

**Cypress Playground
Design Review Committee Meeting
Town Hall, 1st Floor, Room 103
Wednesday, December 12, 2018 6:00 p.m.**

Committee Members Present: John Bain, Daniel Lyons, Antonia Bellalta and Wendy Sheridan and Clara Batchleor

Committee Members Absent: Jim Carroll

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

Guests Present: see attached

Welcome/Call Meeting to Order

J. Bain opened the meeting and introduced himself. N. O'Connor will be chairing the meeting tonight. The Commissioners introduced themselves.

Erin Gallentine introduced herself, Jessie Waisnor, Landscape Architect and Scott Landgren, Senior landscape Architect. E. Gallentine went through a general overview of what will be discussed at this kick off meeting E. Gallentine detailed the funding for this project which includes \$5.8 million for the park. E. Gallentine stated that Town Meeting voted that none of this money will be for synthetic turf. She detailed the effort/meetings that went into the time and work regarding the pros and cons for synthetic turf. She stated that we will be building a natural grass complex. She feels that we can move forward collectively to have a phenomenal park renovation project; she sees it as an opportunity to work together in a positive way moving forward.

E. Gallentine stated that we have completed a topographic survey of the park. She stated that we will be bringing on a Design and Engineering Consultant. She is hoping to pick that team in January.

E. Gallentine went thought the project goals and priorities. She noted that the last major park renovation occurred in 1999-2000.

E. Gallentine detailed the Design Review Process and the process on how to apply to be on the design review committee. The Park and Recreation Commission will

appoint the committee members at their January Park and Recreation Commission Meeting.

She stated that we will look at concepts with the public and look at a variety of designs. Everyone will be able to respond/ add their own input. Ultimately, the design review committee will vote on a recommended plan, establish priorities given the budget and that will go to the full Park and Recreation Commission for their vote.

She discussed how we need to find a balance for the park between active and passive users/ programmed and un-programmed and that maintainability is key.

E. Gallentine and B. Hochleitner discussed then preliminary selection/central register/request for proposals/ invitation to bid process for this project.

The project timeline was discussed. E. Gallentine discussed the High School renovation project timeline.

It is the intent that the field will be seeded not sodded.

An Arial slide of Cypress Street Playground/Park Neighborhood was shown. The pedestrian movement is going to change related to the upgrades to the High School. The project is considering a sidewalk expansion along the High School side of Tappan Street. They are looking at making Greenough Street a slow street. Creating a node on Dana Street was discussed. This is an important connect from the neighborhood to the MBTA. Various user groups of the field were discussed.

J. Waisnor introduced herself. She presented a park overview. She listed the 6 park entrances and showed pictures of each.

J. Waisnor discussed the park perimeter/edge conditions.

J. Waisnor detailed the site fencing.

She displayed pictures and detailed the play equipment.

Lawns and existing trees were discussed. The health of the trees will be looked at.

Pictures of the Athletics fields and basketball courts were shown.

J. Waisnor detailed the various site furniture.

At this point N. O'Connor opened the meeting up to a discussion. N. O'Connor welcomed everyone. They are looking to hear about the parks' strongest points, who the park users are and what would be the most valuable improvement.

Ruthanne Snyder addressed the Commission. She wanted to state that the adult people like this play equipment and children like to run in the bushes. You could trade off a lot mazes and bushes for the kids to run through and save yourself a lot of money. She thinks this would make a better enjoyable experience for the little kids.

Deborah Rivers addressed the Commission. She stated that she was quite involved in all the discussions with the field surface. She is very concerned about where the play can happen. She is happy we are going to keep natural grass, but the issue of having more places for athletic play can happen is important. She stated that the city of Springfield has all natural playing field and they organically maintain it. She thinks we should get in touch with them to find out how they are doing that.

Nancy Wagman addressed the Commission. She wants to make sure that we include the use of the hill for the sledders in the design.

Brian Hotchleutner addressed the Commission. He thinks the biggest challenge is figuring out a way to make the grass field work with all the heavy use. He stated that it's an opportunity in Brookline to set precedent for these practices, but he does know that it is a challenge. He worked as the Chief of Staff for New York City Parks and he feels like he has some experience and in some ways its really straight forward but in other ways there is all these other details with figuring out how it will work with the High School Expansion. He is looking forward to seeing what types of approaches we can come up with.

