

**Harry Downes Field Playground
Design Review Committee Meeting
Town Hall, 1st Floor, Room 103
Wednesday, February 28, 2018 6:30 p.m.**

Committee Members Present: John Bain, Daniel Lyons, Antonia Bellalta and Wendy Sheridan, Christopher Blessen and Franklin Pineda- Lopez

Committee Members Absent: Phyllis O’Leary

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

Guests Present: see attached

Welcome/Call Meeting to Order

J, Bain opened the meeting. W. Sheridan moved for the approval of the September 27, 2017 minutes. Seconded by D. Lyons. All in favor.

Erin Gallentine introduced herself. E. Gallentine went through the project goals and priorities and listed them as followed: universal access into and within the park, treatment of the parks perimeter and entries to address issues of accessibility, redesign for new the playground to include play equipment for all ages and resilient safety surfacing, consideration of site furniture and destinations for seating and picnicking throughout the park, reworking the grading and drainage to direct runoff appropriately, upgrading and renovating the athletic field, replacing synthetic turf field system and track and upgrade and improve access to restroom and storage area.

E. Gallentine detailed the Design Review process and project timeline.

The budget was discussed.

E. Gallentine introduced J.Waisnor , David Nardone from Stantec and Josh Atkinson from Stantec.

A recap of the previous Design review Committee Meetings was given.

An existing conditions survey was shared with the Committee. The entrances were discussed.

The significance of the park was detailed. The park has a lot of great big trees along the street, the playground in the back corner and the park is multi-use. It offers a lot of different activities for a variety of people.

The opportunities and restraints were discussed. The baseline improvements of this project are universal access into and within the park, treatment of the park perimeter and entries, new playground, site furnishings and destinations within the park, drainage and grading, safety of users and game safety and natural field improvements.

J. Waisnor went through the baseline improvements.

The comments heard from the last meetings are as followed; universal access into and within the park and connections of the two sides of the park, separation of the long jump from multi-use side of the park, redesign for new playground, water play desired; existing trees and character of the park is important to maintain, perimeter fence should be evaluated for conditions and location, outreach to the Brookline Housing Authority and support for multi-use park including the Green Dog Program.

J. Waisnor moved into the preliminary design alternatives.

The proposed Gateway-entry sketch was shared with the Committee. She stated that one thing they want to do is make all the entrances compliant and that will involve having some new entrances and possibly closing some that cannot be made complaint. A possible gateway entry on the corner of Highland was discussed. The second entrance is currently is a vehicular entrance and they are proposing keeping as a pedestrian entrance but they would like to move the vehicular entrance down because of the erosion happening. The entrance before the playground would stay as it. The playground is currently a single gate and is proposed that it would become a vehicular double gate that would allow for a truck to clean out the water play drain. Along Highland Road they are proposing moving the non-compliant pedestrian entrance over to make it complaint and keep the vehicular double gate access at the building. J. Waisnor discussed sidewalks. She stated that one of the sidewalk concerns she has heard is that people walk into the park and walk into the middle of a track meet. She stated that Jamaica Road is where a lot of people come in and watch the track meets and they are proposing a path along there, with the little bleachers that exist and adding benches along the pathway. She stated that the second proposed path would start at the new entrance up at the top; the pathway

would curve along the track and meet the other side. The double gates would move slightly and would allow for connection between the two sides of the park and allows athletics to bring their equipment from the comfort station to the track. The last pathway is up to the knoll, they think it is a great vantage point. She stated that at the last meeting there were comments about looking at a pathway that connects to the knoll to the other side of the park. J. Waisnor discussed why this would interfere with the pinch points of the field.

The proposed obstacle course was discussed at the proposed new gateway entry.

The proposed gateway entry was shown. They would propose removing the chain link fence on that portion and that area would become ornamental with an ornamental gateway. The existing monument was discussed.

J. Waisnor went through the proposed obstacle course area and the examples of furniture for picnicking and seating on the knoll. The metal site furnishing options were shown.

