

**Harry Downes Field Playground
Design Review Committee Meeting
Town Hall, 1st Floor, Room 111
Wednesday, April 25, 2018 6:30 p.m.**

Committee Members Present: John Bain, Daniel Lyons, Wendy Sheridan, Christopher Blessen and Phyllis O’Leary

Committee Members Absent: Antonia Bellalta and Franklin Pineda- Lopez

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. D. Lyons moved for the approval of the February 27, 2018 minutes. Seconded by W. Sheridan. All in favor.

J. Waisnor introduced herself and discussed the project timeline.

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

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

J. Waisnor went through the project baseline improvements 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.

The Comments heard at the last meeting:

1. Universal access into and within the park and connections of the two sides of the park;
2. Separation of long jump from multi-use side of the park;

3. Redesign for a new playground, water play desired;
4. Existing trees and character of the park is important to maintain;
5. Perimeter Fence should be evaluated for condition and location;
6. Support for the multi-use park including the green dog program,.

J. Waisnor moved into the preliminary design alternatives.

Site circulation and entries plan were discussed. There is a new entry at the Highland/Jamaica road intersection. The entrance design was described and would be accessible. The entrance is existing but would be realigned. It will go along the edge of the natural field. At the last meeting it was requested to look at path that would continue and complete the loop around the park. This was studied and found that continuing the pathway along the bottom of the track didn't work because of grading issues and trees. A football and lacrosse field were detailed and shown within the plan. The play space overlaps, but they have talked to high school athletics about that and confirmed it was an acceptable solution. They also worked with them to realign the shot and discus so that it is not towards the pathway. J. Waisnor showed a pathway that would continue around playground and go along Jamaica. The entry in the playground would be kept, but they would make it a double gate to allow for vehicular access. The next entrance will remain in the same location, a pedestrian single gate entrance. The next two entrances are new and were detailed.

The proposed gateway was shown at Jamaica and Highland. An idea of what that gateway would look like was shown.

The obstacle course area was shared with the committee. Examples of the pieces in the obstacle course area were detailed.

Site seating plan-new entry:

Examples of benches as well as proposed locations for said benches were shown. Proposed café seating in this area was shared. A proposed retaining wall was discussed.

Site seating plan- entry and knoll:

Benches for this location were detailed. There will be team benches for the softball/baseball fields. The knoll will be left amongst the grass and untouched. They are thinking about organic and natural seating up in that area. Examples of this were shared.

Site seating-playground:

Bench locations for this area were detailed. There will be two different picnic locations (these locations were shown).

Site seating plan-Jamaica Road side

Two bench locations were detailed. They would have longer pads in this area to allow for people to put their chair there. Pads for bleachers were shown.

The overall seating plan was shared with the Committee

Existing benches-7 (half of which are in the playground)

Existing picnic tables-4

Proposed benches-18

Proposed picnic tables-6

The planting goals and priorities were detailed.

The planting plan for the new entry, building entry side and the playground area were detailed. Examples of the flowers, bushes and trees proposed in those locations were shared with the Committee.

The playground goals/comments were detailed.

J. Waisnor discussed the on-site meeting with the kids from the Lincoln School.

Playground First alternative:

This center piece is a 2-5 year age range and the net climber is in the 5-12 range. A 3D rendering of the playground was shared. Examples of play pieces were shared with the committee. Playground sketch for alternative 1 was shared. Pictures of what the net climber would look like were shown to the committee.

Playground Second alternative:

She stated that every kid at New Lincoln voted on this alternative. It is a post and platform play structures for 2-5 year olds. It has the log slide and the difference in this alternative is global motion. It's a globe that spins around and they can climb in and outside. The Berlinear Butterfly piece was shown. The circuit and global motions was shown from different angles. The kids liked the bridge, because it moves and makes a lot of noise. Pictures of the different elements – climbers, connectors, circuit and global motion were shown.

The water play area was detailed.

J. Bain opened the meeting up to discussion.

Alan Cohen addressed the Committee. He thinks in general it's great and exciting. He had a question about the seating and picnic area. He stated the very early in the morning there are cross fit groups in the park doing workouts accompanied by serious grunting. He is wondering that with the café tables in the evening and how that area is going to be monitored. He stated that it is a seductive area. E Gallentine stated that we have introduced café tables in most of our recent park projects with success. People enjoy the different ways to sit and socialize. She stated that we have not had any complaints more so with the arrangement and in terms of hours of use the park is open dawn to dusk. The only thing she suggests is that if it becomes a problem with groups people are paying a fee to participate they should be getting permits and we can manage the hours of those permits and better regulate the hours. She agrees it will be popular especially when it first opens, then regress. He asked how much of the green space will be removed for the pathway. E. Gallentine detailed that for him. Her perspective is fewer design lines, less compaction regular flow in and out of the park and this is something brought to us by the neighborhood. . The trees that will be removed were discussed. A full assessment of the health of these trees was discussed. He asked about other surfaces rather than asphalt. E. Gallentine will make sure it's graded properly. She stated that asphalt is the most durable.

