in the park elsewhere. Randy stated that he would imagine the walls and infrastructure left of the Italian garden would be on list of protected items that cannot be demolished. M. Klopher stated that the walls are part of an identifying character. There were gardens in other parts of the park. He thinks you would be keeping structure where it is, which is why KMDG left configuration because it leaves the walls in place. He wanted to follow historic landscape principles• E. Gallentine stated that the Italian Garden and those architectural elements all fall under preservation restriction.• Randy stated that if you look at Nextgen and were to do a full size sheet of ice, this is the only way it fits within these walls.• W.S. Ames thanked KMDG for the presentation. It is exciting to see these options	
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	<p>and study them as each one is looked at. She sees that these ideas create huge opportunities for recreation in Town, which the existing facility did not even have before its failure. She is excited what this could give back to the community for overall year round usages. She stated that each design does that. She commends KMDG on the design of the terrace, how it slips into the slope, the appearance of the double level building feel smaller and is tucked into the hillside. She heard mention that the height of the canopy can come down, because she thinks the option shown in that elevation did look too high but knows it will come down in height. She thinks we need to study what the height needs to be. She appreciates that it feels like slightly diminished parking that can still accommodate needs of the building. Additionally, she thinks the totally enclosed rink might have additional benefits, but brings up other issues that we really need to understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mary thanked everyone for the studies and presentation. She is interested in knowing why the park maintenance yard was not considered to keep that relatively enclosed and to place the new change of use structures inside that heart to mitigate the effect of the sense of place of Larz Anderson. She wants to understand how this was not built entirely within the park maintenance yard. Jen stated that with the park maintenance yard there are accessibility issues within its current condition going from the driveway up to the door. She stated that if we were to put the rink inside the maintenance facility assuming there is the right square footage, there would be problems trying to get down to the front door. M. Klopher stated that there is also a question crossing a municipality line that becomes politically challenging. He stated that we are also constrained by topography, trying to stay away from historic structures and figuring vehicular circulation work and slopes of the driveway.• R. Murphy stated that with children's safety and traffic in mind regarding the traditional parking area now, is there a way to reconfigure the road	
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	<p>where you could have parking closer to the facility for safety purposes. M. Klopher stated to bring that to the western side of the parking lot would make that curb longer and steeper in order to place parking on the right hand side. There are constraints in terms of grading to make that feasible, but he thinks the objective of that is right on. Richard Murphy stated that with option 4, E. Gallentine has brought up the terrace issue and he wondered if you could take the design and raise the hockey rink to eliminate that issue as far as the functionality between the two rinks. M. Klopher stated that it is a possibility and could be a hybrid option.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Bain asked if layout 4 would fit in option 6. He likes that design and thinks it would serve a lot more people. M. Klopher stated that it is possible, but one tight thing is the existing fountain. He isn't sure there is enough room on driveway side and existing fountain. Randy stated that it was looked at, but the turn off to him was that both rinks would not have a decent view. 	
<p>Alternative Site Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. Vecchio stated that outlined in the RFP was the guidelines for a selected team to develop preliminary design alternatives for Larz Anderson and one other location. The Ice rink task force took this one through two working sessions since the last public meeting. They began with 27 municipal spaces, open spaces greater than 2 acres. This list was then narrowed down for a wide variety of reasons. This list was then brought down to the following 4 sites; Newbury College, Putterham Woods. Soule Recreation and Dane park. She stated that there is limited space in Brookline. She stated that the task force did acknowledge none of the alternatives weren't quite everything they would hope that they would be, but they did move and vote that the alternative site location for the ice rink feasibility study be conducted at Putterham Woods while considering the surrounding underutilized perimeter spaces. A. Vecchio discussed the significant tree damage at Putterham Woods. This will go before the Park and Recreation Commission Meeting on September 14th and there is additional 	