Johnathan Small addressed the Commission. He is wondering if there are any lessons to be learned regarding fields with what happened at Emerson Garden. E. Gallentine stated that this will be a different approach; the grading is being done differently than the intended solution for grading at Emerson. She stated that we will looks at lesson learned and we do apply everything we learn to all our projects.

Andrew Guttell addressed the Commission. He stated that the strong asset to the park is so many living by. He passes it many times during the week and it's often

empty and feels much underutilized. He is wondering what we can take from Downes and get people to use it. E. Gallentine stated that was a very good point. She often feels that the space is overused or underused. She thinks that maybe it is because it feels segmented and the park doesn't flow. She thinks it will be important to make the park feel more welcoming. She stated that it's a little challenging due to the width of the field. She stated that our last few park renovations we have included a very successful perimeter walking path. She thinks that we need to think that through.

A resident addressed the Commission. He stated that there are not many places to lock up a bike around that area. He stated that people bike up and down Davis Path both ways and wonders about putting in a bike lane.

John Dempsey addressed the Commission. He loves the fact that they have the graduation out in front of the High School; he thinks it a great community feeling. He would love to bury those utility lines; he would like to see it on the list on things to try. He thinks that it really interrupts the view. He stated that he would love to see how we could make Greenough Street work. He stated that the Hennessey Triangle that is just mulch would be a real opportunity to do something there. He thinks some seating in that area would help. He discussed the possibility of having some continuity of furniture throughout all the parks in Brookline.

N. O'Connor agrees with Greenough. She has been talking about this at the High School expansion meetings about that connection of the campus all around the Park and connection to the park. She discussed the idea of having Greenough like a plaza that would tie it together, and she thinks the Hennessey triangle is part of that.

Deborah Rivers wants to express the importance of street trees especially on Davis. She stated that the shade from those trees keeps the heat down, and she finds that to be very important. She believes that the area needs to have a pedestrian feel and acknowledge its part of the campus.

Barry Shield addressed the Commission. He wanted to ask how the process set up for this committee works and how it will progress with all the work on the High School expansion. E. Gallentine detailed how we are interacting at every level to make sure the project is well communicated, she stated that we are coordinating all efforts. E. Gallentine stated the perimeters of this committee's project are from curb of the sidewalk in, to the park. The High School is looking at curb on the

other side of the road into school grounds. She stated that there are areas we will want well-coordinated that will overlap.

Ray Masek addressed the Commission. He stated that both sets of teams are interested in making it cohesive. He stated that he and E. Gallentine speak on a regular basis. He stated that the High School design team have prepared real models of the project, they find it to be very interactive and better than paper.

Hellen Charlupski stated that the interface between the two projects is important for the neighbors too. She stated that we will try to minimize as much as possible for the neighbors. N. O'Connor stated that she wants to make it as streamline and easy as possible. She also wanted to stress that what is being designed on both sides are cohesive.

A resident stated that if Tappan is going to be narrower, what is happening with the parking that is currently there. E. Gallentine stated that curb is not moving, the changes will be made on the other side of the curb, therefore leaving Tappan Street the same width. The curb line is staying where it is on both sides of the street. She discussed the traffic calming on Tappan.

A. Bellalta urged those that are here tonight to continue to come to the meetings and add input as the designs progress.

Susan Vishner addressed the Commission. She stated that BHS expansion and Planning Board listen to neighbors and abutters. There are many changes and suggestions from neighbors have been remarkable. She stated that to see everyone listening to neighbors/abutters was terrific. She agrees you can't pull out much of the parking at Tappan. She stated that traffic calming for the kids will be terrific. She knows Ruthanne suggested putting a maze instead of park furniture. She stated that one point to take from that is open space to run and do creative play is very important in conjunction with regular park playground that allows creative play. She stated that as an adult she doesn't use the park much, she appreciated the green space but there is nothing there for her. She would love to see the walking path or seat furniture to draw her in to use it.

