

MEETING MINUTES

Project: Linwood & Athens Avenue Park Master Plan
Date: 22 May 2008
From: Sara Pevaroff Schuh, SALT Design Studio, & Kim Douglas, Studio Gaea
Meeting Location: Township Building

RE: Meeting with Project Study Committee

Participants: Commissioner Scott Zelov – Parks & Recreation Committee, Chair
Commissioner Jane Dellheim – Parks & Recreation Committee, Vice-Chair
Lindsay Taylor – Director, Parks & Recreation
Gene Heston – Parks Supervisor, Parks & Recreation
Tom Pintande – Director, Parking Services Department
Jeff Levine – Community representative
Eric Lowry – Ard-Wood Civic Association
Wallace J. McLean – Community representative
Harriet Ruffin – Community representative
Kim Douglas – Studio Gaea, principal
Sara Pevaroff Schuh – Salt Design Studio, principal
Gwendolyn Johnson – Studio Gaea, intern

Notice to all participants: SALT Design Studio and Studio Gaea will rely on these notes as the approved record of matters discussed. If any of the following items are incorrect or fail to record discussions at the meeting, please contact the writer of these minutes within 3 days.

Introduction

The Design Team presented a revised Conceptual Design for the park, based on the feedback received during the last Study Committee Meeting. The Team briefly reviewed the three concept schemes presented on April 24th and noted that the revised Concept Design captures the following from each scheme:

- using a curvilinear approach to design from Scheme A
- creating a central focal point and trellis structure from Scheme B
- the perimeter path and prominence of rain gardens in Scheme C

Since the Study Committee last met, the Design Team has consulted with the Township Traffic Engineer on traffic calming measures at the intersection and with the Township Arborist on the health of the existing Oaks. The Traffic Engineer was supportive of “bump-outs” at the intersection and wide crosswalks to preference the pedestrian. It was determined that a stop sign would not be a safe alternative to the traffic light. When the park is constructed, timing of the traffic light could be adjusted to allow for better pedestrian movement. The Township Arborist determined that one of the Oaks is in very poor condition and will need to be removed.

Description of Revised Conceptual Design

The revised Concept Design is formed by the underlying ecology of the site – its’ topography, habitats and two watersheds – in tandem with the uses, activities and interests expressed by the community (see diagrams on Landforms & Water Movement). As the site straddles two watersheds, the ridge line across the site is articulated in a gentle landform that shapes various rooms and directs water movement. The site is further organized by three proposed native habitats – woodland, lowland, and clearing – that offer opportunities to learn about native plants and

animals, provide areas to capture stormwater, and substantially re-green this urban site (see diagram on Habitats. As a third layer, there are three zones within the park – civic, active and quiet (see Land Uses diagram).

A low curving, undulating wall runs diagonally like a ribbon across the site from Linwood Avenue to Athens Avenue – creating small nooks and rooms, highlighting the edge of the ridge line, offering numerous places to sit, play and gather. This signature wall spans all three zones of the park, tying them together with a common built element. The primary entrance to the park, at the intersection of Linwood & Athens Avenues, is framed by the existing Oaks and highlighted by a trellis structure with seating. This threshold begins at the expanded corner and directs people into a large civic space, which serves as a focal point for the park. The civic space takes the form of an elliptical plaza, and creates a large, paved area suitable for a variety of activities, including learning to ride a bike, chalk drawing, people watching, festivals, and art shows. Across the park, system of poles is proposed that would incorporate lighting, signage, shade screens, art installations and movies. A path runs around the perimeter of the park offering woodland walks, casual strolling and a way to see and access all park rooms. All areas of the park will be universally accessible.

Discussion on Revised Conceptual Design

Specifically, the Study Committee made decisions and provided approval on the following:

- location of civic, quiet and active rooms
- location of perimeter path
- threshold trellis at main entrance
- water element (mist-site to be determined)
- interactive weather sculpture as focal point behind stage area
- entrances to park will emphasize seasonality in the planting
- dogs will not be permitted (on or off leash) in the park
- use of wall, landforms, bridges, dry streambed, Boulder Garden and interactive play sculpture as play areas for children
- no traditional play equipment is needed

Additional comments regarding the Conceptual Design included the following:

- inscribe ridge line in the park, perhaps as a surface treatment
- use locally made/found or recycled materials in park, especially explore for interactive sculpture
- all new planting in the park will be native plants (with exception of lawn grass)
- add tree-house or platform structure in woodland area of park for both children and adults
- present options for relocation or consolidation of various utility poles on corner
- explore new technologies for lawn maintenance
- ensure access for maintenance vehicles to all areas of park
- investigate creating storage areas in the slope of park
- include lighting in first phase of park construction

Other Issues

Connecting with utility companies for possible grants, sponsorship or gifts, especially as it relates to moving/relocating utilities or sponsoring a utility on an annual basis (PECO, Aqua PA) – Commissioner Dellheim has offered to take the lead on this matter.

Community Outreach Suggestion

Organize a Fall Festival in Park on September 19, 2008 to celebrate the global event, Park(ing) Day. The Township and the newly formed Friends Group could take the lead in this effort. For more information on this event, see the website: <http://www.parkingday.org/>

Next Steps:

- Overall, there was a tremendous amount of positive feedback on the revised concept plan and the Study Committee gave approval for the Design Team to present this concept at the Public Meeting in June.
- The revised Conceptual Design for the Park will be presented at a Public Meeting on June 10th at the Township Building (Second Floor Board Room) at 7pm.