	<p>opportunity for public comment then.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• W.S. Ames stated that Putterham Woods is part of the golf course land which is 120 acres, this is a portion of the overall acreage identified on the slide.• Richard Murphy addressed the task force. He stated that we have a Friends of Putterham Woods and they are very conscientious of this location. There are a lot of historical aspects of it. He stated that Putterham Woods was the original tree nursery for the entire town. In 1940 the Town dedicated Putterham woods to Emma Cummings. He stated that The Friends Group is working with Alexandra and Leigh with the idea of putting this into conservation land. It's a dedicated bird sanctuary and 15 acres is half the size of the Brookline Reservoir. He stated that in the Urban Tree Climate Resilient Mater plan Putterham woods accounts for almost 20 percent of what we have lost in the last 7 years for tree canopy in the Town. He stated that to consider tree canopy from a wooded area would be a last resort thing that should be considered.• A. Mattison and A. Vecchio discussed recordings from the past meetings which will be posted on project website, and there are meeting minutes.• Lisa Redding asked what would happen to the land if the rink were not at Larz Anderson Park. E. Gallentine stated that would require the Park and Recreation Commission to work with the pubic to contemplate the future use and restoration of that space in the context of all the community needs.• Ellen Franco asked if Putterham woods involves taking land away from the golf course. E Gallentine stated that the golf course is under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission, it is managed by the Recreation Department with the revolving fund. It would remain a recreation use land under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission. E. Gallentine stated that R. Murphy and other have committed a lot to Putterham Woods, its space, its restoration and its importance of a natural, passive, recreational space in Brookline. She wanted to acknowledge	
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	<p>the Friends of Putterham and their work, their care for this space and that it be something we continue to discuss going forwards. She stated that if the Park and Recreation Commission supports the recommendation of the Task Force, the same level of care and thought that went into incorporating a rink into the historic fabric of Larz Anderson Park, also go into contemplating this space that is wooded and has significant storm damage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• N. O'Connor stated that she hasn't thought about the idea of the two different levels and what that would mean for clearing ice. She stated that we have been sensitive to the fact that we need a cover to stop the weather, we know enclosed is a stretch and so the covered seems to be a good middle point. She stated that we don't need the outdoor option if the community is happy with a rink with a cover. She stated that we don't need the second rink and or the second rink doesn't need to be that size. She stated that these are things we can think about as we are refining.• Avi Urbas stated that his comment was more about reclaiming space in options 2 through 6. He wonders if we could use that space and use other space for the Italian Garden.• J. Lewitus stated that at Recreation they handle a lot of the customer feedback and calls, and a lot of the feedback is the need for more public skate hours. He stated that just seeing multiple rinks he thinks will work wonders for community and Recreation overall. He likes the direction where this is headed and it's a great kind of fit.• A. Bellalta thanked KMDG and staff for a fantastic job for all the options. She stated that if we are going to respect the Italian garden, some of these schemes stay away from using the entire service area and wonders if there is a way to detach this activity from a historic way at all. She wonders if instead of having the ice rink right up against it, if it would be better to put it to the edge of the property line with the service area. She stated that it looks like to her that Scheme 4 has a lot more vegetation than in 5. She likes the option of having access from	
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	<p>the Boston side for parking, it seems like it will also be beneficial to have another entrance to the park. Her preference was the one with the terrace because she thinks it respects the topography of the site better. M. Klopfer hears A. Bellalta on what she is saying. He thinks the loop scheme is trying to detach it and pull it away from the historic fabric so that whatever is new is not trying to extend the historic wall. He stated to make it asymmetrical on the topography starts to do some wonky things, but it is worth looking at.</p>	
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next steps were discussed. • A. Vecchio thanked everyone for their hard work and thanked the public for attending and for all the feedback. • W.S. Ames echoed A. Vecchio sentiments and statements. She thanked everyone for a terrific meeting and looks forward to continuing the works. 	
<p>Adjourn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N. O'Connor moved to adjourn. Meeting adjourned. 	

Next Meeting: Location: Zoom Webinar

A true record

Attest Jessica White

Date: 08/19/21