



T O W N o f B R O O K L I N E
Massachusetts

Department of Public Works
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE DIVISION

Andrew M. Pappastergion
Commissioner

Erin Chute
Gallentine
Director

John E. Murphy Playground
Design Review Committee Kick off Meeting Minutes
Room 103-Brookline Town Hall
Wednesday, March 11, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Nancy O'Connor, Dan Lyons and Antonia Bellalta,

Committee Members Absent: John Bain

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

N. O'Connor called the meeting to order.

The Commission members introduced themselves.

N. O'Connor stated that this is a park near and dear to her.

This park is very familiar to all the Commission members.

E. Gallentine introduced herself. She stated it's wonderful to talk about opportunities and improvements that we can make together for this park.

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

Introduction —

Goals & Priorities, Design Review Process,

Project Budget and Timeline

Existing Conditions and Site Analysis

Open Discussion

Summary and Conclusion

Design Review Process

Establishment of a Design Review Committee

7 Members: 4 Commissioners & 3 Members of the Public

Letter of Interest to Chair of Park and Recreation Commission

Public discussion of alternative solutions

Develop preferred concept plan

Final presentation to Park and Recreation Commission.

E. Gallentine stated that everyone should feel that their voice is heard even if you are not serving on the Design Review Committee.

The construction process is about twelve months. E. Gallentine stated that you can expect the park to be closed for 12 months.

The project timeline was discussed.

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

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

Murphy playground is small space but it packs a lot in there. Site lines in and out of the park were discussed. E. Gallentine stated that whatever we design needs to stand the test of time.

J. Waisnor introduced herself and detailed the current existing conditions of Murphy Playground.

Thomas Brady, Tree Warden will walk through the park and provide J. Waisnor with a tree health assessment of every tree in the park.

J. Waisnor detailed the current conditions including the park entrances, perimeter fencing, playground equipment for 5-12 year olds, play equipment for 2-5 year olds , hard court play, water play, site furniture,lawn and plantings.The plantings include a lot of mature trees and yews

Open Discussion

Mary Winslow and J. Waisnor discussed dedication benches.

Frank Carroll addressed the Commissioners. He is very familiar with the neighborhood and he is here because he is concerned with making parks more attractive to older residents. He stated that what intrigued him about this spot is it's across from 99 Kent Street which is a senior housing building. He stated that there is a substantial number of older people who live there. He thinks it's good to have things that draw older people out and spend time in the park. He would like to get someone to serve on this committee from that neighborhood and who will make Murphy attractive to older people.

Laura O'Brien addressed the Commissioners. She lives in the red house adjacent to the park. She wanted to piggy back on the comments regarding the residents of 99 Kent, she stated that those residents usually sit out and on the corner of Kent and Bowker. She would like to entice them to come into the park. She thinks we need to look at the fence, there is so much brush there and raccoons are living in the back corner of the 2-5 year old play area. The aggressive vines in that area also affect her gutters. She stated that there is partying at night and parties all summer in the dark corners of the 2-5 year old play area. She thinks we need to eliminate dark space/hiding spaces in the water area and 2-5 play equipment area. Her other concern is there is a tendency to get over populated with crowds who are celebrating parties. She knows there is a permit but they are there all day and its get overrun by large parties. She thinks that the basketball, swings and spray area are all great. Her preference is to do away with the off leash area in this park. She knows there is an issue with the drainage. She had water level table tests done on her property. E. Gallentine asked L. O'Brien what would feel like a comfortable fence height. L. O'Brien would like to bring it down but still be able to keep the balls out.

The Wisteria in this area was discussed.

Alan Christ addressed the Commission. He wanted to say that he thinks the arrangement of uses in park and balance of different spaces in the park is great and it allows lots of different groups to use the park simultaneously. To him the worst issue here is the drainage, there is a huge puddle and it becomes a lake. He stated that the whole fence along the western edge is kind of scary, kids climb the wisteria and it is not very safe. He stated that for him one thing that could be improved is the picnic table situation, it always feels like the picnic table does not have a place and it floats around the park. He stated that right now the corners of the park out on Kent and on Bowker with the ring of bushes are not used well at all, and he thinks it would be nice if picnic table could have a home by the bushes separate from green space but still be part of it. He loves the basketball court, but he wishes it was not the strange shape, he thinks if it was a square with three point line it would be a much better space. He loves the park, his kids grew up here and they don't want the park to change at all.

He understand how dirty the sand is but its keeps kid occupied.

Ken Winstein addressed the Commissioners. He stated that this is first design review meeting. He stated that in regards to the multi generation point at that corner there is a gentleman that comes and sits with walker and it would be great if he could come in/ he thinks access on that side of Kent an Bowker (99 Kent entrance slower to corner) would be great. He stated that the park works great for multiple ages and the fact there is a designated area for little kids that is not tempting for older kids to go into is really important. It works well with that division. He stated that an incredibly popular feature is the incline on the walkway though the park this ramp helps kids learn to ride bikes/scooters. It's just steep enough to be fun, but no one is breaking bones. He stated that the basketball court is a great feature and would like to see it more of a court. He thinks the shading of the benches is great on hot summer days, he would be careful with redesigning in regards to plantings. He has hosted 3 birthday parties there, he knows you can reserve any picnic bench but Murphy is small and if you have 20 kids at party it's not accessible to the rest of the neighborhood.

Mariah Nubrega addressed the Commissioners. She wants to say yes to everything and she would like to ask about not having woodchips and not having a sand box. She also likes the ramp, but she wonders about accessibility and if there is a way to preserve the ramp. She stated that we have drainage issues and inclines that are too steep she wonders if there is a way to raise the park. She stated that there is a small incline so when it snows people sled down near the ramp/the bowl. She stated that she would like no Yews and address the overgrown bushes around the benches that causes smoking and drinking issues. She supports the pruning/removing of the yews.

E. Gallentine discussed the Park and Recreation policy regarding sand and the Parks and Open Space vigorous sand maintenance plan.

N. O'Connor is very excited about this project.

The open lawn uses were discussed. M. Nubrega would like to see baseball discouraged here, there is not enough room for it and scary with a hard ball.

Security lighting in Murphy was discussed. A resident wonders if they don't have to be that bright, or the lights lowered in scale on Bowker right at the entrance. E. Gallentine stated that shields can be used. Pedestrian scale lighting was discussed. The neighbors would like warm lighting, not something incredibly bright.

E. Gallentine discussed the tree assessment done by T. Brady and what it entails.

Annual block parties for Murphy were discussed.

99 Kent has a Resident Association and M. Nubrega will look into getting some contact information.

Meeting Adjourned.