

Park and Recreation Commission  
Corey Hill Playground  
Design Review Committee

Tuesday, June 28, 2016  
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
Town Hall  
Room 111- 1st Floor  
333 Washington Street

**Committee Members Present:** John Bain, Daniel Lyons, Antonia Bellalta, Gail Wolfsdorf, Mike Lindstrom and Lisa Wilkins

**Committee Members Absent:** Jean Stameris

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

**Guests Present:** See attached

J. Bain opened the meeting.

A. Bellalta moved from approval of the April 13, 2016, April 28, 2016 and June 13, 2016 Corey Hill Playground Design Review Minutes. Seconded by G. Wolfsdorf. All in favor.

Erin Gallentine welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for coming. She introduced herself and stated that she is very excited about the renovation. She knows how important that park is to everyone and she is looking forward to everyone's input tonight. E. Gallentine described the make-up of the design review process. She stated that tonight you will see some concepts. J. Waisnor will review what we have heard to date from the residents. There will be concepts shown for the passive side of the park then the playground side of the park. E. Gallentine stated that there seemed to be some affinity for nature based play and we have some structural elements to show you tonight. We will look for feedback from the community and in September we will come back with a revised plan based on what we hear tonight. She stated that tonight we will start with the passive side of the park and then stop for discussion and comments and then we will move on to the playground side.

J. Waisnor gave a quick overview of the time line.

J. Waisnor went over in detail the neighborhood plan, the current park plan, the park entries, the park perimeter, the park walls and sundials, the play equipment as it stands now, the current plantings, the existing park furniture, park rock outcroppings and the park views.

Concepts for the passive side were shown

The first option/design for the passive side was shown to the residents. She showed the entry ways into the parks off the sidewalks. She discussed the informal meeting places under the oak tree. She stated that there has been expression/desire for exercise equipment in the park and in and around what area that could possibly go. She stated that regarding the exercise pieces she has not heard positive things about the longevity of pieces with moving parts. She discussed the paving in this area stabilized aggregate, which is accessible and has more natural look. Under the big group of oaks would be picnic tables and those would be placed under the trees on pads. The sundial in this plan remains as it. Under the second group of trees there would be a hammock grove, an example of this was shown. Lastly she showed the overlook area, there is similar paving to the exercise area and this plan shows a wood deck. It would start at grade and come out to the slopes. Examples of lounge chairs sitting on a deck were shown.

The next option/design is similar to the first one. This design takes out the sun dial. In this option the exercise area has turned into café seating, the lounge chairs are a different style and set out on the edge of the hill side, the sundial in this one has been removed (J. Waisnor has been in contact with artist to build a small one and relocate the plaque), this one keeps the hammock grove, the deck in this one becomes a smaller deck without any furniture.

J. Waisnor stated that the last option has no exercise area and instead we went with the curved benches that can be switched back and forth. The sundial stays in this design and expands to a patio where we would put lounge chairs. The hammock groves stay in this design. A different way to have the hammocks positioned was shown. The overlook here has no deck and has a café/seating area.

J. Waisnor showed what it would take to open up the long view into Cambridge. J. Waisnor described the trees that will need to be removed. It would be 11 trees total measuring from 6 inches to 24 inches caliper.

J. Waisnor then opened this portion of the meeting up to comments. She stated that you can mix and match the design options and it could be a combination of anything you have seen.

Ed Page addressed the committee. He stated that he has missed the first two meeting and would like some context on opening the view to see Cambridge. He is wondering if that has been requested or just general ideas that are being floated around. E. Gallentine stated that she was asked to determine what would need to happen in terms of tree removal to open up the long view. She stated that no decisions have been made on this matter.

A resident asked if Town Arborist has weighed in on this. E. Gallentine stated that he has been on site and has done a health assessment of the tree canopy within the park. She stated that this is not an assessment of condition it is purely a design consideration.

The Gibbons Family addressed the Committee. They stated that it would not be fair to have picnic tables so close to their house. They would appreciate it if you don't do that. They find that there are unwanted animals coming onto their property when people eat near the fence.

