Master Plan for Linwood Park

A COMMUNITY PARK IN ARDMORE PA

Prepared for
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION
LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP
Montgomery County, PA

October 2008
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Acknowledgements

The Master Plan for Linwood Park in Ardmore, Pennsylvania was financed by members of the Ardmore community through private fundraising. The property designated for this park at the corner of Linwood and Athens Avenue was purchased through a grant from the Montgomery County Open Space Program. We would like to acknowledge the contributions, time and effort of the Study Committee, the Lower Merion Township Commissioners, Township Staff and the many individuals who worked with us throughout the public process to develop the Master Plan.

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Commissioner Jane Dellheim – Ward 8, Parks & Recreation Committee, Vice-Chair

Lower Merion Township Staff
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Gene Heston – Parks Supervisor, Parks & Recreation
Donna Heller – Recreation Supervisor, Parks & Recreation
Chris Leswing – Asst. Director, Building & Planning Department
Officer Joe Zeminski – Police / Crime Prevention

Ardmore Community Representatives
Eric Lowry – President, Ard-Wood Civic Association
Harry Weldon – Household of Faith Deliverance Worship Center
Kate Galer – Community representative
Jeff Levine – Community representative
Steven Lindner – President, Ardmore Progressive
Wallace J. McLean – Community representative
Harriet Ruffin – Community representative
Thanks to the Many Contributors

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This report serves as a documentation of the planning process for the development of a new community park -- Linwood Park -- in Ardmore. Lower Merion Township issued a Request for Proposals in fall 2007 and the team of Studio Gaea and SALT Design Studio was commissioned to develop this Master Plan. The Township created a Study Committee composed of Township staff, two Township Commissioners and seven members of the community to work with the design team throughout the planning process. The process officially began in January 2008 with the first of many Study Committee meetings intended to identify community goals, needs and interests.

The one-acre parcel purchased by the Township at the corner of Linwood and Athens Avenues is a public parking lot. The lot was originally woodland and later used as agricultural land until the mid 1850s, when Ardmore began to develop as a residential and commercial area. Buildings occupied the site until the mid 1960s, when it was cleared for use as a parking lot for the adjacent Christian Science Church (now owned by Household of Faith Deliverance Church).

Bordered by eight mature Red Oaks and a clipped hedge of Yew, the lot presently accommodates approximately 40-50 cars. The Household of Faith Deliverance Church uses the lot as overflow parking for church events and neighbors take advantage of its hardscape for bike riding and car driving lessons.

The goal for the Master Plan is to provide a community gathering space driven by the needs and interests of the neighborhoods. Over the course of six months, the Design Team facilitated two public meetings (February 26 and June 10), two public workshops (March 29 and April 5) with both adults and children, and five meetings with the Study Committee (See Appendix for Meeting Minutes). The work products, goals, comments and feedback generated from each public forum were posted online through the Township website in an effort to make the planning process as transparent as possible and accessible to all the community.

There are three park facilities within five blocks of the park site. South Ardmore Park, at Sussex and Athens, is an 18-acre active recreational space with numerous ballfields, tennis courts, play equipment, restrooms and a walking trail. St. Paul’s Tot Lot, at Spring and Ardmore Avenue, is a small neighborhood playground for toddlers, and Vernon V. Young Memorial Park, at 124 Ardmore Avenue, is a 5.2 acre site with fields for basketball, softball, baseball, and volleyball, tennis courts, tot and junior play equipment, a swimming pool, seating and restroom facilities.
The seat of Lower Merion Township, Ardmore is home to approximately 13,000 people. A highly diverse population representing numerous cultures and ethnicities, Ardmore is also the densest village in Lower Merion Township (Montgomery County Open Space & Environmental Resource Protection Plan) and most in need of community open space. The maps above and on the following page call out the local and regional open space opportunities for the Ardmore community, as well as possible users and partners for the park. The Design Team envisions a park supported by the local schools and other public institutions, and one in which this new park is both an important civic space for the community and an educational resource.
PARTNERS:
Lower Merion Conservancy
Lower Merion Historical Society
Elementary School
Penn Valley
Penn Wynne
Wyncote
Darby Cobb Watershed Partnership
Haverford College

RELEVANT LOCAL PROJECT:
Proposed Wetlands at East Branch of Indian Creek

POTENTIAL COMMUNITY PARTNERS • TOWNSHIP
Executive Summary

As an economic hub of the Main Line, Ardmore has developed into an area with the highest density of housing and people, and the least amount of tree cover in Lower Merion Township (http://www.lowermerion.org/archive/osp/osp_infra.html). Over time, streams have been filled and open space has been developed for commercial uses. In 2006, residents in Ardmore learned of a developer’s plans to convert an existing parking lot at the corner of East Athens and Linwood Avenues into a housing development. Motivated by lack of neighborhood-scale green spaces in Ardmore, a small group of residents galvanized the community and persuaded the Township to purchase the parking lot to create a new neighborhood park. Montgomery County, through its Green Space Program, contributed significant funding to enable this important greening effort and to set a new precedent for park design in the region. The Township selected the consultant team of Studio Gaea and SALT Design Studio to lead the master planning project.

