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

Margaret E. Robinson Playground
Design Review Committee Meeting #4 Minutes
Tuesday, May 27, 2020, 6:00 p.m.
Webex Meeting

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

Committee Members Absent: Nancy O'Connor,

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

W. Sheridan opened the meeting. She welcomed everyone to the Margret E. Robinson 4th DRC Meeting. She stated that the playground is much loved by the neighborhood, community and her own family. She stated that we look forward to fine tuning the design tonight and urged people to not hesitate to express thoughts, ideas and feedback.

W. Sheridan moved for approval of the January 21, 2020 minutes. Seconded by M. Glover. All in favor.

E. Gallentine stated that J. Waisnor has been working on fine tuning the design concepts and she thinks everyone is going to be really excited the options being shown tonight. She stated that J. Waisnor has beautifully integrated the community's input. E. Gallentine thinks all the options are strong and cannot wait to hear what the feedback is.

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

- Introduction
- Background
- Site Design Concepts
- Open 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. The budget for this project may need to defer a year, as the Town tries to adjust budget shortfalls for this year and next fiscal year. All capital projects are being looked at by the town.

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.

Support for pathway around the park

Support for a zip line/swing area

The Existing Conditions Plan was shared with the Committee. The current entries into the park were detailed.

Neighborhood Plans

Anne Luske shared with the neighborhood some plans of the playground that she has the neighborhood markup with ideas. These marked up plans were shared with the Committee. Anne Luske's plan was shared with the Committee.

J. Waisnor detailed the tree assessment. There are 37 trees in total that are in fair to excellent condition, there are 35 trees in poor health and 8 dead trees in total.

The planting palette was shared with the Committee. Existing and proposed trees were pointed out.

J. Waisnor detailed the fencing assessment. The fencing assessment was broken up into three categories, one is chain link in good condition, to remain with minor repairs, the second is chain link in fair conditions, moderate repairs and the third is chain link in poor condition, to be replaced. J. Waisnor detailed portions of the fence that fall into each category. J. Waisnor detailed what fencing would remain, be replaced or removed.

J. Waisnor detailed the fence recommendations.

There are 5 overall concepts. All concepts have a pathway and keep the playground in the location it is now.

Concept 1

J. Waisnor stated that you would come in off Cypress and come into a swing and seating area (i.e. Nooks & community area), then come to a picnic grove area and rain garden to help manage storm water. This plan shows a hard court play with a half-court basketball/ pickle ball, pergola with seating, the playground and water play are in the top corner.

The swing and seating area along Cypress Street will have a seat wall, seating island, hammock swing and accessible and belt swings.

Hard court play and pergola Alt. 1 were shown.

The picnic area rain garden connecting to hard court shows bike racks, pergola with seating, rain garden, picnic area and hardcourt.

The hard court play and pergola Alt2. The pergola faces field side instead. Everything else stays the same.

The hard court play and pergola Alt3. This brings the pergola in curve of the path and everything else stays the same.

Multi Use Hard Court Play example pictures were shown

Shelters/Gazebo/performance space mixture examples were shown.

Concept #2

J. Waisnor stated that you come off Franklin and continue along the baseball field, the basketball half court in this concept has moved to Cypress Street. The half-court basketball area has some benches/picnic tables. This concept has a smaller rain garden, picnic area and swing area were the basketball use to be. The swing area layout in this concept was detailed.

Half-court basketball and pickle ball along Cypress Street pictures were shown

The Swing Zone along High Street Place pictures were shown.

Concept 3

This concept looks at a Zip line and hammock area. This is the first plan with full court basketball. J. Waisnor stated that if you are coming in from Cypress (entrance moving up) you come to a zip line, two hammocks up top and picnic / seating area. As you continue along the pathway you come to a picnic grove, rain garden and then go to a full basketball court area. She pointed out where the playground and water play (oval water play) was located.

Zip line area was shown. She showed some café seating / gathering area.

Examples of the Hardcourt play and how the full court, pickle ball and 4 square could work together were shown.

