



TOWN of BROOKLINE
Massachusetts

Department of Public Works
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE DIVISION

Andrew M. Pappastergion
Commissioner

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Gallentine
Director

**Margaret E. Robinson Playground
Design Review Committee Kick off Meeting Minutes
Room 103-Brookline Town Hall
Tuesday, January 21, 2020, 6:00 p.m.**

Committee Members Present: John Bain, Nancy O'Connor, Wendy Sheridan, Antonia Bellalta, Kim Jennings, Michael Glover and Beverly Gallagher

Committee Members Absent:

Staff Present: Jessica Zarni, Administrative Assistant, Jessie Waisnor, Landscape Architect, Erin Gallentine, Parks and Open Space Director

Public Present: see attached sign in sheet

Welcome/Call Meeting to Order

E. Gallentine opened the meeting. She welcomed everyone to the third Margaret E. Robinson Design Review Meeting.

N, O'Connor moved for approval of the minutes. Seconded by W. Sheridan. All in favor

E. Gallentine gave a brief overview of what is on the agenda for tonight.

- Introduction
- Background
- Existing Conditions and Site Analysis
- Site Design Concepts
- Open Discussion
- Playground alternatives and discussion
- Summary and Conclusion

E. Gallentine listed the Project Goals and Priorities:

Treatment of the park's perimeter and entries to address issues of universal accessibility
Redesign for new playground to include play equipment for all ages and resilient safety surfacing
Upgrade of water play
Upgrade the natural athletic field and support infrastructure
Assess the grading and drainage to direct runoff appropriately
Assess hardcourt play areas and uses.
Consideration of site furniture and destinations for seating and picnicking throughout the park
Assessment of plant health/develop planting plan

The project timeline was detailed for the Committee.

J. Waisnor reviewed the comments to date:

Universal access into and within the park;
Separation of 2-5 year and 5-12 year play spaces;
Keeping as much open space as possible desired;
Existing trees and character of the park is important to maintain;
Support for the multi-use park including the green dog program;
Would like to preserve the sledding hill by the maintenance entry;
A clean and open space that are inviting for families to gather and share;
A multipurpose sustainable open space that promotes inclusion and connection to the outdoors.

The Existing Conditions Plan was shared with the Committee.

The 4 park entries were discussed. She stated that currently all entries are not gated.

The existing play equipment, site furniture, hard court play area, lawns and planting (mostly grass and trees) and athletic field (one of nicest fields in Brookline) was detailed.

Concept 1

This concept leaves the field in place as is. This concept would be eliminate the entrance off of franklin Street, the pathway would come around the edge of the field and com onto High Street Place. The entrance on franklin place would stay in same location. This concept shows swing/hammock area (teenage kids). This concept shows two saucer swings, a little hammock and picnic tables on the sides. J. Waisnor stated that the swing area/playgrounds can work in any different concept. This concept has a pavilion and nature area, or could be used for education purposes. The hard court is staying in the corner. The path alignment is staying as is to protect

trees and sledding hill. The maintenance vehicle currently have to back out, the concept allows for them to now go out onto High Street Place and not have to back out their trailers.

Slides of Seating suites and pallets were shown to the Committee. Examples of wood and metal pieces were shown.

Examples of a shelter/gazebo/performance space were shown.

Concept 2

This concept also leaves the field in its place as is. This is the concept showing what a zip line (50ft) would look like. She stated that the zip line is fast and exciting. This concept also shows hammocks/ swings in the zip line area. This concept has picnic tables, they could be moveable or café. The hard court play stay in place, and outside the hard court area would be another seating area. She thinks this area would be fun to have moveable seats. The exit on this concept changes. It calls for you coming off from Franklin but goes right into high street place. This is a multi-use space.

Another suite of seating was shared with the committee.

Concept 3

This is the only concept that takes the back stop and moves it. This shows the back stop 12 ft. further into the park than it currently is and rotated. The Entrance of Cypress is staying, then you have a hammock area. This concept has a picnic table off the pathway with a nature area in between. The hard court play is staying in the corner area. The entrance onto high street Place shifts up and the pathway would go out on Franklin. This is showing a lopped pathway around the park.

Another suite of seating was shared.

Concept 4

This concept also has a complete circular path but leaves the back stop in place. The corner of the field overlaps with that little edge of the pathway. The pathway is pushed as far against that wood edge as possible, it really concentrates that hammock wooden area and this concept has the most open space. The entrance on High Street Place shifts up and the pathway would continue.