Over a six-month period, the design team of Studio Gaea and Salt Design Studio focused on transforming a blank canvas into a sustainable park with innovative ideas about play and community uses. The designers embraced a participatory approach to the design process, which included on-going involvement from both adults and children in the community. Through public forums, community workshops, and design sessions with neighborhood and Township representatives, the team explored ways for the park to engage the community, reconnect with the environment and introduce alternatives to traditional forms of recreation.

Environmental Infrastructure for the Park

The primary inspiration for the park became the fusion of play into the physical restoration of the site ecology. Linwood Park’s design is rooted in landforms, watersheds, and habitats. The site straddles the Cobbs Creek and Indian Creek watersheds with a north-south ridgeline dividing the watersheds. This essential topographic feature had been obliterated over time. Articulating this ridgeline in a bold landform created the infrastructure for a unique and context-driven design for the park. Rising three to four feet above the sidewalk grade, the landforms direct stormwater, create flexible, unprogrammed rooms and dramatically change the visual perception of the space.

Ecology and play coalesce to create two iconic features of the park: a colorful, low curving wall and a dry, winding streambed. Like a ribbon, a wall weaves diagonally across the site from Linwood Avenue to Athens Avenue, its surface undulating, contracting and expanding along the way to serve multiple functions. This playful “Ribbon Wall” accentuates the curving landform of the watersheds, while it generates a series of nooks, elbows and plateaus for socializing, sitting and gathering. Correspondingly, the dry streambed curves and sweeps through a lowland habitat, capturing stormwater from the site and culminating in a rain garden, as it echoes the meander of a forgotten stream.

Three habitats in progression from the streetscape to the back of the site – lowland, clearing and woodland – organize the park and offers a variety of

Participation at the adult design workshop
opportunities to experience native plants and wildlife. An abundance of new canopy and understory trees, shrubs and perennials will be planted to create a multi-layered woodland, while a rich and varied groundlayer will enliven the lowland and its existing mature Red Oaks. Together, the landforms and plant communities will foster a diversity of native birds, bees and butterflies, making this park a critical local contribution to the broader regional network of green space in the Township. But this park landscape will be more than a neighborhood ecological restoration; these habitats are designed for play.

A Walk-Through

The main entrance to the park begins at the corner of Linwood & Athens Avenues, directing visitors along a walkway and through a shaded threshold. Framed by the existing majestic Oaks, the walkway expands into a dynamic civic space, the main gathering place for the park. The shade structure acts as a gateway to this new plaza and a visual scaffold for community events. Elliptical in form, the plaza envelops a large, paved area to host a myriad of activities, such as learning to ride a bike, chalk drawing, people watching, festivals and art shows. On the far side of the plaza, the ribbon wall widens to become a stage for concerts or impromptu performing. Like garden follies, an ornamental and versatile system of poles marches across the stage and into the adjacent lawn. The poles can support lighting, signage, shade screens, art installations and movie screens for special events. The permanent backdrop to the stage is an interactive weather sculpture, which is a central focal point of the park. This sculpture will allow children to learn in a physical and experiential way about weather and other natural phenomenon. A great lawn opens up behind the weather sculpture, with a tumbling hill for rolling down in the summer and sledding along in the winter. Groves of trees dot the hill, offering shaded options for lounging and picnicking.

North of the tumbling hill, a Reading Garden is created in the crescent bend of the Ribbon Wall, shaded by canopy trees and furnished with movable tables and chairs to accommodate reading, playing chess or eating lunch with a friend. Adjacent to the plaza on the south, a horseshoe of boulders creates a playful garden in the lowland streambed. Misting jets of water emerge from the pavement for cooling off in the summer, powered by solar energy. At the far north and south corners of the site, there are entrances to the park from the neighborhoods, further supporting the present pedestrian flow through the site. At these gateways, the Ribbon Wall descends to ground level, spilling colored paving across the public sidewalk as an invitation to enter. A secondary path runs around the northeast perimeter of the park, traversing the woodland, bridging over rain gardens and offering plenty of benches for resting, relaxing, or watching people play on the open lawn. Tucked in the woodland, a universally-accessible platform is built in the lower canopy of the trees, away from the street activity. The adventure of climbing and enjoying a new perspective up in the trees can be experienced in the Tree Lookout.
A Park for Generations to Come

