



TOWN of BROOKLINE
Massachusetts
Park and Recreation Commission

Park and Recreation Commission

John Bain, Chairperson

Nancy O'Connor, Vice Chairperson

Clara Batchelor

James Carroll

Daniel Lyons

Antonia Bellalta

Jean Stameris

Director of Parks and Open Space

Erin Chute Gallentine

Director of Recreation

Lisa Paradis

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, July 10th, 2012

6:00- 9:30 PM

Room 111, Town Hall

333 Washington Street, Brookline, MA

Present: John Bain, Nancy O'Connor, Clara Batchelor, James Carroll, Daniel Lyons, Antonia Bellalta, and Jean Stameris

Staff Present: Erin Gallentine, Parks and Open Space Director, Lisa Paradis, Director of Recreation, Melissa Battite, Assistant Recreation Director, Liz Scott, Park Clerk

Public Present: Patty Underwood, Myles Underwood, Aaram Bachman, Matthew Schexnyder, Hadiya Strasberg, Scott Williams, Bill O'Brien

1. Minutes for Approval

Minutes were approved as presented. Moved by J. Carroll and seconded by D. Lyons.

2. Public Comment

Scott Williams and Bill O'Brien, BYH president said they attended tonight's meeting to voice their support for the new ice skating rink fee structure. They spoke about the strong working relationship they have had with the Recreation Department thus far and would like to see it continue.

3. Ice Skating Rink Fee Structure

M. Battite took the opportunity to introduce the commissioners to Evan an intern for the Recreation Center. His major is sport management with a minor in business.

Point of sale fees were approved at the last meeting for the upcoming season. The new fee structure mirrored the field policy from 2010 identical with user groups and priority

levels. As we prepare for the fall we will use this as a tool to set prices for residents, non-residents, and non-profits.

N. O'Connor asked about the current costs to produce ice. According to M. Battite minus the labor cost it was about \$164 per hour last year. N. O'Connor asked how many hours does youth hockey use? On average they used 12-14 hours a week last year. Youth hockey supplements their ice renting other facilities. Asked what they paid at other facilities S. Williams' responded \$250 an hour at Boston University and \$320 an hour at Dexter. The rates fluctuated.

Prime ice time for youth hockey is a start time of around 6pm and running until 8:30pm. It's hard for families to get there earlier because of their work schedules. This is the time men's hockey currently has booked.

The rink is currently only used only for practice because the league won't commit to an outdoor rink for games due to possible weather issues. N. O'Connor asked if they have started incorporating this fee. S. Williams responded they are in the process of trying to transition it in.

M. Battite said over the past year she looked at last season and found some untapped resources. There are ways to market the ice when it's not being used. By filling those hours it will offset until hockey can play full price which will hopefully happen within three years.

J. Bain asked what the actual price of renting rink ice per hour. It was \$200 last year said M. Battite and will remain at that this year. J. Bain asked if everyone on both sides of the table (hockey and the recreation department) is happy with the arrangements. The hockey representatives stated as an organization they value that facility and want to work towards being able to fund their use appropriately.

4. Brookline Skateboarding Update

P. Underwood thanked the Commission for their time. The Friends of Brookline Skaters appreciated the opportunity to update the Commission on the work that they have done over the past several months with Architects for Humanity to develop skate park and spot concepts for two potential locations in Brookline: Devotion School Playground and Robinson Playground.

The Friends of Brookline Skaters spoke in regards to some of the skate parks that have been created in the last year. Somerville recently completed Morse-Kelley Playground which includes a skating area. The Town of Hingham built a skate park which is comparable in size to a basketball court. J. Bain asked for figures on the Hingham facility. It was approximated that the cost was \$185,000 which included the landscaping.

A. Bachman spoke about the recent community activities that The Friends of Brookline have participated in. He instructed a skateboard design clinic and then a skate instruction clinic which had over 25 participants in each class. At the end of May a festival with a portable skate park was attended by about 40 people. Over the course of 10 weeks last spring A. Bachman instructed the Lincoln School Afterschool Program in basic skateboarding at Robinson Playground. They have also held various focus groups at his skate shop.

J. Bain asked what they required as far as safety equipment. A. Bachman responded that they did require helmets as part of the programs.

J. Bain inquired about the typical injury level involved in skateboarding. They responded that page 24 of their handout had statistics surrounding injuries. They also noted 1/3 occur within the first week.

Bachman spoke about the design for Robinson created by Architects for Humanity. He took into consideration the traffic pattern of the park, and where the noisiest areas would be and positioned the skate park towards to the back to help the trees absorb sound.

