

Design Review Committee Meeting # 2
Larz Anderson Park
Town Hall Room 111
333 Washington Street, Brookline MA 02445
Tuesday, January 26, 2016, 6:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: John Bain, James Carroll, Clara Batchelor, Antonia Bellalta, Nina Brown, Linda Leary and Jean Stringham

Committee Members Absent:

Staff Present: Erin Gallentine, Parks and Open Space Director, Jessica Zarni, Administrative Assistant

Consultant Team: Kaki Martin, Mark Klopfer and Michael Geffel

Guests Present: see attached for guests

E. Gallentine called the meeting to order.

J. Carroll moved to approve the December 1, 2015 Larz Anderson Design Review meeting minutes. Seconded by Nina Brown. All in favor

E. Gallentine stated that the Park and Recreation Commission has accepted letter of interest from members of the public to serve on the Larz Anderson Design Review Committee. The makeup of this Committee will consist of four Park and Recreation Commissioners and three members of the public. The Commission reviewed the applications and chose 3 members, Nina Brown, Linda Leary and Jean Stringham. E. Gallentine gave some background on each chosen design review member.

E. Gallentine provided a quick summary of the first Larz Anderson Design Review Meeting.

Kaki Martin from KMDG introduced herself, Mark Klopfer and Michael Geffel.

K. Martin summarized the presentation and outcomes of the December Design Review Committee Meeting. She highlighted the following from the December meeting: Photographic and video tour of the estate and its garden, the Master Plan, Horticulture Master Plan and associated work completed by Vic Walker over the course of 20 years, discussion of current conditions and priorities for a first phase of work and feedback on how people arrive at and use the park and what interests and excites them about future work on the park. K. Martin reported that there were favorable comments on the idea of a perimeter circulation path, favorable comments about the diversity of the places within the park and favorable comments about respecting the park's history and finding ways to strengthen it. She heard from people that event parking is a key issue to look at and there were other comments about maintenance, the green dog program and future uses of the park. K. Martin listed the 1989 Master Plan Phase 1 improvements (1990-1991) and its stabilization and restoration goals, the proposed

Horticulture Master Plan and Phase 2 improvements (2001-2002) and its use and management rehabilitation. A plan of the existing conditions was shown. K. Martin separated the park into zones to describe the phasing of the current project. The zones consist of the entry zone, the rink zone, the top of the hill zone and the Avon Street exit zone.

K. Martin has four options to present to the committee and the public tonight and they build upon each other. K. Martin shared more existing conditions/parking broken down by zones.

There are about 90 total existing parking spots that are used and deemed allocated by the Town currently at Larz Anderson. The amounts of spots were broken up in the different zones within the park on a slide.

The first option introduces a new pedestrian path; it would resurface the roadway and improve the drainage. This would allow for people to be off the regular road. A pedestrian crossing would be added. This option would shift parking counts, spaces would be taken away to make crossings possible. K. Martin showed slides of what this path would look like throughout the whole park. K. Martin had mentioned earlier that the options build on one another so moving forward every option will have the three elements that the first option offers and then will add on from there. Option one will bring you down to 84 spaces.

Option 2 uses the same new path alignment, enlarging the existing parking areas, adds a drop off zone at the rink (this will further reduce parking), uses angled parking (helps clarify direction of parking and movement through the parking lot), and it makes adjustment to the road alignment. The parking space drops to an 80 count. The drop off zone was shown. J. Bain isn't sure if it is such a good idea to have to back up the hill to get out of there.

Option 3 A offers a new alignment path, it enlarges existing parking, it uses angled parking, it has adjustments to the road alignment and offers a 2 way system possible. This options calls for tighter more efficient parking to the museum and at the Putterham School. L. Leary and K. discussed the parking in front of the school house. This option will call for greatly expanding the width of the parking lot. Option 3A gets the plan to 97 spaces.

Option 3B is the same as 3A but calls for making an adjustment to the Newton/Pond entry. It shifts it away from the curb. It allows the 2 residential structures to come together. The scope of works starts to change through this option; this option gets the plan to 104 spaces, with another 14 or so in the area of this new parking lot.

J. Carroll asked K. Martin to display the flow of traffic. Option one is a one way and K. Martin described that flow of traffic. However, there is space that could allow for an option that is 2 way. One could enter from Newton Street go up and park and when leaving the parking lot have a choice to go left up the hill, or go right back out the Newton Street entrance.

A. Bellalta discussed how the flow of traffic has been a real challenge up at Larz Anderson. She feels that even if we have it one way only people will still use it as a 2 way. E. Gallentine

discussed how they had a consultant come in and look at a whole host of options regarding the flow of traffic including improvement/clarity of signage. E. Gallentine stated that this is an opportunity to further clarify the direction of flow.