As a thriving commercial center, Ardmore has attracted a diverse population with a commitment to neighborhood scale green amenities. Working collaboratively with the community and the Township, the challenge of the Linwood Park Master Plan was to create a park that was uniquely suited to Ardmore and this community. The design for Linwood Park unites infrastructure with site ecology in an imaginative and flexible approach to play and nature. This rehabilitated place offers up the medium for an innovative park experience without fully determining the program. It provides the impetus for conversation, storytelling and narrative. Native plant and animal habitats are integrated within a variety of versatile outdoor rooms, giving form and shape to a fully interconnected community – at once historic, cultural and ecological.
Perspectives

Gateway into Park at Linwood & Athens Avenues

Reading Garden & Lunch Spot
Perspectives

Lawn, Tree Lookout
& Walking Trail

Ridge Line, Ribbon Wall & Rain Garden
Opinion of Probable Construction Costs — Phase 1

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**NOTE:** Design fees and direct owner costs are not included in this estimate. In providing opinions of probable construction cost, the Client understands that the Consultants have no control over the cost or availability of labor, equipment or materials, or over market conditions or the Contractor's method of pricing, and that the Consultant's opinions of probable construction costs are made on the basis of the Consultants professional judgment and experience. The Consultants makes no warranty, express or implied, that the bids or the negotiated cost of the Work will not vary from the Consultant's opinion of probable construction cost. The Consultants suggests the Client independently employ a professional cost estimator for greater reliability and precision.
## Opinion of Probable Construction Costs — Phase 2

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**NOTE:** Design fees and direct owner costs are not included in this estimate. In providing opinions of probable construction cost, the Client understands that the Consultants have no control over the cost or availability of labor, equipment or materials, or over market conditions or the Contractor's method of pricing, and that the Consultant's opinions of probable construction costs are made on the basis of the Consultants professional judgment and experience. The Consultants makes no warranty, express or implied, that the bids or the negotiated cost of the Work will not vary from the Consultant’s opinion of probable construction cost. The Consultants suggests the Client independently employ a professional cost estimator for greater reliability and precision.
Alternative Sources of Park Funding

1. Dedication of Land for Recreation/Fee in Lieu – “In order to meet the recreational needs of future inhabitants of developments and subdivisions in the Township, the applicant or developer of any residential subdivision or land development comprising more than three building lots or residential units shall, as a condition of final plan approval, dedicate to the Township, or to a homeowners association comprised of the owners of the lots set forth on the plan, as the Township shall determine, fifteen percent of the tract area as a recreational area. In lieu of such dedication, and upon agreement with the Township, the applicant or developer may construct recreational facilities, pay to the Township a fee in an amount set forth in Chapter A167 hereof, privately reserve land, or a combination of the above, for park or recreation purposes.” Code of The Township of Lower Merion

2. Friends of Linwood Park – Friends of Linwood Park has started application for 501(c) organization status; our mission is to support the development, maintenance, and beneficial use of Linwood Park for all residents of Lower Merion Township. Friends of Linwood Park will organize volunteer projects and fundraising for the implementation and maintenance of the park.

3. Private Donations from Lower Merion Community

4. Grant Sources:

a. The PECO Open Space Program Green Region helps municipalities in southeastern Pennsylvania with ongoing efforts to protect and improve open land. Municipalities may apply for a Green Region grant of up to $10,000 per project in their region. Contact: Fred Maher of PECO at 215-841-5555 or Olivier Bass of Natural Lands Trust at 610-353-5587 x244. Applications must be postmarked November 1, 2008

b. Starbucks Foundation will contribute at the regional and local level with product or in-kind donations. Starbucks Parks promotes arts and culture, the environment and/or young social entrepreneurs. Applications must be submitted online. The Friends of Linwood Park has started the application process.

c. State of PA, Department of Community & Natural Resources & Community Conservation Partnership Program - Community Grants are awarded to municipalities for recreation, park and conservation projects. These include rehabilitation and development of parks and recreation facilities; acquisition of land for park and conservation purposes; and technical assistance for feasibility studies, trails studies, and site development planning. Grants require:

- 50 percent match, except for some technical assistance grants and projects eligible as small community projects.
- The initial $20,000 or less in grant funding provided must be used to purchase materials only and approved professional design fees.
- Additional grant funds of up to $20,000 may be provided matching the municipal applicant’s local cash or non-cash contribution to the project.
- An additional $20,000 may be used to cover all other eligible costs and other costs such as labor and/or equipment.
- Maximum grant under this project type is $40,000.