Jane Gerry addressed the Commission. She asked where both water fountain locations would be. She did not remember at the last meeting the idea of continuing that pathway. She stated that it doesn't bode well for dog park hours, it created a diversion. The dogs don't like wheels and bikes. She stated that wall on Pond Ave side has gotten worse over the winter and needs to be looked at.

Phyllis O'Leary asked if there will be any fencing so people can't walk across the turf when they are leaving the dog area.

Deborah Erskine addressed the Committee. She discussed track meets and wondered if the shot put could be moved closer to the long jump and have the fence come out. She stated that it creates a massive pot hole.

Charlie Golay addressed the Committee. He has been part of the Green Dog Program for 3 years. He thinks it every important that signage be at all gates that states "Please Close Gates". E. Gallentine stated that applies for the playground as well. C. Golay discussed possible locations for double gates. E. Gallentine stated

that this is high use and high intensity park. She thinks putting in one of these double gates that is specifically for dog parks is sending the wrong message, in terms of what this park is. E. Gallentine wished we had more land and space and realizes there is a real need, but thinks we need to be careful.

Ruth Flaherty addressed the committee. She is wondering why in the green dog area there are no picnic tables. There are currently two wooden picnic tables and the seating there is limited. E. Gallentine stated that moveable picnic tables have been added to the park plan. E. Gallentine and J. Waisnor discussed possible areas to add picnic tables.

Nancy O'Connor addressed the Committee. She was curious when Allen was talking about the path coming in from Jamaica and Highland she wondered how wide it that path is, J. Waisnor responded with 5 feet. She stated that in the children's play area there was talk about having roses, she knows the ones she has is thorny and just wants us to be careful in placement and proximity to the play equipment. She asked if we planned on enhancing the field house facilities. E. Gallentine detailed the upgrades that will be done. A family restroom will be added and a janitorial supply closet. The Green Dog hours/ connection with other uses of the park were discussed. E. Gallentine discussed the various methods of ways Alex Cassie, Park Ranger communicates with the Green Dog participants

Mike Toffell addressed the committee. He asked if the baseball field will be retained use as it is, E. Gallentine responded with a yes. He asked if there was room for two, J. Waisnor responded with a no. The current locations of the drinking fountains were discussed. E. Gallentine discussed the openings and closing of the water features/comfort stations.

Phyllis O'Leary discussed the low water pressure at the tot park. J. Waisnor stated that she is working with the Engineers and the Water and Sewer department regarding that issue.

Sarah Jay addressed the Committee. The park is very important to her and her family and she is super excited about the water play. She is excited to see the sand go. She thinks it's a very nice water play design and what like to see the water play area shaded.

A resident addressed the committee. She would second that as far as the shade goes. She asked if there is adult seating at the water play. J. Waisnor discussed the benches around the water paly.

The surfacing in the playground was discussed.

Charlie Golay would like to see two picnic tables in the Green Dog Area.

Robert Simpson addressed the committee. He stated that his daughter was in the group that looked at the design. He had a question about the new planting and how we plan on protecting them from being trampled. J. Waisnor stated that it would have a fence that would be along the backside, and the idea is to keep it as contained and part of a group as possible. She stated most of these plants are very hardy.

A resident stated that she does not like the idea of the path going all the way down and around rather than stopping at the knoll. She votes for stopping at the knoll.

Wendy Sheridan is a huge fan of connecting the path. She thinks the path open up opportunity for other user groups, when it's not green dog hours. J. Waisnor and W. Sheridan discussed the fiddle heads. W. Sheridan loves the idea of a little color to give it a little life in the play area. She would love the idea of a design on the ground surface of the water play area. E. Gallentine stated the plan is for concrete, but we could score a pattern within reason and make it more interesting.

J. Bain stated that with the path we are creating a passive area with a continuous loop path. It gives an opportunity for someone to be away from a lot of the activities they may have on the other side. He agrees that is important to allow everyone to enjoy the park.