Hardcourt play with Pergola/seating and rain garden picture examples were shown

Concept 4

This concept looks at the basketball court moving to the Cypress Street side and what full court basketball would look like in that corner. The entrance onto Cypress is halfway in between the stretch of Cypress and you would continue along to a raingarden and full court basketball. This concept showed a swing grove. She detailed all the various swings in this concept. This concept has a pergola attached to swing area in a curved fashion following the pathway and in this concept it had wider pathway along the edge for maintenance access. The playground and water play in this concept were shown.

The hard court play in this concept was shown.

The swing area in this concept was shown.

Concept #5

In this concept there is a combination of a basketball court that moves on the bottom corner of Cypress with a smaller swing area. She stated that you come in off Cypress, you come down to hard court half court, rain garden, then move along to picnic grove, swings once again and exit on High Street Place. The playground and water play were shown in this concept.

Pictures of the hardcourt play in this concept was shown.

Pictures of the smaller swing area in this concept was shown.

The existing seating was presented on a plan.

Existing Seating

5- Existing benches

2-team benches

2-movebale picnic tables

Seat wall at water play

The proposed seating was then presented on another plan.

Proposed Seating- All the concepts are similar in numbers

10- Proposed benches

2- Team benches

6-picnic tables

Seat wall at water play

Open Discussion

Antonia Bellalta commended Jessie on the fantastic job. She stated that it looks great, peaceful all the pieces have a story when you walk around the park. She is interested in what the community wants with basketball. She personally likes the basketball upfront to the street. She thinks it's easier to have it not hidden in a dark spot. She likes the pergola as part of the walkway, it can become a multi-use activity along the walk. She is interested to see what happens with the play area with the selection of the play equipment. She thinks its nice balance of picnic tables and benches. She has nothing negative to say. She likes that little league is maintaining its space and she likes the loop around he park. She likes the entrance option off of Cypress.

Beverly Gallagher stated that she is so impressed and it's hard to choose which concept would work best. She loves the fact that there are so many swings. She has heard this over and over from the kids in that park that many swings as possible. She thinks the pergola looking to the field is very useable. She thinks that a basketball court over towards Cypress is a nice idea and she thinks it would make it more accessible. She thinks one design had 3 picnic tables there, but she think one there would be enough. She loves the way the baseball diamond has not taken more lawn space. The wide open space is so loved. She likes to see that preserved. She loves the accessible path around it.

Kim Jennings wants to keep as many trees as possible, but mentioned one of reasons people come to this park is because the playground is so shaded. She wonders with moving the hard court will trees have to be removed that are more mature trees. J. Waisnor stated that when moving hardcourt on Cypress it depends whether you do a full court or half court. The half court keeps more trees, the 4 impacted are not specimen quality. All designs where basketball along High Street place, all plans take into consideration keeping the 2 great trees. K. Jennings wonder if we can plant mature trees or would be younger. J. Waisnor stated that younger trees have a better chance of survival, the idea with the planting is to look at fast and slow growing trees. J. Waisnor and K. Jennings discussed the flush jets in the water play.

Wendy Sheridan really likes concept 1, she feels like it added newer elements to the park that doesn't exist. She had a small concern that a half-court basketball with much smaller than existing one, however she loves the fact that it is a multi-use space that kids take advantage of. She hesitates to put full court because it will turn into basketball, when now it's used for anything. She loves the multi-use feeling of the space and how it is surrounded with trees. She loves the setting of the pergola, she thinks it creates space in the park to host community events and provide a shaded area for parents whose kids might be playing on the hardscape. In concept one she likes the swing area, she think it creates that middle school space she has been talking about since the beginning. This space separates them from the younger kids and provides the

parks with little pockets. She feels like she is betraying her daughter and lots of the neighborhood kids but she wants a zip line to work, but when you see it in plan it really does take up so much space and you lose a pocket for swings. As shown in concept 3 it feels like a zip line destination only. She likes in concept 1 having seating towards the front of park that gives space for multi-generational users to walk along the street and sit down on a bench to take in the park without going all the any in it. She is torn with the idea that a lot of people like the hardscape and basketball there because it is closer to street but the drawback is maybe the multi-generational users wouldn't go sit there with a basketball court there. She loves the pergola, community space, she loves as much green space added trees and lawn as possible and she loves the pockets of play space for different age groups.