Contact: Rachel Carson State Office Building, PO Box 8475 Harrisburg PA 17105-8475, Deadline: April 25, 2009

d. National Gardening Awards - Youth Garden Grants are for schools and community organizations with child-centered garden programs. Applicants must plan to garden in 2009 with at least 15 children between ages 3–18 years.

- Five (5) programs will receive gift cards valued at $1000 (a $500 gift card to The Home Depot and a $500 gift card to the Gardening with Kids catalog and store) and educational materials from NGA
- Seventy (70) programs will receive a $500 gift card to The Home Depot and educational materials from NGA
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Historical Evolution

1750 - 1800

- Lancaster Pike
- Spring Garden House, Andrew's Mill
- Old Stone Church

1850

- Andrew's Mill built in 1875
- Swasey Estate House

1900

- Machin Fire Company
- Old School House
- Andrew's Mill

1950

- flour mill on the site of Andrew's Mill
- American Furniture, 1931
- Lancaster Pike

2000

- Lancaster Pike, north side, west of Commerce, circa 1910

Philosophy and maps courtesy of the Lancaster Historical Society.
Environmental Structure

watersheds

birds

potential habitat corridor & patches

ecology

plant communities

lowland appalachian-oak forest

sunstudy

water drainage
Existing Conditions

NOTES

SOILS: Made Land — land which is already extensively covered with development is classified as Made Land because the original soil features have been obliterated by construction activities and grading.

GEOLOGY: Wissahickon formation — Consists of mica schist.

site plan

view south on Linwood Ave.

view north on Linwood Ave.

view east on Athens Ave.

view west on Athens Ave.

360° panorama
Circulation — Inventory and Analysis

which way do you walk?
Opportunities and Constraints

**people & place**
- exchange
- integrate
- gather
- play
- flexibility
- enclosure
- connections
- outdoor rooms
- civic space
- “the third place”

**native plants**
- diversity
- succession
- edible
- layers
- restore
- educate
- shade
- scent
- texture
- temporary

**opportunities**
- local birdsong
- habitat
- corridors
- nesting
- patches
- wildlife
- infiltrate
- meander
- clean groundwater
- recycle
- stormwater
- ephemeral gardens
- celebrating rain
- water
- noisy
- traffic
- access
- utilities
- void

**what does this place want to be?**

**constraints**
Park Comparison Study

neighborhood amenities

SOUTH ARDMORE PARK
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Tennis
- Soccer
- Playground

VERNON V. YOUNG MEMORIAL PARK
- Basketball
- Baseball
- Swimming
- Pool
- Playground

LOWER MERION HIGH SCHOOL
- Football
- Soccer & Lacrosse
- Baseball

ST. PAUL'S TOT LOT
- Playground

HAVERFORD COLLEGE
- Trail
- Pond

where do you go?

precedents

Three Bear Park
- 0.03 acres

Teardrop Park
- 2.0 acres

Rittenhouse Square
- 0.2 acres

South Ardmore Park
- 18.2 acres
Community Workshops
Site Programs & Sketches from Adult Community Workshop

**Concept One - Orange Group**
- Program:
  - Gateways
  - Water feature
  - Canopy trees
  - Seat walls/benches
  - Plaza
  - Gathering space

**Concept Three - Green Group**
- Program:
  - Gateways
  - Water features
  - Covered amphitheater
  - Plaza
  - Elevation changes, landforms, multiple levels
  - Rain gardens
  - Treehouse
  - Lawn areas

**Concept Two - Yellow Group**
- Program:
  - Gateways
  - Shade structure
  - Plaza
  - Elevation changes: bermed area
  - Rain gardens
  - Path/seatwall as spine
  - Flat multi-use lawn
Common Threads

**Active & Quiet Spaces**

**Multi-Purpose Plaza with Shade Structure**

**Native Plant & Wildlife Habitats**

**Stage for Community Events**

**Elevation Changes/ Landforms**

**Walking Paths**

**Water Element**

**Lots of Seating options**

**Open Lawn**

**Rain Gardens**

**Gateways at Park Entrances**

**Climbing Structure/Art for Children & Adults**

**Traffic Calming at Intersection**

**Buffering for Adjacent Properties**

---

Big Ideas

**Emphasizing the Two Watersheds & Ridge Line**

**Creating Park Zones: Civic, Active, and Quiet**

**Reintroducing Native Plant Communities**

**Harvesting Stormwater**
Initial Concepts Generated During Phase II

Concept A

Concept B

Concept C
Revised Preferred Concept

Land Uses

Landforms & Water Movement

Native Habitats
The plant community proposed for Linwood Park will focus on native trees, shrubs and groundcover, with a particular emphasis on those native to southeastern Pennsylvania. Native plants that thrive in this region will require less maintenance over time, are better able to adapt to changing environmental conditions, and provide food and habitat for wildlife. Plants will be labeled as part of the educational mission of the park, and to impart a positive message about connecting to the land in which you live.
Material Palette