She wanted to point out that all the playground pieces are customizable

Playground Plan Alternative one –Themed Concepts

The water play would be at the top. A site illustration of examples of the Themed Concept play was shown to the Committee.

Playground sketch alternative two-Landscape Structures

The water play would be in the top corner. Safety surfacing was discussed. A site illustration of examples of the Landscape Structures play was shown to the Committee.

Playground Equipment Alternate three-Berlinear

Water play would be in the top corner and this example is a modern take of a tree house, this design calls for swing sets. Examples of pictures of their pieces were shown.

A water play system designed by Vortex was shared with the Committee. All jets would be flushed into the ground. Boulders would be used in the water play area.

J. Bain opened the meeting up to comments from the Committee and residents.

A resident addressed the committee. She thinks the walkways and benches are great. Her only concern is most of the parks in Brookline have some cute pathway around the park to cycle or use a scooter. She thinks the kids need a safe place to go and ride their bike. She uses Clark Park and Pierce playground and they both have two great structures that all kids can use. She thinks the designs for celebrating the trees are great but it has to be something that will be used. The park isn't big and the structure needs to be used by all ages. She stated that the water play is a must; she would like to see something to climb on. She thinks an obstacle course is great. Sand was discussed.

E. Gallentine is very excited about the connection between the two sides of the park and having improved access points. She stated that they tried hard to have a continuous loop but we kept running into problems. She stated that it doesn't mean it can't happen in the future. She discussed how she is excited about the pathways. She also wanted to comment about the new entry, the signature entry, she stated that it came out of the public meetings and she is really excited about that. It helps activate that part of the park.

J. Waisnor stated that the fence divides the two fields, the proposal is that the fence would turn the corner and come on opposite side of long jump and meet the fence. The long jump would become part of the track/synthetic field side of the park.

Randolph Meiklejohn addressed the committee. He uses this park during the winter and you can see how people walk across from Jamaica Road and into the dog park area, and he wants to make sure at least one or two of gates let you go from the turf side to the dog side. J. Waisnor pointed where that would be located.

Steve O'Neill addressed the Committee. He stated that it is a thoughtful plan overall. He has 2 questions. The first question he asked is where there will be additional water fountains and this second question is that in the playground area with the water play area does it shut off at a certain time. J. Waisnor stated that the water play is on a timer system and discussed where the water fountains would be located

Jane Gerry addressed the Committee. Her personal opinion is that she doesn't like a rod iron entrance. She just doesn't like it. She thinks you should save some of the knoll for sledding. J. Waisnor stated that their attention is not to change the grading only to bring the pathway up and help the erosion.

Charlie Golan addressed the committee. He stated that the green dog program is excellent. He would like to see at the entrances "Please close the gate" signage.

A resident and J. Waisnor discussed the benches on the plan. The resident stated that as you think about the furniture, since uses the park for reading she would like to see benches with a back. She thinks it's nice to read in both shade and sun and she would like benches both in the shade and the sun.

The proposed seating wall on the Highland Road wall was discussed, and parts of that wall could become a seat wall.

Sara O'Neill addressed the Committee. She asked if the entrance path connects to path on the other side. J. Waisnor stated no because the grade where the hexagon erosion is. The layout of the comfort station won't change, but it will be upgraded.

Bike racks were discussed.

A. Bellalta and W. Sheridan both heard that there is no opportunity to continue the path full cycle through, but wondered if there is an opportunity to bring the path from the south side up. J. Waisnor stated the pathway would interfere with the field lines. The biggest impact is pop warner; the High School could accommodate it being shorter both for football and lacrosse. E. Gallentine stated that we can continue to look into this and come back at next meeting. A. Bellalta thinks it's important to have two spots coming from down below, she thinks if people coming down below and walk around they will go up but it stops. She is trying to avoid interaction if there is a game there.

Steve O'Neill addressed the committee. He asked if there is a designated area for the football team to have their equipment stored. E. Gallentine stated that we will find space between the comfort attention and fence. She is looking to pave that area and get their stuff tucked away and stored.