J. Bain discussed the foot traffic going from Davis and Greenough and cutting across to the new Cypress Street Playground facility. The field has been done over, but at one time there was an opening at the bridge on Aspinwall, and within months there was ditch there. He wonders how we will protect the field and improve the field. He is thinking we may need a foot traffic study, N. O'Connor

sated that it's a good point, she stated that they say the students are coming out from the left hand corner and not the main staircase or gym.

A resident stated that J. Bain made a great point, he wonders how we keep the big brown spot from forming again. He wonders if there will be a mechanism for a budget line item every year. J. Bain stated that we don't have the luxury to rest the fields. E. Gallentine stated that we should be taking the fields off and out of play every four years and reestablishing the natural grass. She stated that we already have a shortage of athletic field space and also lack of field space for programming and permit uses. She discussed the vigorous field maintenance program, but stated that with the hours of use and non-resting grass can't survive, it's not as simple as maintenance it is really about quantity of fields and permitting. She discussed the possibility of restricting field hours. He stated that he is sure something can be done and mitigated.

A resident discussed the issues of baseballs being projected onto cars and onto roofs on the Davis street side. E. Gallentine stated that we have talked about netting and can talk about that in the upcoming meetings. The resident and E. Gallentine discussed any restrictions on the number of ball fields going in. E. Gallentine stated that we can look at the radius of the fields. She stated that we need to think about uses, size and mitigating elements.

D. Lyons and Scott Landgren discussed designing and installing a separate irrigation zone in to water the softball infields, to avoid the dust that occurs regularly, especially for the day for graduation.

Guus Driessen addressed the Commission. He suggested raising the intersection for pedestrian flow. He sated on the other side they are walking though the parking lot of the MBTA and will not use crosswalk,

A resident stated that bleachers could be nice a nice addition, he has never seen bleachers very full. He stated that we need something that gives you a little seating.

Grace Watkins addressed the Commission. She stated that as a teacher she takes care of a lot of kids and she would love to see more swing access and older kid access equipment. E. Gallentine stated that people love swings and we can look at different layouts for swing, she stated that sometimes swings are hard because of the huge safety zones. She thinks that we can look at that and see how we can incorporate that.

W. Sheridan stated that Lincoln School Playground is overdue for a renovation.

A resident stated that basketball court is horrible and a drain pit in the middle. He personally never sees it being used very much, he thinks a half court might be better there and maybe use the extra space for swings.

W. Sheridan stated that she can envision just as the front of the high school is a spill out landing zone, near the younger children side of the park near the path becomes a spill zone. She stated that depending on that path (spill zone) she would hate to see a resident not be able to walk through, we need to be thoughtful on that edge. E. Gallentine stated that has her thinking about the Tappan street scape and nodes for seating and gathering as you go down Tappan.

D. Lyons asked if the plan is to keep the basketball court in same general area. E. Gallentine would say so far yes. She stated that we can explore it but we may find it's pretty invasive to move it elsewhere.

Helen Charlupski stated that maybe there is a multi-use for that Basket Ball court. She is thinking of a four square maybe and allow for basketball. She sees a double use there. She sees chess games along the way.

A resident stated that when the High School students are coming out, we need to think about the interaction between the younger kids and high school students. She thinks we should shelter the younger play area a little from the oldest kids.

E. Gallentine stated that in thinking about multi use court and graduation we should be thinking about electrical and how they set up graduation. She wonders if there is a way to have graduation set up easier and allow for a performance space. She is thinking about a design for easy access to electrical and designated place for the band, so that is easy to set them up. C. Batchelor thinks we need to think about site lines as well.

E. Gallentine stated that before the next meeting we are looking to have those internal meetings with athletics and Recreation. She stated that we also will be doing a conditions assessment and will also be looking at the existing trees and we are also looking at different types of community engagement tools. This is a pilot to allow for people can participate remotely. This will allow for people to have a voice and say if they can't make physical meetings.

The Commission moved to adjourn.

Date: 12/12/18

Park and Recreation Commission

GUESTS SIGN-IN
**** PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY ****

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