The materials for Linwood Park will come from local sources where possible, including materials that have been recycled or repurposed. Materials will be chosen for their longevity, durability and relevance to place. Priority will be given to materials made from renewable resources and their ability to be recycled at the end of their useful life.
Meeting Minutes

22 JANUARY 2008

MEETING MINUTES

Project: Linwood & Athens Avenue Park Master Plan
Date: 22 January 2008
From: Sara Peveroff Schuh, SALT Design Studio, & Kim Douglas, Studio Gaea
Meeting Location: Township Building
RE: Initial 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 Haston – Parks Supervisor, Parks & Recreation
- Donna Heller – Recreation Supervisor, Building & Planning Commission
- Chris Leswing – Asst. Director, Building & Planning Commission
- Eric Lowry – President, Ard-Wood Civic Association
- Harry Waldon (Chuck) – House of Faith Deliverance Worship Center
- Kate Galer – Community representative
- Jeff Levine – Community representative
- Steven Lindner – President, Ardmore Progressive
- Wallace J. McLean – Community representative
- Harriet Ruffin – Community representative
- Kim Douglas – Studio Gaea, principal
- Sara Peveroff 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
Lindsay Taylor welcomed the group and asked the Study Committee and Consultant Team to introduce themselves. Kim Douglas of Studio Gaea and Sara Peveroff Schuh of SALT Design Studio have been commissioned by the Township to design a new park on the parking lot site located at the corner of Linwood and Athens Avenues in Ardmore. Kim and Sara expressed their deep interest in working closely with the community and neighborhood institutions to develop the park design over a 6-month planning process.

Discussion of Planning Process
Sara Peveroff Schuh of SALT Design Studio discussed the project schedule (See Agenda & Master Planning Calendar handout) and the team’s approach to working with the Study Committee, the community and the other relevant stakeholders. Sara talked about what type of drawings the design team would bring to the first public meeting, and asked for input from the Study Group regarding community goals, needs and key issues.

Vision for the Park – Roundtable Discussion
Kim Douglas of Studio Gaea presented two drawings prepared by the team: a Local Community Partners map and a Township Community Partners map. The Local map features aerial views of the site and surrounding context, and it highlights nearby schools, religious institutions, childcare facilities, recreational areas and community organizations as potential partners in the planning and design process. The second map presents watershed information and green spaces on a Township-wide level. The design team spoke about their vision for the park on a conceptual level (See Vision handout) and asked the Study Group to respond to the question: What is your vision for the Park? Discussion focused on many aspects of the park, but began with how the Park would serve the community. The responses below are a summary of that discussion.

Park as Community Resource
- Consider park a key civic, social and green space in the community
- Community is interested in a communal gathering space, opportunities to meet with and get to know neighbors, social network
- Community is interested in community gardens, teaching or demonstration gardens
- Community is interested in the park serving various age groups, focused on young children since teenagers have other park options in the community
- Strong desire for flexible, multi-use spaces that engage young children
- Interest in creative play options for children – flexible, imaginative play
- Interest in helping to build stewardship values in the children of the neighborhood – pride and ownership; molding play and education with green; educational growing garden

Park Elements or Features
- Trails for bicyclistic/bicycle training (continuing current tradition)
- Opportunities for handicap to exercise
- Sitting options – esp. for adults tending to children at play
- Tables for gathering and chess playing
- Picnic tables
- Interest in using wood and natural materials (not metal and plastic) – tree stumps
- Gazebos – handicap accessible, with lighting
- Incorporate art
- Parking – now street parking restricted except on Sundays
- Study Group is not interested in another Tot Lot

Landscape
- Retain existing oak trees
- Existing hedges – they prevent entering, yet also creates sense of enclosure, safety and limits for young children
- Interest in native plants
- Interest in community gardens
- Multi-use landscape
- Interest in tree-level elements as well as ground-level elements
- Open green space for informal game-playing
- Landscape niches at child-scale
- Need balance between impervious and pervious surfaces

Interface with Residential Fabric
- Create connections to neighborhood and other open spaces
- Foot traffic through park – multiple entrances for easy access and connections to community
- Lighting for evening use and safety – possibly solar (PECO grant?)
- Time for lights out/closing time


**PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**Project:** Linwood & Athens Avenue Park Master Plan  
From: Sara Pavaroff Schuh, SALT Design Studio, & Kim Douglas, Studio Gaea

**RE:** Public Meeting with Ardmore Community  
28 February 2008  
Household of Faith Deliverance Worship Center

**Facilitators:** Kim Douglas – Studio Gaea, principal  
Sara Pavaroff Schuh – SALT Design Studio, principal

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

**Introduction**  
Commissioner Jane DelliBene welcomed the attendees and introduced Kim Douglas of Studio Gaea and Sara Pavaroff Schuh of SALT Design Studio. She spoke briefly about the history of the project, how the community organized to persuade the Township to purchase the parking lot, and that in December 2007 the Township selected a consultant team – Studio Gaea and SALT Design Studio — to lead the master planning effort.