The playground plans/themed concepts were shown to the committee and residents for comments.

E. Gallentine stated that at the last meeting what we heard loud and clear that folks wanted nothing nature inspired/nature themed. She would say the themed concept shown here is taking the theme to the extreme, this vendor uses as a cast concrete

that they can then color. She has a little reservation about this arrangement. She thinks it's a little too much and will look out of sync from rest of park. She stated from a maintenance standpoint she has some reservations. She listed those reservations about longevity. E. Gallentine stated that in terms of Landscape, J. Waisnor did a lot of work to get an off the shelf model customized, with a lot more movement and play value. They are a very high quality product and are easy to get replacement pieces. It has a nature theme without being too much; it is subtle and would fit. E. Gallentine discussed the fiddle heads. E. Gallentine stated with Berliner we were talking about the idea of a tree house. She thinks maybe they have less play value underneath but their high quality as well and it would be a modern type of take on the tree house theme. She stated we can mix, match and make customizable. She stated it would be helpful to have one of these three options to go back and try to work further with the manufacturer.

A resident addressed the Committee. She does like the first one; it is all geared to little kids. The second plan is similar to the structure that there right now but she thinks the design is outdated it is not a theme she sees in Brookline. She is concerned if there are metal on the steps, because they get icy and kids fall. She stated all the sharp edges are dangerous for the kids. E. Gallentine stated this is a smaller kid's area, we don't have a lot of space to incorporate a 5-12 year old area and have water play in the site.

N. O'Connor addressed the Committee. She stated that she likes the spinning basket. She likes the second better than the first one. She loves the third one but asked if we could fiddle with the second option more.

E. Gallentine is wondering if there was a way to have a little trike loop that would go all around, it wouldn't have to be wide and that could be the edge of the playground. It is something to think about with some rearranging or losing some play.

Sarah O'Neill and J. Waisnor discussed the age group of the obstacle course. She likes alternative 2 and the idea of a track that goes around.

Steve O'Neill addressed the Committee. He stated that he gravitates to option 2. He likes the idea of a long slide that could appeal to the older kids.

J. Bain stated that we have limited space in this park and he is very proud of our parks thought out the town and us to take a great deal of thought into safety. He stated this park has never had water play and he has been hearing request for water play for 10 years. He appreciated hearing from those with young kids and hearing what they like and don't like. He always recommends on all these design review process that folks go to other parks to see the activity and get ideas from parks. J. Bain discussed sand boxes. E. Gallentine discussed the Town's vigorous sand program.

E. Gallentine stated there will be something for everyone here.

Franklin Pineda- Lopez thinks everything looks great, he likes they are making the paths ADA accessible. He likes theme number 2 as well.

D. Nardone introduced himself.

D. Nardone discussed regrading and drainage.

The Athletics Systems surfacing was discussed. A natural grass field system is a layer of natural grass (seed or sod), native soil or amended soil (varies 6' min, 10' typical, 12' max). A synthetic turf field system consists of a mat on the surface, there is a pad, a drainage and crushed stone layer and then it goes into the sub base. You can store water in the gravel area.

The existing turf system component is a synthetic turf carpet with sand/rubber infill, a shock pad and a stone base.

D. Nardone discussed the proposed turf system components. He discussed and showed examples of a dual fiber system, parallel slit film or monofilament-shape. Then you have an infill that goes with it. D. Nardone discussed the organic coconut, plant based TPE, Organic Cork and Acrylic coated sand infills.

The rubber pads were discussed.

Proposed is a synthetic turf carpet with acrylic coated sand /sand infill with a new shock pad and existing stone base or a synthetic turf carpet with TPE/Sand infill, a new shock pad and an existing stone base.

Natural grass surface temperature is just below the ambient temperature. The synthetic Turf (existing town fields) are 35-55 degrees hotter than the ambient temperature, the new synthetic turf that is coming out has heat reflector material and is about 15 degrees cooler than and with an organic infill you can get another 15 degrees cooler than that.

N. O'Connor and D. Nardone discussed the cost differences between the infills and discussed the fibers wearing down/static.