J. Waisnor detailed the full tree assessment that was done by Thomas Brady, Tree Warden. The map of trees were evaluated and rated 1 (great) to 5(dead) and this assessment was presented to the committee. J. Waisnor stated that a lot of the trees are voluntary, they were not planted. The bottom comer along the wooded edge has trees that are in the worst condition. There are 37 very good and 42 that are poor or dead.

J. Waisnor discussed a planting palette she is thinking about moving forward with. Her proposal is mixing fast successional trees with some maples and oaks.

N. O'Connor stated that J. Waisnor mentioned that concept 1 would could come in from Franklin and come out from High Street, one is a straight shot but J. Waisnor made corner big enough to turn. She asked J. Waisnor and J. Waisnor responded with a yes. A resident stated that it's worse for the kids who go down that sledding hill because they will shoot right onto High Street place. She thinks they are all great but she objects on behalf of the kids who go down that. N. O'Connor and J. Waisnor disused the little league field dimensions. She likes the idea of the moving the field in 12 feet, it doesn't seem to disrupt anything in the design. E. Gallentine asked if the infield only moves in one concept, she replied with a yes.

A. Bellalta stated that her and J. Waisnor talked about adding an entrance in the middle and it was to stop the back stop clear of people coming in. J. Waisnor stated that the current entry is off of Franklin, there are no entries at the corner. A. Bellalta wondered if that is good. J. Waisnor stated that the entry has to be moved up to make zip the line work... A. Bellalta stated that she was thinking about parent parking on Franklin and Cypress for games, of all the options what is the easiest to access the field and seating. She wonders if having it in middle feels safer for the games and the players.

M. Glover asked J. Waisnor if you had an entrance on Franklins at the corner does it have to be paved or can it be a break in the fence. E. Gallentine stated that if its entrance we are designing for people to use, we are looking to make it accessible so it will be paved. Michael Glover was looking for an entrance near the corner of Franklin and Cypress, people who come from that direction they don't want to walk up or down the hill. N. O'Connor stated that the grading there is a drop off. J. Waisnor discussed how the grading would be addressed.

The entrances on every concept was detailed.

All the pieces are interchangeable, minus the zip line would dictate moving entrance farther up on Cypress.

Beverly Gallagher feels that is it very important to have an entrance down on franklin near basketball diamond. The park is used a lot for kids going to and from Lincoln and people getting busses. She thinks it would be inconvenient to not have an entrance there,

M. Glover feels strongly about not moving the field forward. He thinks when you move it forward you have an expedient use of space and just a loss of green space in general that the neighborhood would miss. He thinks that is not the right move.

E. Gallentine discussed perimeter loops in other parks that have been successful.

J. Waisnor stated that in concept 4 you have a perimeter path, the field stays but your tradeoff is the corner of field. The path would be through the corner of the field.

E. Gallentine stated that if folks don't think that the perimeter path is really needed or will not work here, we can still have an entrance off Franklin that is paved but maybe it goes to the team bench. W. Sheridan was going to say exactly that, but visually she likes the feel of the park without that path cutting through that green lawn at bottom of the hill. She understands the needs for that entrance and her kids use it, but without it, it does keep the basketball player protected but then to add this layer to an already crowded space makes her feels hesitant. She wonders if you could swing the entrance to the corner of Cypress and access the path on other side. A. Bellalta agrees with W. Sheridan. M. Glover thinks an entrance on that side of Cypress Street would be ok, he thinks something needs to be in that vicinity of the corner, W. Sheridan loves concept 1 with the pocket spaces, and she wished it didn't take up so much room. She loves the concept of having a space for tweens/kids and have their own little zone on the swings. She likes concept 4, having picnic table on either side of the park. She feels like we have lost hard court, but she wants to be thoughtful on how the community wants to use that space. She is afraid it takes away for little kids to use it as free play if it is a full court basketball.

A resident thinks the loop is the best addition to the park. She thinks it's great for older people. She thinks it's fantastic to learn how to ride bicycle, it's a simple gesture and serves so many aspects.

Jackie German addressed the Committee. She stated that she loves concept 1 and really loves the tween area, but she feels strongly that moving the diamond out is problematic. There are basketball at night and spend any time in the green area you feel you are in the way,

Nany Roe addressed the Committee. She wanted to echo the comments of the multigenerational aspects of having a path around the perimeter. The swing area with zip line she wants do it, she loves the idea.

Ann Marie Allara addressed the Committee. She thinks a full circle is very important. She thinks it's important for accessibility and there maybe times its high traffic with baseball but there will be other times it is great.

Mike Wolfe likes the idea of having a segregated area for the playgrounds. He likes the native plant areas and having seating/picnic table interspersed. He likes the free form larger geomatics seating areas and he likes the loop for both accessibly and little kids being able to do the loop. He likes the concepts with the pavilion, he thinks an added shelter area would be great.