J. Stringham was wondering if an option could be to drive up, do a drop off and leave out Newton Street, one would circle into a loop.

J. Bain shared his concerns on the two-way, especially with the big summer events. The events are getting bigger and with people parked everywhere and it being two-way he is unsure this would work. He talked about the front of the museum and how it is a big paved area and clarify where people can walk/go and feel more safe. He stated that the entrance makes a statement, and he wouldn't want to see it blocked by roof tops/cars. Linda Leary agrees with J. Bain that Larz has a nice entrance now and wouldn't want that to change.

Nina Brown wondered if there is a reason to keep that first section of driveway wide enough for a two-way. She had an idea of maybe taking the space for the pedestrian sidewalk from the road itself so the road becomes 18 feet wide and then have the sidewalk be 5 or 6 feet. She thinks that the road being so wide is what confuses drivers. One thing that she values about the park is the vast open lawn on the hill on Goddard Ave and she wanted to point how much she values that in such an urban area. She likes the idea of a bigger parking lot.

E. Gallentine believes that there is a level of confusion with the flow of traffic and there is a possibility to make this a 2 way. If that is the case though we need to make it clearer and safer and design it so that the level of confusion that exists now is gone. If the decision is to maintain the one-way flow of traffic there should be design changes that make the road rules more clear to the driver.

J. Bain pointed out an area on the slide that has drainage problems. K. Martin discussed how there will be separation between path and road where there is a potential opportunity for a drainage solution.

J. Stringham wanted to discuss the option that moved the drive on one side of the 2 historical buildings. Those two buildings from her perspective do not relate at all and is not sure what is the advantage to putting them on the same side of the road. She likes this idea of driving the same way on the same road that the Anderson's did. E. Gallentine stated that moving these two properties were a part of Vic Walker's master plan. This is the entrance to a flagship park, and E. Gallentine thought it was worth it to talk about and take into consideration. She knows that these two are not related except in that they are residential lease properties at Larz Anderson Park. The concept moves the entrance to a place where it could be better defined and makes the two small residential properties secondary. Her reservations on this option were cost, disruption and a change in the curved alignment of the roadway that has become such a welcoming approach into the park.

J. Carroll wondered if we narrowed the entry road to 28 feet, if we could make the path wider in that area. He stated that there is a lot of foot traffic that comes off Newton Street. A. Bellalta stated that consolidating the parking is beneficial in some instances, she would like to see more green and not such a big parking lot at the top.

David Boit addressed the Committee. He was wondering what the mandate was for coming up with this design review process. E. Gallentine stated that Town currently has funding to improve the roadway and circulation, including parking, drainage and safety improvements. D. Boit was wondering if KMDG looked at creating an additional exit and pointed to the Park Maintenance Area on the slide. He feels that one of the reason people use that road as a two way is because it is easier to turn around and go down the one way it is a shorter distance to exit. He wanted to point out that everywhere you need to put a path in you lose green space.

L. Leary discussed a separate entrance that use to be close to Hopkinton Road. E. Gallentine discussed the service area that is now back there.

Sarah Allaire addressed the commission. She appreciates the comments made by KMDG and the Committee that all paths and roadways will be ADA compliant. She had some concerns about the sloping of these walkways, about the various placing of the walkways and the crossings. She was wondering if maybe the locations of these paths might affect the slope. KMDG and E. Gallentine are focused on the pedestrian experience and there will be a lot of work spent on grading, planning and connecting the paths throughout the park. We do not want the pedestrians to feel vulnerable.

Renee Toll addressed the Commission. She was wondering if it has been considered to have the flow of traffic come in from Avon Street, and when there are car shows the people can still come in from Newton and out from Newton. The angled parking would now become the direction of the flow of travel. E. Gallentine has looked at this and feels that Avon Street is tough in terms of an entrance to a park. R. Toll discussed how she feels like the park needs clearly marked designated spots.

J. Stringam stated that during the car shows people park as if there are spaces on the uphill side, so that if there is a 5 foot curb or walkway she thinks that it would prevent cars from parking on that side at all. She stated that museum has gotten better with parking the cars in such a way that is off the road to the left.

N. Brown thinks the whole curb thing is an important subject. She discussed granite curbing and the project done in the past with Vic Walker. E. Gallentine agreed, but also mentioned the country road feel you get without a curb.

Cobblestone was discussed.

E. Gallentine likes the idea of extending the parallel parking down towards Avon, the idea of consolidated parking by the ice rink, separating it from the roadway and designated circulation;

after listening to some of the comments she doesn't feel there is a need for a designated drop off area.

Elizabeth Feuer, addressed the committee. She was wondering if we considered keeping the walkway always on the same side for two reasons. One reason is it is very windy on one side and the second reason is it would make it clearer to have one crossing at the museum if at all. K. Martin showed where the path is now on the slide and where it connects and E. Gallentine described it as almost a network of paths throughout the park.