J. Stameris asked if the current fence would be a hindrance. A. Bachman said the current fence would not be a problem.

D. Lyons commented that he was there for the public event and he seemed to think the people were very receptive to it.

N. O'Connor asked about landscaping. There would be plantings in the middle to help with appearance and provide shade. She asked for an estimated price to construct a skate area at Robinson Playground. The Friends of Brookline Skaters estimated that the cost would range between \$50,000-\$125,000 depending how many "bells and whistles" were incorporated.

For the Devotion School sketches the architects used one tennis court for the square footage.

Pg. 14 of the handout had Devotion School designs which had similar elements, but beefed up because of the bigger space.

N. O'Connor asked the Friends if Robinson Playground would be a big enough spot. They responded that Robinson would not alone fulfill the Town's need but is a great starting point. Devotion, as a sole skate park in Brookline could meet the towns skating needs due to its size.

J. Bain asked if the Hingham facility met a lot of skaters needs. A. Bachman asked for more benches than what Hingham provided.

N. O'Connor asked if a skate dot or a spot would really be enough to meet the Friends needs for the next few years. P. Underwood said though it would be a great starting point she doesn't feel that's equitable. A bench is great and they would love it but it would only allow three or four people at a time.

J. Bain assured the group that they are still on the radar screen and that the Design Review process for every renovation of a park includes discussion of a skate element. D. Lyons asked the architects for an estimate on the Devotion sketches that were presented. The representatives responded Devotion would cost approximately \$125,000-\$185,000.

5. Temporary Art Exhibit at Linden Place

M. Schexnyder and H. Strasberg, spoke to the Commissioners in regards to placing a temporary art exhibit in Linden Square.

M. Schexnyder thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity and shared both his and Hadia's backgrounds and why they are interested in this project. Matthew is resident of Brookline lives on Linden Place. Hadia is a former classmate and a current colleague at his architectural firm. They have a shared interest in children activities in the parks. They feel a public work of temporary art that injects something unexpected and novel would be great for the community. They shared their proposal with the Commission (attached). The outside is very utilitarian and functional. Different materials would be used inside that are bright and you can move in or around the structure.

The scale of the structure is no bigger than 9 feet. The opening would be 2-3 feet higher. The opening would not be the shape or scale of an actual door because they are trying to be abstract. C. Batchelor asked if residents would be able to climb on it since public safety is of main concern. Their response was it would be lined so that it wouldn't be possible to climb and the openings in the front would be spaced enough that you couldn't climb. The structure would be large enough to go inside and turn around but not big enough to camp out in. J. Bain asked what you would see from the inside of the structure. They replied it would be more about looking up then out and having a different experience of your surroundings.

E. Gallentine expressed her support for public art in the park and has found that the Studios without Walls temporary art exhibit in the Riverway provides more engagement for the public when interpretation is provided. M. Schexnyder said they will provide a small plaque with a link that will provide info about the park and the structure. J. Bain asked what the color scheme will be. H. Strasberg replied a dark stain but no particular color scheme has been determined. M. Schexnyder said a double experience is being given to the public because the inside will provide an immediate different environment from the outside with soft fabric. The soft fabric will also help with different lighting effects. E. Gallentine asked how the structure would be secured. M. Schexnyder said it will need to be secured in 4 places. E. Gallentine added they reviewed their guidelines and their application conformed. E. Gallentine said it would need to be an easy restoration effort. The architects agreed and said they anticipate having the ability to put it up quickly and bring it down quickly.

There are two potential areas in discussion for the structure. One is under a tree canopy and one is under a light for most of the afternoon. Dialogue is now ongoing for the best placement of the structure.

C. Batchelor asked how the insurance would be handled. Is there any requirement by the town that the artists carry insurance? Public art falls in a very different category and additional insurance would make it prohibitive.

N. O'Connor commented she sees the structure as more of a neighborhood feature then a sightseeing attraction.

In regards to accessibility issues, they could make one of the structures with a wider entrance to make it more accessible. N. O'Connor asked how they can monitor what is going on. Would a police officer be able to see through? Space at the bottom allows you see the feet and the opening that could be oriented towards the street.

J. Bain inquired about what dates they had in mind for the piece to be displayed. They are interested in displaying during the warmer months and hoped to have it up in September

and then asked E. Gallentine what her opinion was for the duration of the piece. E. Gallentine said typically pieces remain on display for 6 weeks.

The vote tonight will be on approval of the concept, materials, and verbiage. E. Gallentine recommended the commissioners approve this. She felt it is great to see people interested in having art in the neighborhood and it's a way for the public to engage with the space differently and get folks thinking creatively. She stated that she is very much in favor.

N. O'Connor asked how it would be funded. It would be personally funded responded M. Schexnyder and H. Strasberg. They are currently looking for space to build and then will begin working.

J. Bain asked if they could make sure that the wood is safe for the public and won't give people splinters.

A. Bellalta asked who would be responsible for maintenance if something were to happen to the structure. M. Schexnyder and H. Strasberg would be personally responsible and are aware of that.