Michael Glover wanted to start off by telling Jessie Waisnor that all the designs are amazing and are so exciting to see. He is pleased to see the basketball and thinks a full court would be better. He thinks it gives a little bit more flexibly as a hard court space. A full court would allow you to play half court and the other half can be used for anything else. A full court when not used is great to ride bikes on. He would advocate for a full court. He doesn't have preference on location. He likes having more swings than less. He isn't sure he fully appreciates the rain garden, he thinks it would be beautiful but thinks maybe it could be used for more seating. He thinks from a utility perspective he wonders about the rain garden.

John Bain does like a full basketball court and wonders if it can be put on Cypress next to the garage. J. Waisnor showed that in concept 4. J. Bain likes concept 5, he likes what has been said about number 5. He likes the idea of a larger space for multiple use. E. Gallentine detailed the current hard court space. J. Waisnor stated that the design is full court high school. The existing line vs the proposed full size high school court were compared. She stated what is there now is a little longer.

W. Sheridan stated that it sounded like she is against the full basketball court, but she is not against the size of full a basketball court. She wants to make sure that the use is for multiple activities not just basketball. She thinks it could be painting of lines that encourages that.

A resident addressed the Committee. He agrees with a lot of comments if not all of them. He likes the idea of the full basketball court being multi use and designing it in a way where it defaults to that almost. This would allow for multiple activities to happen in that one space. He wonders about a ball wall incorporated to one edge of that area to add another possible use. He stated that as far as the pergola was concerned he likes the idea of the possibility of a community/performance space. He wonders if it could be raised to function well as a stage. He stated that on the process side, he doesn't know how much you have heard from kids themselves and wondering if it is still possible to get creative thought/inputs from kids themselves. E. Gallentine stated that we did go to the community block party to chat and talk with kids on what they loved about the park and would like to see at the park. She stated that a Survey was sent out to the community and A. Luske did a survey with the community and J. Waisnor showed images earlier that included neighborhood kid comments. He does not have a preference on the location of the basketball court, he thinks the idea moving closer to Cypress in terms of visibility and lighting seems to make sense.

Anne Luske wanted to thank J. Waisnor for showing all the surveys/drawings. She handed out so many surveys. She prefers the full court over near Cypress because some of the comments where that the sound of basketball would be better near the traffic. She thinks it's safer for the kids for

the court to be closer to street. She hates to lose the zip line, but she knows the kids want a lot swing. She likes the pergola and the idea of concerts. She stated that she likes to see the open space green space. She doesn't want to increase the hardscape in the park. She understand the rain garden makes sense, but for seniors to be able sit at picnic table by swings would be comfortable to them. She would like seating by the hard court for teens. In concept 4 you have an older swing area and younger kid's wing area, but space wise she would like to see picnic table but in that area so it is not just swings. She likes the idea of Concept 4 with picnic table added and keeping green space.

Resident Diana addressed the Committee. She really agrees with Anne on everything's she said and without other respondents who said that they like the full court along Cypress. She likes concept 4 and but she stated that it's the only one that didn't have water play and wondered the reason. J. Waisnor stated that water play will work with that area. Diana thinks J. Waisnor has done a great job and likes the rain garden.

J. Bain and J. Waisnor discussed what a rain garden is.

Playground LSI concept #1 was shown to the committee.

Playground LSI concept #2 was shown to the committee.

Berliner concept for the playground and zip line was shown to the committee.

Summary of Probable Costs and possible add alternates were shown to the committee. The add alternates are pergola, additional swing area and zip line and hammock area. The Berliner playground is a price increase.

John Bain likes LSI concept number 2. J. Waisnor and J. Bain discussed the materials of that piece. He asked if some heat generates more heat than other, J. Waisnor responded with a yes. J. Bain stated that it is an Interesting combination we don't have anywhere else and makes it special to the neighborhood.

Kim Jennings likes the design a lot, she has climbers in her family and thinks it would be right up their alley.

Beverly Gallagher likes LSI number 2. The 5-12 year old structure height was discussed. She thinks the Berliner with closed little tree houses might be a mistake. She prefers something more open.