**Presentation**  
Kim Douglas of Studio Gaea first presented an overview of the project planning process, which began in January 2008 and will culminate in August 2008, with the completion of a park master plan. She presented the history of the site, why the Welsh settled in this area, and how Ardenvor was developed into what is now Ardmore. Kim pointed out that by comparing the Township in 1851 to the Township in 2008, it is clear that Ardmore remains an economic hub of the Township, functioning like a small but very diverse town. In addition, though Ardmore is a prime growth area in the Township, streams have been filled and open space developed. Amanda has the highest density of housing and people, and the least amount of tree cover, making this park even more important for the quality of life. Kim also discussed circulation patterns and key environmental factors surrounding the park site, such as regional and local watersheds, native plant communities, potential habitat corridors, and the urban heat island effect. The site lies within two watersheds, Cobbs Creek and Indian Creek, which will impact the design of the park, use of water and management of stormwater on site.

Sara Pavaroff Schuh of SALT Design Studio presented a series of park precedent studies, to help the community understand the scale and potential function of the park site as compared to other parks. South Ardmore Park is 18.2 acres and offers numerous recreational fields and other amenities. The park site is only 1 acre, and therefore, will not be able to support the same types of activities. Sara spoke about 3 other successful urban parks, including Rittonhouse Square in downtown Philadelphia. The design team also inventoried local parks to gain a better understanding of what “green space” amenities are currently available to neighborhood residents.

Sara concluded the presentation by speaking about the inventory & analysis process as a time of discovery. The consultant team is interested in learning who the community is, and identifying their needs and goals for this place. To date, many conversations with neighbors revealed a desire for a place that is flexible, offers social opportunities and places to play. The design team
The opportunity and the challenge of creating this park will be about balance—balancing the ecological piece with the human piece so that neither dominates, but both inform the other. This design team is genuinely interested in creating a park that is unique to this site, to this place in Ardmore and one that will be inspiring, well-loved and innovative.

Community Question & Answer Session
The design team invited the community to ask questions about the presentation, the planning process and to express their ideas, concerns and interests for the park. The following is a summary of this Q&A session:

Schedule & Comments about Design Process:
- Park Planning Process runs from January – August 2008
- Two public charrettes are scheduled. Information about the dates and signing up for these charrettes will be posted on the Township website.
- Questions were asked about reaching consensus, and how the consultants will synthesize all the ideas into one plan. The design team reiterated that the planning process would provide for a variety of public forums, including public meetings, charrettes and one-on-one discussions in order to elicit ideas and set priorities for the park.
- Links to existing park web sites will be posted on the Township site to assist community members in understanding the scale of this park site.
- Anyone interested in suggesting ideas for a park name can submit those to the Township or the design team.

Park Budget
- Budget has not yet been established
- Commissioner Delliens noted that the fundraising drive is paying for design of the Master Plan. Some funding is coming from CIP, and some plantings are coming from Penn Valley elementary school. Water and electricity to the site may come with help from State Senator Connie Williams through a grant from PECO.
- Chris Leswing, Assistant Director, Building & Planning Commission, LMT added that further funding can come from grants and fundraisers, and a “Friends of the Park” group can help with these efforts.

Ideas & Comments about Park Program
- Charrette will help the design team in sorting out the community’s priorities.
- Need to factor in constraints imposed by neighboring homes and church
- Community Gardens
- Places to run, ride a bike, plant
- Interesting topography, especially as buffer for neighbors
- Would be helpful to review the Bird Sanctuary in Havertford for potential ideas and scale

Will the Park be handicapped accessible?
- Yes

Parking
- Consultants will review with Township options for on-street parking and whether it is necessary to revise existing parking regulations.
- Community members expressed an interest in keeping the park “car-free.”

Park Ownership & Maintenance
- Lower Merion Township owns the park site and will be responsible for basic park maintenance throughout the year, as they do with all Township owned parks. The Township will encourage the formation of a ‘Friends of the park’ group to assist in this effort.

Bicycles
- Many in the community talked about how they use the parking lot to ride bikes with their children. Some are interested in continuing this activity while others expressed a preference for minimizing paving.