The Chair moved we approve the concept. Seconded by C. Batchelor. 6 voted yes and 1 voted no. N. O'Connor opposed. Motion approved.

6. Fisher Hill Reservoir Park Presentation

Mark Klopfer and Kaki Martin, Principal of KMDG, represented KMDG, and presented the final plan for Fisher Hill which they described as a yearlong incredible and engaged process. The plan was amended over time to what the community expressed without hindering the design. The process included 9 public meetings. There is a budget shortfall, however the Design Review Committee came up with a prioritizing and associated costs so that the Town can consider various funding strategies.

M. Klopfer commented the staff had a great time working on this project and he is excited to present to the Commissioners an overview of the final designs, alternative architectural elements and budget summary. Fisher Hill Park has an important cultural history and the goal was to keep that part of the site.

The vision is to have the history of the park embedded in the surroundings as people recreate. He discussed the promenade plan including seating and orientations, the entrances and the bridge over the swale by the parking area, accessible ramps to the promenade and the field, views, the possible water rill and cascade at the end of the promenade, and interpretation including the high water mark and a regional waterworks map. He then discussed paths, circulation and fencing, including the material types for different paths and surfaces, such as stone pavers and concrete pavers on the promenade, concrete sidewalks, asphalt and chip seal main park paths, Klingstone secondary paths, wood fiber woodland paths, and finally wood boardwalk, bridge and gathering space. He also explained why the various materials were chosen including access, durability and maintenance, costs, and appropriateness. He said there would be an ornamental metal fence on Fisher Ave. and a black PVC-coated chain link fence around the rest of the park perimeter. Finally he discussed play and gathering spaces, including episodic play versus

a designated area, and including a slide built into the slope, the slope itself, and the water rill feature, which he compared with the Highline in New York City, as well as the gathering space at the top of the hill.

Kaki Martin, Principal with KMDG, reviewed and discussed the planting strategies, including the 25 trees to celebrate the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance's anniversary, to be planted in the preferred location along the promenade and Fisher Ave. She also discussed the development of the planting on site, particularly the woodland planting and the planting typology, with layers of planting and differing light levels, and the distribution of each layer on site. This includes a woodland canopy, woodland understory, woodland deciduous shrubs, woodland evergreen screening and shrubs, woodland herbaceous layer, meadow plants, wet meadows and bordering upland plants, and a specimen tree. For each layer she discussed specific examples of plants and the values they would provide such as a visual interest in all seasons, habitat value and food and cover for wildlife, and screening for abutters.

M. Klopfer presented the cost estimate and budget analysis, including a base cost for the park, and two levels of alternates with increasing costs, for the full master plan. He explained the base cost of \$3.8M, which the Town has funding for, and the breakdown of costs, including demolition and site preparation, earthwork (relatively less since much of the berm will remain), pavements, surfaces and walls, architecture, furnishing and site amenities, utilities (including power, plumbing, stormwater treatment and civil engineering), fences and gates, planting and a contingency cost. He then explained the level 1 park alternatives at a cost of \$1.08M, and including additional gatehouse stabilization, comfort station upgrade, ornamental fence on Fisher Ave., promenade materials upgrade (i.e., granite), increasing planting, site furniture upgrades, and overlook platform, slide and play features. Finally, he explained the level 2 park alternatives at a cost of \$1.5M, and including the fountain/water rill system, more additional planting, full preservation of the gatehouse interior and exterior, additional benches, and a steel shade structure, which is optional and a low priority as trees could be used instead. E. Gallentine stated that the Design Review Committee had actually requested that the fountain/water rill system be moved into the level 1 park alternatives category. The total master plan cost with all alternatives is \$6.38M.

J. Carroll asked what the schedule is going forward. E. Gallentine said we will look for more money in the CIP, private fundraising, and we have time to get a funding strategy together. Some parts such as construction docs will continue but at some point we will have to stop and figure out the value we are working with.

N.O'Connor asked how deep is the rill and mentioned it felt like safety concern for her. M. Klopfer responded it was minimal and only a couple of inches. N. O'Connor commented she was very impressed and hoped we can find a way to fund it.

J. Stameris commented she is not on the committee and seeing these plans for the first time she is amazed and felt the park would be a great addition to Brookline.

C. Batchelor asked if the Level 1 Budget Alternatives were prioritized. E. Gallentine responded that on the presented budget chart they are not but there was some general priority consensus unless a donor wanted to do something specific.

D. Lyon's inquired what we are looking at for a possible end date for construction. A year for construction responded E. Gallentine depending on the season we start. D. Lyon's commented he is looking forward to seeing the finished product, it's going to be gorgeous.

E. Gallentine took the opportunity to thank KMDG representatives for making this a fun, great project, and that it was inspiring to create something from scratch.