Megan Rock is in support of pretty much everything she has seen. She was not in support of loop but has been persuaded. She does want to echo the moving of baseball diamond inward prioritizes baseball over any activity. She thinks keeping the baseball diamond where it is helps serve both of those needs. She stated that the ability of maintenance vehicles coming in and out from High Street is good one, but wants to make sure the pathway is not attractive to kids with cycling scootering and running down.

N. O'Connor and J. Waisnor discussed how the Athletic Field Supervisor, David Croteau lines the field at 176 feet but J. Waisnor's slide shows her outlining the field at 200 feet.

Anne Lusk addressed the Committee. She is not in favor of moving the ball field. She likes the zip line. She is worried for the residents along High Street Place that the sound of basketball is a noise you could hear all night. She stated that High Street Place is a private way and she wants to work on take the brick planters in front of 305. The cars can park close to street and the Owner is parking cars on the ten foot right of way. She stated that she would like to see High Street Place as a desire line. She discussed the plowing of this area. She wonders if the snow can go somewhere else so it doesn't go on the parking land. She is concerned with having a higher chainline fence on High Street Place.

A resident stated the issue is how consistently enforced is the dawn to dusk curfew in parks, because if you're not having basketball later on at night because it is enforced it might be ok. She stated lately there are more people out late at night. E. Gallentine stated that the police will respond if there are complaints about activity at night, they are not kicking people out unless they are getting complaints. She thinks it is something to keep an eye on. She stated that we are designing these parks to be attractive and fun. She stated that basketball is one very which she finds to be very reasonable to call the police if it's happening after hours.. N. O'Connor stated

that if it is after dusk or before dawn and there is something going on in the park, you every right to call police.

Frank Morris addressed the Committee. He stated that if you are going to have maintenance vehicles coming down through the park and out to High Street, he thinks some thought should be given to the possibility that people will start using it as a cut through rather than going down to Cypress. J. Waisnor stated that the only people getting through that area will be maintenance, it will be locked gates and you need a key to open it.

A resident asked how the basketball court at Clark Park has done since there are neighbors so close to the court. Her kitchen windows looks out onto Robinson. E. Gallentine stated that we do install backboards that are perforated and it deafens the noise.

A resident addressed the Committee. He stated that on the bottom edge wooded area, he would like to ask consideration for that amount of sunlight it actually gets. He thinks growth in that area could be difficult. He sits on his balcony overlooking Robinson and he never had issue with anyone using the court, it is designed for everyone and he thinks we need to nurture kids in that area. He hears all positive things about Clark, he stated that it's a positive environment.

Beverly Gallagher asked if there is some way to do a basketball net on the outside of the hardcourt like it is now. She remembers a lot of discussion about the noise factor and there was a discussion of having a big court. She wondered if there is a way now to have basketball but not have a big court.

Antonia Bellalta supports the gazebo especially within a nature area. She likes the idea for open roof slats/with vines.

E. Gallentine thinks it would be great to get feedback around a performance space/gazebo. This would be influenced greatly by the circulation and the space. She stated that we were thinking about something multipurpose. It would have a year round use and not feel like it was for 3 events per year, it would get used all the time. She doesn't know if we have the budget to do it but it could possibly be an alternative.

Anne Lusk stated that we are working hard to make the parking land as attractive as possible. She felt bad about cutting the trees on that land down, but T. Brady stated that they were all invasive and growing into the chain-link fence. She sees a tree line in all four concepts, but she is afraid the trees will grow into the fence and it will have the same unattractive issue that she is dealing with on the park land. She stated that we want the parking land to look pretty

Playground Concepts.

She walked through 5 concepts using LSI, Berlinear and Kompan manufacturers.

Concept 1 LSI:

LSI both look at 2-5 and 5-12 play structures/ free stand pieces/traditional post and platform. A friendship wing was shown, it is made for adults and kids being able to swing together. A structure called Venti layout was shown to the committee. Pictures of the 2-4 structure of what it looks like out of the catalog were shown.

Concept 2 LSI:

This concept has a 2-5 structure that is more of a circuit, bridge and tunnel. The 5-12 structure has lots of nets and spinner. This concept shows a sea saw, boogie board and net structures. A component of the 5-12 structure (netplex) was shown.

Concept 3 Kompan:

It is much different that LSI. She showed pictures of the 2-5 and 5-12 structures in this concept. Pictures of these pieces in surrounding parks was shown. There would only be room for the swing shown in this concept, there would be no room for smaller kid's swings,

Concept 4 Kompan:

The concept showed stacked cube towers. A cube that you go inside and play but climb up over structure was shown. They are showing Traditional swings and a version of a seesaw.