Township Policy on Dogs in Parks
- Several asked where dogs can be walked, on or off leash in the Township. The following is a list of parks where dog walking (on leash) is permitted in the Township:
  - Austin Memorial Park
  - Black Rock Road Site
  - Cyrenwyd Station Park
  - Eco Valley Nature Park
  - Henry Lane Park
  - Kennedy Nature Park
  - Merion Square Road Site
  - Mill Creek Valley Park
  - Pennypack Park
  - Righters Mill Road Site
  - Rolling Hill Park
  - West Mill Creek Park
  - Williamson Road Site
  - General Wayne Park (north of elevated path)
  - Shotridge Park (area bound by paved walk entering from Parkview Drive to East Wynnewood Road)
  - Penn Wynne Park (wooded area between tennis courts and Lankenau Hospital property)
- Additionally, Township has plans to allow a dog park near the new Cyrenwyd Trail.

Conclusion:
The drawings, presentation and survey, along with minutes of the Community Meeting will be posted on the Township website in the following week.

Next Steps:
- The Design Team will meet with Study Committee on Tuesday March 4th.
- Charrette for adults is scheduled for Saturday March 29 from 9:30-12noon. RSVP will be required in order to plan for multiple sessions.
- Charrette for children ages 5-12 (grades K-6th) is scheduled for Saturday April 5 from 9:30-11:30. RSVP will be required as the Charrette will be tailored to the participants.
MEETING MINUTES

Project: Linwood & Athens Avenue Park Master Plan
Date: 5 March 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 Zelay – Parks & Recreation Committee, Chair
Commissioner Jane Dollheim – Parks & Recreation Committee, Vice-Chair
Lindsay Taylor – Director, Parks & Recreation
Gene Heaton – Parks Supervisor, Parks & Recreation
Donna Heller – Recreation Supervisor, Building & Planning Commission
Tom Pintande – Director, Parking Services Department
Steven Lindner – Ardmore Progressive Civic Association
Eric Lowery – Ard-Wood Civic Association
Harry Weldon – Household of Faith Deliverance Worship Center
Kate Geler – Community representative
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 left to record discussions at the meeting, please contact the writer of these minutes within 3 days.

Introduction
Lindsay Taylor welcomed the group and handed the meeting over to Kim Douglas of Studio Gaea and Sara Pevaroff Schuh of SALT Design Studio.

Roundtable Feedback on Public Meeting
The public meeting was well attended (est. between 75-100 people). It was an upbeat and pleasant meeting with information of unexpected depth. Community members commented on how there were people attending who they had never seen before, indicating the excitement and community involvement in this project.

Scheduling of Charrettes
The dates and times of the 2 charrettes were confirmed:
Saturday, March 24, 9:30-12:30 a.m. — adults only
Saturday, April 5, 9:30-11:30 a.m. — children ages 5-12,
(with accompanying parents on the premises)
- Both charrettes will be held at The Household of Faith Deliverance Worship Center, utilizing the large meeting room as well as other smaller rooms as needed.
- Total participants each day will be limited to 50. A facilitator will be needed for each group of 8-10 people, so RSVP is required.
- Charrettes will be announced via flyers, community meeting sign-in sheets mailings and through civic organizations.

- Charrette groups will meet concurrently, with a summarization at the end of allotted time. Drawings, models and examples will be used during the charrettes.

Potential Study Committee Field Trip
April 26th was selected as a date for a field trip into Philadelphia to see a sampling of parks. Chris Lessing has offered to lead it this trip. Details about which parks and timing of the trip can be finalized during the April 24 Study Group Meeting.
The group also discussed the benefits and downsides of a recently completed park on Rt. 30 in Wayne, known as St David’s Community Park.

Discussion of Planning Parameters
- PARKING: Since only a few cars use the parking lot during the week, and less than 20 on Sundays, Tom Pintande said that the existing street parking will be sufficient for the needs of the neighborhood.
- DOGS: Site too small for off-leash use. Township is looking into other locations for an off-leash dog park.
- The need for traffic calming at the intersection of Linwood and Athens Avenues was mentioned and will be researched.

Park Construction Budget and Phasing
Timeline for the park was discussed. Per the contract with the Township, the Master Plan is scheduled to be completed by 15 August 2008. Design development and construction documentation would probably take an additional 3-4 months. The public bid process will take approximately 8 weeks. Memorial Day 2009 could be a ground-breaking date; planting could take place in the fall 2009.
- Demolition of the asphalt prior to full construction was ruled out due to budgetary constraints.

Project Outreach
“Linwood Ave Park” is now on the Park & Recreation Department’s website home page. All drawings, meeting minutes, presentation, and links to existing parks examples will be posted on the Township website by the end of the week.
- Options for posting drawings on the park’s site were discussed, including using the existing signs or building new structures.

Next Steps:
Preparation for the charrettes is the next step: participants, facilitators and materials.