KMDG representatives thanked everyone for the support they felt throughout the process. The felt the town made the process clear and easy for them to understand.

A. Blair was recognized for her work behind the scenes and all her help to manage the process and the committee.

J. Carroll moved to accept the The Fisher Hill Design Plan as presented. J. Bain seconded. All in favor.

7. CIP Discussion

The annual CIP budget review that occurs every September is approaching. E. Gallentine suggested that the committee review the upcoming Park renovations and see if any should be swapped based on need.

Brookline Avenue playground is scheduled for design review in 2014 and with completion in 2015. Brookline Avenue field is highly used for Green Dog and heavily for sports. It is a tough field to keep the turf strong, the play equipment needs to be replaced and residents have requested a water play area focused on the younger kids at the Lynch Center.

Brookline Reservoir Park is currently scheduled for FY16. Based on bids in over the past year the budget is approximated to be 1.4 million. The goals for this park included; make the entranceways handicap accessible, preservation commission has asked for restoration of the gate house and potential restroom in that location. Committee should evaluate if that should be moved to earlier than FY 16.

Clark was on voted, a design was approved and construction has started. We are anticipating a Spring 2013 completion.

Corey Hill is currently on the docket for FY 15 and construction to begin FY 16, Corey Hill Playground is in need of full renovation.

Downes is currently scheduled for an FY17 design and FY18 construction where we would renovate the playground, rebuild natural turf and try to meet residents requests for waterplay.

Larz Anderson Park is scheduled for FY 15 with a \$600,000 budget to reconstruct the entire road way throughout Larz and fix deteriorated stairs and pathways.

Other renovations on the current CIP include; Murphy Playground scheduled for FY 18, Schick scheduled for FY 18, and Soule Athletic fields scheduled for playgrounds and field renovations in FY15.

Currently the Devotion School grounds are next on the school list to be renovated. The historic value will be biggest challenge in this project because the core of the Devotion School, which has historical significance, needs to be preserved.

E. Gallentine encouraged the committee members to think between now and September's CIP meeting if we should move Robinson into the CIP for possible skate park incorporation.

Should Pierce and Schick be switched based on their current conditions? Pierce seems to be in a greater need.

L. Paradis is working on a feasibility study for Tappan Street Gym and will share those findings with the Commissioners.

7. Brookline Day

Brookline Day is scheduled for Sunday, September 23rd. The day is being sponsored by Brookline Bank. Currently there are several vendors and food trucks interested. 14 banners will be going up throughout the village and along Route 9 to advertise. Current activities include; hot air balloons, inflatables, face painting, touch a truck and more. The goal is to keep it more of a "town fair" feeling and not as commercial. There will be no admission fee charged to visitors but vendors will be charged a fee for tables.

The Parks Department will have a booth combined with other DPW divisions with various activities offered.

8. Recreation Report

The Aquatic center brochure has been updated and is now available.

The Recreation Department has recently received two grants to begin a Leads program through recreation therapy. Brookline LEADS (Life skill Education and workforce Development for Students) is a transitional program for students on an IEP in the 19-22 year program at Brookline High School. Select participants will become interns at a variety of Brookline Recreation facilities and will work to improve vocational, life, and social skills. Brookline LEADS is supported by a grant from the Brookline Community Foundation's Youth Grant making Program.

9. Park and Open Space Report

The Emerald Necklace Conservancy, Department of Conservation and Recreation, City of Boston and Town of Brookline are discussing an update to the Emerald Necklace Master Plan.

E. Gallentine shared with the commissioners that a signage inventory is currently underway of all of Parks and Open Space signs. The next step will be using sample parks with the intent of finding general language, protocol, and eventually a design, which will then be standard throughout all of the parks. Currently there are different styles and a variety of rules from one park to the next, conflicting signs etc. Standard signage across the board will be helpful for consistency and enforcement. A subcommittee will be formed to work on design and content and update the rules and regulations if they are outdated.

E. Gallentine updated the committee on current Design Review Projects. Clark Park has recently begun construction. In regards to Billy Ward the bids have come back and are over budget for

the second time. E. Gallentine is reviewing items to see if they could go under different elements or possibly redesign by leaving the water play where it is. If the design changes drastically to meet budget restrictions the committee may have to reconvene. E. Gallentine will share more details of this with the commissioners as they become available to come but hoped we could make it work.

Warren and Waldstein are moving along and have both had their first two DCR meetings. The committees are working on concepts this summer. Public meetings will continue come September or October.

Age friendly initiatives have requested a summary from E. Gallentine that looked at how the Brookline Parks support age friendly inventory and the park amenities we have available throughout the parks for the elderly.

Advertising in the parks in general is something we should revisit. N' O. Connor said she does not want to revisit this because BYB has talked in the past about wanting to use this as a source of income.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.