Sandra Brown addressed the Committee. She stated that we are the abutters on that side there and she thinks that café tables might bring a lot of night time beer drinking and noise. She thinks that maybe moving the café tables in the middle near the sundial would be a better option.

Jeff Brown addressed the Committee. He stated that with the zoning of the park into different sections / functions are a great idea and would still maintain the character of the place. He would reiterate the idea the more public functions being in the center would make abutters happy. He thinks the hammock grove would be popular and great. He stated that at Lawton there were struggles in terms of maintenance of the hammock structure there that had to be replaced by a flat structure because of the vandalism. He wanted to mention that he is curious about why there isn't a more even distribution of thinning of the trees across the lower slope in terms of opening the view. He thinks that maybe there could be a second pass at that, he stated that the strongest view is from the southwest corner of the park looking more towards down town. The one thing that would be great to see is the consideration for a raised cross walk between the two sides. The vehicular traffic is pretty quick gunning it over the hill.

Chris Gibbons addressed the Committee. He stated that the sundial existing is a really unique piece of the park and he would hate to see it disappear. It doesn't serve as a sundial but it definitely serves as a piece of the park that a lot of people recognize and appreciate. He seconds the Browns suggestion on lateralizing the picnic benches; it gets noisy late at night already.

Ralph Spears addressed the Committee. He is all for removing trees to restore the view. He wanted to request not having the exercise equipment placed near the abutters.

Bob Chin addressed the Committee. He agrees with what everyone has said so far. He stated that speeding has always been an issue, both at night and during the day. In the past speed bumps were discussed but it was decided against because people would launch the cars off the speed bumps, the car becomes out of control and you could hit a kid. He isn't sure of the raised crossing and he thinks it's the same issue because of the steepness of the hill and with that we have to see pavement in the snow. He thinks any type of speed bump could put the kids in more danger. He stated that occasionally you have cars parked on both sides, but he thinks it would make a huge difference if the road could be widened on the playground side and that would be safer for the kids. He discussed how dangerous it is for children to cross that street in that area.

J. Bain discussed the method of traffic calming and speed bumps.

Joel Pearlman addressed the committee. The side of the hill that does not currently have a fence he wonders if it would be possible to consider putting a fence parallel to the one on the other side of Summit Ave. It does not have to be completely closed, but something like that would be big improvement. He would also like to see a fence at the top and not necessarily on the Jordan side.

A resident stated that he wanted to go on record to support the exercise equipment.

Gail Wolfsdorf loves the wooden benches, especially the shape of them and thinks they are just gorgeous. She thinks the hammocks are a great idea but if they will get damaged so easily that is something you have to look and take into consideration. E. Gallentine and G. Wolfsdorf discussed Park Rangers. G. Wolfsdorf stated that removing trees is critically expensive, she is thinking we have to weigh where we are spending our money and establish what our priorities are.

Mike Lindstrom stated that J. Waisnor has done a great job with the options presented here tonight. It seems like it can be really nice in a simple way. He likes the urban wooden seating and the lounge chairs. He likes the idea of a deck that goes out over the grade. He really likes the hammock groves, likes the idea of a collection of different seating and you can sit and appreciate the view. He thinks it would be nice if you could move along the ridge. He discussed the potential area where the exercise equipment is going and doesn't see that as the best place and the best use of the budget. He stated that the exercise equipment is low on the priority list in his opinion. J. Waisnor and M. Lindstrom discussed what redoing a similar sundial would entail. He likes the idea of hammocks. He discussed the Janice swings. He likes the idea of hanging seating and loves how there is a bunch of different ways and types of seating to enjoy the views.

The stabilized surfacing was discussed amongst the committee.

Lisa Wilkins likes the hammock idea but is worried about the long term maintenance. She loves the idea and how it could be such a relaxing space with great vibes. She stated that the deck seems strange to her, especially the second one without any seating. J. Waisnor described the deck and stated that it will not call for handrails. L. Wilkins loves the three areas for seating. She loves the curved wooden benches and would like to see a picnic area on the other side where kids/adults would love to sit and chat. She loves the exercise equipment; she thinks the people running up Summit Avenue are a great example for our kids.