E. Gallentine stated that what we should do now is narrow is make some decisions and eliminate some concepts so that KMDG can go back and further refine the options. E. Gallentine wanted to ask the Committee if anyone is in favor of changing the park access road to a 2-way road. The general consensus was to keep the Larz Anderson Park roadway one-way.

C. Batchelor and K. Martin stated that when you change the entrance and add a parking lot it would be a very costly parking lot.

J. Bain does not like the idea of parking immediately in front of the museum, he thinks the expansion of the parking lot is excellent and the more curbing the better. J. Bain was wondering about lighting.

E. Gallentine stated that we have talked about appropriate ornamental lighting, she discussed the current lighting. She would like to see formalized lighting for Larz, but at this point in time we don't have funding for new lights.

The committee agreed to take the two-way flow of traffic off the table. J. Carroll stated that he wouldn't mind seeing the roadway narrowed down to increase the pathway.

E. Gallentine stated that there has been talk amongst the Committee to think about the parking in front of auto museum and keeping the front /view up to the carriage house relatively open (similar to the views of today).

N. Brown stated that it would be nice instead of having asphalt up to the building to have a better material in front of where one enters.

L. Leary wondered if you take away the drop off in option 2 what would you pick up in terms of parking spaces. The answer is that you would pick up 6 spaces, but is 4 less than what is in the existing parking.

J. Carroll did like the parking configuration when you had the two-way, the parking is segregated and liked the idea of keeping that configuration even sticking with the one way. This is the design that would get rid of the parallel parking on the right (10 spaces).

C. Batchelor and E. Gallentine discussed keeping the parallel spaces on the right and what that would look like. E. Gallentine stated that since we decided on keeping it one way, KMDG can come back in and show ideas around that.

The crossing/planting for option 3A was discussed. K. Martin stated that in 3B you are adding in another set of drivers that would not be in 3A. E. Gallentine stated that everyone is making good comments about traffic/parking/flow of traffic, but since we have now decided that we are sticking with a one way route, let's look at if there is a better way to get into the parking and that will be the charge to look at it from both ways and present it at the next meeting. E. Gallentine stated that we will look both at leaving the parallel spaces on the right and taking them away.

The Committee agrees that the "drop off" is not something they would like to pursue.

L. Leary and K. Martin discussed a model parking lot that L. Leary believes would work well at Larz Anderson.

E. Gallentine asked K. Martin to think about the entrance planting and the planting at the rink stairs.

J. Stringham really wants to see the steps along that the path way from near the Putterham School down to the water rehabilitated. E. Gallentine stated that is the section that is in the worst condition and she is hoping to get to those stairs.

E. Gallentine went through the present master plan circulation and access improvements. They consist of the drive refurbishment, existing parking area, comfort station improvements, proposed path circuit, path refurbishment, historic bridge repair, proposed light fixture, proposed tree planting, woodland restoration and meadow restoration. Not all of the goals would be accomplished in this phase of work.

E. Gallentine went through the phases/scope of work. The phase one scope rehabilitates the roadway and parking, makes improvements to the drainage and makes improvements to the pedestrian circulation. The phase two scope consists of rehabilitating the paths, steps and bridges, adding a path from the entrance, having a south facing hillside treatment above the playfields, refurbish/restores bridges and railings, restore meadow and implements the horticulture master plan, restore/ rehabilitate the Tempietto, fountain terrace and stairs, dredge and rehabilitate the pond and make improvements to the comfort station/ office (E. Gallentine would like to see a welcome station in this area. The phase three scope restores the Italiante Garden walk/stairs/wall, it restores the gazebo, east side, it rehabilitates the perimeter wall and gate within the park and along Avon Street, it implements the horticulture master plan and improves paths and circulation. E. Gallentine detailed with a future grant/ future phase scope would allow for. It would allow for the addition of a perimeter path, it would improve parking along Goddard Ave, it would implement the Horticulture Mater Plan, it would rehabilitate the path and steps and it would replace/refurbish play equipment and picnic areas.

She then discussed another future grant/phase that would add interpretive signage, improve site furnishings, implement the Horticulture Master Plan at park edge and it would renovate Pond Street/Avon Street Open Space.

N. brown and E. Gallentine discussed the interest of a 9th school at Larz Anderson. E. Gallentine discussed the Article 97 and Land and Water Conservation Fund Protected Status.

The maintenance shed usage was discussed.

K. Martin stated that she had gotten some great helpful feedback and great clarification tonight.

E. Gallentine will be sending out an email to set a date up for the next meeting.

J. Carroll moved to adjourn. Seconded by J. Bain. All in favor.