Concept 5 Berliner:

This concept shows a Seesaw with weighted balls in the middle, a 2-5 play house and a 5-12 play. Independent play piece pictures were shown to the Committee. Ideas for the swing area were shown to the committee.

Images of the possible zip line area were shown.

Open Discussion

W. Sheridan stated that she is torn because her kids are excited for a zip line but in her mind she thought it was part of the playground. She is torn about moving it to teens and tween. She wonders we need the zip line in the area we are trying to design for a different age group. She thinks it will be attractive to 5-12, but it won't be an area for tweens.

A. Bellalta and J. Waisnor discussed how you could not walk into the zip line.

Beverly Gallagher and J. Waisnor discussed how the corner space would just fit a zip line and a few hammocks.

The safety surfacing of the zip line was discussed.

W. Sheridan felt like we might create little nature pockets in playground area. She wonders if there is anything about to make it feel natural along the edges. J. Waisnor stated that we would clean that area and built a seat wall for erosion. W. Sheridan is having trouble understanding where elements are in the park for the playground. J. Waisnor walked everyone through a general layout of the playground area.

The water play has been reduced and is now 35 ft. diameter, it is the same size as Downes.

Megan Rock likes Concept 1 by LSI. She doesn't see traditional swings in all these designs, her kids like the old school belt swings. She likes the zip line concept and thinks it would be a great addition. She stated that she is not enthused with the concept with the super tall house. She stated that the concept with Berliner cabin looks like fun but not as much play as the earlier concepts.

A resident stated that they like concept 2, especially the netplex. He likes the style of 2-5 play area it seems aesthetically pleasing to him. He is very underwhelmed by Kompan, he finds them boring.

E. Gallentine stated that we can mix and match pieces.

A resident stated that Concept 1 for 5-12 seems amazing, but concept 2 for the 2-5 year old seems more interesting. The rest seems dull and creates closed spaces. They are not great site lines.

Megan Rock thinks you need to think about the design and the purpose of the hammocks.

Anne Luske likes the swing that adults and kids can do together

N. O'Connor stated that she likes concepts 1 and 2 for all the same reasons. She likes Berliner, she always have in the other parks. She likes the idea of doing something different

Michael Glover wants to pick up the point about the belt swings. They get a lot of use and they are classic.

Beverly Gallagher stated that she has talked to a lot of middle school kids and she heard over and over again that they want more swings.

W. Sheridan stated that there is no space for middle schoolers and thinks that we really need to be thoughtful about making sure there is still space in the park for that age group with the zip line if that happens.

E. Gallentine stated that she feels like she heard that the around the overall circulation she clearly head that people don't want to move the field. People want an entrance close to the Franklin and Cypress. She heard a lot of folks in favor of perimeter loop and one that has an entrance off Franklin and on cypress. She heard that we don't want the maintenance access go down from Franklin if gate is open, people want the playground in current location, people like the idea of little nature pockets and how we incorporate that and also people would like to see some type of space for teens. She thinks we need to look at what that is with the zip line or if it is just a swing/hang out zone, but looking at using the corner for that age group .E. Gallentine heard some folks liking the LSI and that it was a little less directed and more imaginative, people like the open concept and people did not the 2-5 play structure on first concept. She stated that some folks are in favor of Berliner and keeping that on the table. J. Waisnor and E. Gallentine will look into getting some Videos and pictures and look at LSI and Berliner. She has heard loud and clear belt swing are wanted, and what does fit and what the tradeoffs are.

Michael Glover stated that on thinking about placement of swings we need to think about shading.

W. Sheridan likes the zip line area and loves the belt swings.

Hardcourt play area

Images of places that have done a multi-use court play area was shown.

N. O'Connor wonders if we need a full court with two hoops. She thinks that maybe we can have a half court idea with other options. M. Glover would want to look at a full court, it won't be 247 basketball, and it can be used for other stuff. W. Sheridan thinks how you line and color it can help depict intention. Ann Lusk is concerned with the root system of the trees, she wonders if there was consideration moving around. J. Waisnor stated that we will not be removing the subbase.

A resident like concept of splitting up the hard court area and having a full basketball court, but maybe painting a 4 square or something else just on half of the court. It would be a full court lines for different things

M. Glover likes the skate elements, on the hard court, there is clearly in an interest in having those skating elements. He thinks it is something to consider.

A resident agreed with the M. Glover's comments.

W. Sheridan wonders if there is an opportunity for hard court to become part of the pavilion.

Meeting Adjourned.