J. Bain thinks there are great ideas in each one of the concepts. J. Waisnor and J. Bain discussed what the deck is made of.

Tree removal and erosion was discussed amongst the committee.

E. Gallentine stated that the hammocks in terms of seating are simple and low cost in terms of seating options.

Antonia Bellalta stated that people bring their own hammocks now and was wondering if we want to replace that. She is just wondering if we want to invest money there since it's something the neighborhood does now. She would like to reduce the concentration of

activity in the root zone of the trees. She stated that last time there was a conversation about color on street for traffic /speeding and doing something dramatic that alerts people to slow down; make the top of hill feel as if it is part of the playground/park and not the street. She thinks maybe the speed bumps can be done lower down and not up on top of the hill. She would keep entrances and exits of parks to a minimum and not create more. E. Gallentine and A. Bellalta discussed the exercise area (the flat open area). A. Bellalta does like the wooden furniture on the third slide, it is more natural.

E. Gallentine has reached out to the Director of the Transportation Division, with the safety concerns on Summit Avenue she heard in the last meeting.

Dan Lyons agrees with everyone that the simplicity of this design is beautiful, he thinks we could mix and match and do some really nice things. He was curious about there being the handicap accessible picnic tables and E. Gallentine responded with a yes. He likes the idea of hammock groves but agrees that people in the neighborhood bring their own but adding one or two wouldn't hurt. He agrees with people who want to move the seating areas a little away from edges to reduce traffic and reduce the noise in their houses. He likes the idea of a deck and he likes the lounge furniture. He loves the curved wooden bench. He thinks J. Bain and A. Bellalta have great ideas for traffic calming.

Erin Gallentine is looking for some direction from the committee on the overlook area. J. Waisnor is proposing stabilized stone dust but to what end. It would be helpful to have direction on this area

The November project was discussed.

Mike Lindstrom stated that he thinks it nice to have one space to have a group of people, he thinks if you had stuff on the edges that would be good. E. Gallentine stated that grass will not survive at the overlook do to the high volume of people.

Lindsey Baden addressed the Committee. She wanted to make an open plea for as much exercise as you are a planning. She stated that exercise is a positive message she wants to send to her kids.

Jeremy Stanhope addressed the committee. He wants to maximize view and the traditions that the park has been used for.

At this point in the presentation J. Waisnor moved to the playground side of the park.

The lower half of the playground side, this area will be meant to be an informal area where kids can explore and happen upon. Examples of possible pieces for this area were shown; A door in the woods, fairy doors, woven twig nest( this will over time break down ), a woven

willow fort ( this would grow into something you would trim), informal log seating and bird houses on the trees along the walkway

J. Waisnor showed different concepts for the playground. She stated that the colors you see are not what we would necessarily use. She stated that a plant palette could enhance the nature play. She showed examples of plants and stated that she would want to build understory along edge of play area.

J. Waisnor discussed water play. She stated that there will be a concrete pad surrounded by rocks, 2 flush spray heads, then there is a stream bed run alongside, that would have a farm pump and there would be little wood bridge that would cross the river bed from the walkway. She stated that when the water is not on the kids can play on rocks and dry stream bed.

Examples of playground structure pieces from manufactures Park Street playground, Landscape Sutures, Rocks and Ropes, and Richter were shown.

A resident addressed the committee. She is wondering if there would be any way to move and/or reduce the number of play structures so we could have a flat spot for the kids to play. She thinks they kids would like that.

A resident stated that she agrees completely with everything she said. A soccer area would be valued more and she would echo that. She wondered why we are not looking at any modern play equipment.

Erin Gallentine stated that the direction given to staff was to look at nature theme/naturalist play elements. E. Gallentine stated that we can look at some type of flat grass area but it is a tough site for that. She would really like to see one flat spot.