W. Sheridan likes both of the LSI designs. She thinks LSI number 2 is interesting and new. She thinks LSI 1 is different but not dissimilar to Clark. She had a question in terms of Berliner given the price increase to budget where does it fits in to budget at all or would it be an alternate to being with. She sees the pergola as an add alternate and she would love to see that in the park E. Gallentine stated that if the neighborhood was passionate about the play equipment and found it to be more important than swing zone and they would reduce budget elsewhere to make the base budget work with numbers we have. W. Sheridan would definitely go with LSI

M. Glover prefers the LSI design. M. Glover and J. Waisnor discussed the types of play/activity in both LSI concepts. J. Waisnor stated that you can combine pieces from concept 1 and 2.

K. Jennings wants to make sure we have accessible pieces. E. Gallentine wonders if we go with LSI, we should look at the accessible seesaw and shift pieces to make it work.

A. Bellalta and J. Waisnor discussed Berliner's pieces in terms of accessibility. A. Bellalta and J. Waisnor discussed the swing structures in both LSI Concepts.

A resident wanted to inquire about if there was a skateboard feature noted and brought up by the public in the past and wonders if it could it occur in one of these concepts. He wonders if there is an opportunity to support skateboarding and asked if there is room for a pump track skate feature. There isn't room for a track, but skatable elements within the park is an option. E. Gallentine stated that it is something that came up for and against. E. Gallentine would like to turn to the Committee for their opinion on Skating elements and formally incorporating it into the plans.

Beverly Gallagher stated that skateboarding has been discussed a lot in the neighborhood, and years ago when people wanted a skate board in the multi-use area there was a lot of Neighborhood opposition to make a formal skate park because of the noise. She thinks there is use of the multi-use area for people to practice, but she knows there was a lot of pushback from the noise from the high street place residents.

M. Glover stated that he thinks we can integrate skateboarding nicely into the park with some skate elements. He thinks around parts of the paths, near basketball court or connected to basketball court there may be some skate elements that makes sense. He stated there are a lot of kids and adults that skateboard in the neighborhood.

W. Sheridan stated that the Recreation Department has offered entry level skateboard classes that take place at this hard surface area, so she can't see why this cannot continue to happen assuming there is a multi-use hard court space. She might consider reaching out to instructor or Recreation Department directly to see if there is a simplified skate element that could be incorporated into that multi-use zone that would be welcomed to their skate board lessons or kids learning to skateboard.

K. Jennings asked if we went with the full basketball court that has that one bench in that area, could we incorporate a skate element in that area. J. Waisnor stated that a concrete wall designed right could be a great skating element.

Anne Luske addressed the committee. She stated that on the playground structure once her grandkids master it they are done, so they are looking for a cooperative comment to play with someone else. She stated that two features they seem to stay with are he merry go round and the other element is a pump that had water come out into a shoot that went into something that was a rain garden. She would rather see things that kids are cooperating. She likes the one seesaw that a parent or grandparent can be on. She would like to see interactive play.

E. Gallentine stated that we have heard some great feedback. She is hearing that folks want a full court with most people liking it reoriented on the Cypress side of the park, potentially with not a whole picnic grove there maybe one picnic and thinking creatively about designing the court so it is intentionally multi use. She stated that we will incorporate some type of beginner skate elements. She does think we need one more meeting to pull together a final concept. She stated that the swing zone is budget consideration. She thinks we could have a Swing area that can be expanded if funding allows. She hears a lot of support for the pergola so that will be kept in the design, and she heard folks like it on the curve of the path on the lawn of the field side slight raised. She stated that there seems to be a lot of General support for the approach to the field, the

space for play and support for LSI whether it's one or two. She personally feels that with LSI one there are pieces like this at Pierce and other locations. She would opt for LSI concept 2 and see if anything else that might be more interactive as Anne suggested.

W. Sheridan stated that the 2-5 LSI piece is interesting and new and she would love to explore that.

Antonia Bellalta agrees with Anne Luskes's ses saw comment.

E. Gallentine wanted to thank J. Waisnor for all her great work.

Meeting adjourned.