J. Bain asked which of the fills would be cooler. D. Nardone stated that coconut would probably be the coolest as long as there is water evaporation happening.

A. Bellalta stated that overall the plan looks great and her preference is definitely option 2. She would like to push the pathway. She thinks there is an open space pocket that would be trapped between two places and wondered if there is of integrating it in a way of that to make the playground feel bigger even if the kids are running on a slope and that way it would be part of the natural space. She thinks the entrance at the top looks great and this is allowing you to a providing sidewalk which is fantastic. She likes the making the connection to the knoll, while making a connection without a formal pathway. E. Gallentine, A. Bellalta and D. Nardone discussed replacing the absorbency pad since the Town will be going with an alternative infill. The pad is very expensive and expense to get rid of existing pad. Antonia Bellalta asked about the running track condition. D. Nardone stated that the Rubber condition is in fairly good condition for its age, but its past middle of its age so the plan is to have tested for resiliency and if passes that test it would be recolored and restriped. A. Bellata and D. Nardone discussed the color of the grass itself. D. Nardone likes to mix two colors of green and when the light reflects of it looks natural and pleasing to the eye.

D. Nardone discussed safety concerns for the infills.

W. Sheridan stated that she has 3 children and play at this playground and field quite often. She stated that of the three designs presented she felt like the first design lacked innovation in design and was a little static. The third more modern one the space felt empty physically in the illustration and the only piece look interesting and different was the waddle board and she can see kids engaged on that piece. She loves the idea of the second design scheme. She thinks the fiddle

heads are great as accents at varying heights. She doesn't totally disagree that the platform structure itself does feel a little dated to her. She would love to see what elements they have that are modern/ innovated and creates an intentional area where imaginative play can happen. She stated that you had a mini obstacle course to the side, and keeps create their own type of play in a space like that and she was encouraged. She would like to see the structure worked on a little more. She hopes that the focus is just not on getting high to go down a slide. In terms of the water feature she thinks it's great and thinks we will have athletes going over there. She asked if there is an opportunity when the water closes and to turn it into a play space. She asked if the coconut infill needs to be sprayed or else does it gets dusty. David Nardone stated that when it dries out it breaks down faster. She asked if it is slippery when wet, D. Nardone stated that he had not heard or witnessed that. W. Sheridan has heard from athletes that the coconut infill feels more natural under their cleats than other infills do.

Chris Blessen stated that likes what is going on. He thinks the second option for play is his favorite one and has more options. He was asking what five year old wants is and she said lots of slides and real swings older kids can swing on. He thinks it looks great and he couldn't tell if there are any enclosure options for the playground. J. Waisnor pointed that out to him. He suggested the roofs in options 2 are a little outdated, that is the one element that is off. He suggested maybe a tin roof.

Franklin Pineda- Lopez stated that he agrees with C. Blessen that slides and swings area appealing to kids and option 2 provides a lot of that. He thinks the water park is going to be amazing and the work done to date on the park has been great.

D. Lyons stated they have done a great job and it's come a long way. He would like to see a pathway to have bicycles cycle around the play area. The ambient temperature of the field is important to him and wants to keep it as cool as possible. He loves the obstacle course and he would go with option 2 for play equipment. He would like to see more netting. The roofs did look awkward but overall it's a great design. He stated that it is unfortunate we can't get an entire perimeter path but kids can go up and down the hill at their leisure and it's a great improvement.

E. Gallentine wanted to suggest for the committee that maybe we have the budget and priority discussion at the next meeting.

J. Bain likes option 2; he stated that all our parks are great. He stated that we need to come up with something new and different and make sure that all safety issues are addressed and covered. He is just so proud of our parks.

E. Gallentine went through a quick summary. She stated that for the next meeting we will look at the types of furniture and locations, we will look at all seating and destination, they will look further at the pathway within the playground itself and that circulation and pathway of park will be looked at again, we will have a planting pallet, we are going to work with the playground option 2 and look at other some other alternatives.

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