A resident stated that a flat place would be nice but it will be challenging. He stated that one of the most popular aspects would be the water feature.

J. Waisnor discussed the updated drinking water fountain that will be put in.

Molly Yancovitz addressed the Committee. She agrees with everyone that water and something that sprays is needed. She did have a question about seating for the parents. J. Waisnor stated there will be seating in all the options but it will work around the play structures. She wants to be able to see the kids and with the heavy wooden structures from Richter you can't watch the kids. She likes Landscape Structures options that seem a little more cross over between modern and nature.

A resident addressed the Committee. He would like to see a flat area as well. He would vote for pieces from the Rocks and Ropes manufactures, he stated that we have a chance to

make it unique and he wants to do that. He stated that maybe the water should be in the center as well, he wonders if that is the best place for it.

Additional tree planting was discussed.

The water play has to be activated by the kids and goes down the drain.

A resident stated that all the picnic tables should be anchored. J. Waisnor stated that they will be anchored.

A resident stated that her son has severe food allergies and if you are open to looking at it she would love for you to explore surfaces for tables that can be washed down with a wipe.

Dan Lyons stated that he likes the natural play area, they might not last but they present creative opportunities for kids to reconfigure them. He loves the fairy doors and bird houses. He likes letting the kid run wild. He likes the Rocks and Ropes and the water feature and hopes the pebbles will be embedded and Jessie responded with a yes.

Antonia Bellalta likes the Park Street structures and doesn't care for the Rocks and Ropes pieces. She thinks the Landscape Structure does seem overwhelming, but if you chose that one maybe something less dense. She stated that we want there to be good circulation and the opportunity for informal play around the space. She loves the slide amongst the trees, it integrate with the natural aspect.

J. Waisnor and E. Gallentine were looking for feedback toddler or the idea of a disc swing?

Mike Lindstorm likes the disc swing, the regular swings take up a lot of space.

Lisa Wilkins stated that the water feature spoke right to her heart. She thinks it is clever to put water in the middle of park. She stated that she is opposed to Landscape Structures. She thinks the wood village was so cool, she thinks the Rocks and Ropes pieces go with the natural aspect of this park. She stated that the less is more mentality works well here. She stated that everyone she asked in the neighborhood voted unanimously for swings and the embankment slide.

There will be no sand at this park.

Mike Lindstrom stated that he agrees with most of those terms of equipment he likes Rocks and Ropes. They would be different and challenging. He urges J. Waisnor and E. Gallentine not to think of the Natural play area as a separate space from the playground and find way to bring the planting palette up into this area. That way it feels like one whole space. He stated that it would be nice to have a flat spot anywhere. He thinks it is worth looking again at the longer embankment slide and see if you could put an accessible path that switches back to the meadow area. He discussed the water feature. He agrees with the majority in

terms of the pieces from Landscape Structures, this vast ocean of plastic is what we don't want.

Gail Wolfsdorf doesn't want to see plastic. She loves the Rocks and Ropes pieces. She would love to see bucket swings if possible. She would love to have more shrubs on both sides and a careful selection of plantings.

Dan Lyons likes the circulation.

J. Bain likes the spinner. He thinks the water play is very important for this area. He can't imagine a park without swings. He thinks we have a lot to work with and we are going to come up with a good plan.

A resident stated she wanted to see bucket and accessible swing and the big kids love communal swing. The older kids anything upper body is popular.

A resident stated that she would like to see kids to take a look at these ideas. She wants to think fun in addition to nature..

E. Gallentine and a resident discussed irrigation and plantings at the entrances

A resident stated that she likes the Rocks and Ropes pieces and she would like to see monkey bars and maybe a fake tree to climb on. She thinks that anything kids can swing on will be popular.

The next meeting will be September 8<sup>th</sup>.

E. Gallentine discussed doing a possible summer informal meeting in the park to get input from the users.

Jay Crohen and J. Wasinor discussed entries into the park.

J. Bain moved to adjourn. Seconded by Dan Lyons. All in favor.