Christopher Blessen thinks the paths provide an alternative to those who want to ride a scooter on the track surface that should be happening on the track, or just a walking path. He would advocate very strongly for it.

A Summary of probable costs was shared with the Committee

Base bid

Site preparation and Demo

Paving, surfacing, walls and curbing

Fencing

Site Furnishing (water fountains picnic tables, benches throughout park and playground)

Playground and water play

Synthetic field (new carpet, pad and sand infill and a disposable fee for current carpet and infill)

Track and long jump

Natural turf field

Planting and lawn

Comfort building

Bond and contingency

Total for base bid items 2.4 million.

Possible add alternates

Obstacle course and surfacing

Natural field pathway

Lacrosse netting

Long jump

Full depth track

Additional furniture

Collar trench drain

E. Gallentine discussed the collar trench drain.

Frank Morris addressed the committee. He asked if the wall on Pond Avenue is in the budget item. E. Gallentine stated that is not part of this project or budget, but her division will look into it.

Sarah O'Neil and E. Gallentine discussed how the budget and add alternates work, and how it's all packaged together.

E. Gallentine discussed how the obstacle course came about.

N. O'Connor stated that she would love to see the obstacle course happen and suggested even if you had to could scale it back some to make it happen that would be ok. E. Gallentine stated that we could put in fewer pieces and still do something meaningful

Wendy Sheridan and E. Gallentine discussed the estimated life span of the track with just the structural overspray vs a full new track. E. Gallentine discussed the repair work and testing that has been to the track.

Chris Blessen and E. Gallentine discussed contingencies.

E. Gallentine wanted the Committee to consider a few things as part of your conversation. The first is on the agenda there is a vote on recommended design alternates and priorities, and she stated IF you are ready to make a motion and vote on the base bid and alternates, then you could move to do so. She stated that we would go to the full commission probable in June with a presentation and vote. E. Gallentine stated that Jessie Waisnor has done a great job; she has been so responsive to all the input. E. Gallentine is so excited about the future of Harry Downes. She is thrilled about the pathway and entrances. J. Waisnor worked hard on the grading work but we are at a point where high school says it will work for lacrosse, but what isn't going to work well is Pop Warner, the full football field and that is important to know. She wants people to understand that there will be a user trade off. The track has about 4 track meets at Downe's each year, but they do have practices 4-5 days a week in the spring for 8 weeks and a couple hours on Saturday. She stated that she spoke to the High school about the need to close the access to that area with or within a path if they are doing a shot put and discus. She stated that it may need to be managed with signage and coaches. She stated that if we put a path we are encouraging a type of use, there is a little conflict that exists now and that would be exacerbated with the path. She would like direction on seating. E. Gallentine stated that she has worked with A. Bellalta on the plating pallet. They worked together on the finessing that plant pallet so it's appropriate for the location. She hears about signage and that will be incorporated. She will look at the wall as well.

J. Bain asked since there isn't any shade would it be beneficial to have wooden benches over steel. J. Bain thinks it's important to get the natural field pathway in, so it gives a use for passive walking and a getaway from the real busy part of the field at its peak. He thinks the pathway adds another use of the park for those who want to just go in and just walk around. He stated it's a shared field

The construction time line was discussed. A phased construction was discussed.

A resident asked about lights, E. Gallentine stated that it was something the neighborhood decided against.

D. Lyons stated that as always Jessie Waisnor did an unbelievable job. He loves the fact you got the input from the kids. There are some great ideas. He loves the planting pallet and agrees with Wendy and John in terms of the path. Wendy Sheridan would say that additional furniture might be important but if it could be phased in and accommodated over time that would be fine. E. Gallentine thinks that would be an easy one to phase in over time.

Dan Lyons given the price the lacrosse netting would be an important early add on. He agrees that the additional furniture is important. He thinks the natural field pathway is very important. He thinks the obstacle course is a nice feature.

Wendy Sheridan would support with the list as is.

Chris Blessen is curious with the long jump. He stated that between the existing track and the long jump it feels like it is an awkward thing that needs to be addressed.

Phyllis O'Leary stated that the full depth track and collar drain to her are the most important. She stated that the real main vote is to make sure the track and field are in good condition and will last a long time. She thinks the drainage is very important. E. Gallentine thinks we have done that with the base bid.

J. Bain stated that the full depth track will be moved to the bottom of the list. The Chair moved to approve alternate playground 2 option, the benches and picnic tables will be a metal and wood combination and the add alternates as presented but moving the full depth track to the bottom. Seconded by Dan Lyons. All in favor.