Suggestions were made for a Plant Collection (donations of divided plants) and a Paper Shredding fund raising event. It was suggested to hold these events on April 19th, the Saturday before Earth Day (April 22nd). Plants collected would be stored at Penn Valley Elementary School until they are needed.

The next Study Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday April 24th at 8:30 am. Discussion will focus on concept plans for the park.
LINWOOD PARK MASTER PLAN

MEETING MINUTES

Project: Linwood & Athens Avenue Park Master Plan
Date: 24 April 2008
From: Sara Pavaroff 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 Dollheim – Parks & Recreation Committee, Vice-Chair
Lindsay Taylor – Director, Parks & Recreation
Gene Heaton – Parks Supervisor, Parks & Recreation
Donna Heller – Recreation Supervisor, Building & Planning Commission
Tom Pintande – Director, Parking Services Department
Steven Lindner – Ardmore Progressive Civic Association
Jeff Levine – Community representative
Erlis Lowy – Ard-Wood Civic Association
Harry Weldon – Household of Faith Deliverance Worship Center
Kate Galer – Community representative
Wallace J. McLean – Community representative
Harriet Ruffin – Community representative
Kim Douglas – Studio Gaea, principal
Sara Pavaroff 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 5 days.

Introduction
Kim Douglas of Studio Gaea gave a summary of the goals for the meeting; to review common threads from the adult and children’s design workshops; to view and discuss three park design concepts; to receive feedback and to narrow down the list of possible program elements.

Concept Principles
The Design Team presented a Concept diagram illustrating the primary principles which form the foundation for all Three Conceptual Designs. These principles were generated from Phase I Sita Analysis, meetings and workshops, and highlight elements of value to the community.

- Ridge Line & Water Movement – expressing the ridge and division of two watersheds
- Habitat
- Flexible Space (Active, Quiet, Civic)
- Landforms
- Circulation
- Intersection as Gateway

General Discussion on Three Conceptual Designs
Three designs were presented. Concept A and C use curvilinear schemes and Concept B presents a rectilinear approach to design. All three schemes feature rain gardens, ornamental water features (shallow pool, streams), plazas, lawns, woodland buffers and elevation changes.

- Curvilinear designs were more appealing than linear design
- Creation of outdoor rooms, universal accessibility, variety of seating options and changes in elevation were viewed as highly desirable
- Connection to sidewalks surrounding park, integrating them into the park was also desirable
- Design A: liked curving wall and path, outdoor rooms
- Design B: liked focal point of central plaza and bosques
- Design C: liked perimeter walk and proliferation of Rain Gardens

Other Issues
- Maintenance of water elements: Township parks currently do not have water elements. If there is to be water, the maintenance would be shared with the Friends of the Park. Township prefers natural use of water, as in collecting stormwater on site. Also discussed was the infrastructure needed for the water element (water and power sources). Concern about maintenance and appearance in winter was expressed.
- Safety concerns within the park: Sight-lines to the back corner need to be clear from both Linwood and Athens Avenue; water element depths for children, as well as icing of the water in winter; lighting.
- Safety concerns around the park: Main entrance is at the corner at the intersection of Linwood and Athens Aves. Four-way stop not a viable option. The addition of pedestrian lights and crosswalks was discussed. Two initial ideas for traffic-calming for the intersection were shown: sidewalk bump-outs and surface treatments. The Design Team will meet with Township Traffic Engineer to review traffic-calming options.
- Children’s play: Natural play opportunities vs. manufactured play equipment were discussed. Space requirements for play equipment are limiting and other local neighborhood parks offer tot lots. The Design Team emphasized that at this point in the design process, the goal is to determine program in a broad sense – such as providing places to climb or be up high, and have water in which to play. As consensus is reached for the program, specifics for play options will be presented.

Friends of the Park
Kate Galer and another community member have initiated the process of organizing a “Friends of the Park” group. A fund-raising gala event was suggested for the Fall.

Next Steps:
The three conceptual designs for the Park will be posted on the Township’s web site and in the park for community feedback until June 1st. One concept will be developed in response to the feedback and presented to the Community on 10 June at the Township Building (Second Floor Board Room). Time to be announced.

The next Study Committee meeting is scheduled for 22 May at 8:30 am.
Township Building, Second Floor Caucus Room
Discussion Topic: revised concept design for the park based on feedback received to date.
MEETING MINUTES

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

Participants:
- Commissioner Scott Zelow – 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 Peveroff Schuh – Salt Design Studio, principal
- Gwenicity 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 treliss 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 prefer 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 across the existing Oak’s and framed 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, systems 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 tressels at main entrance
- water element (mist-sits to be determined)
- interactive weather sculpture as focal point behind stage area
- entrances to park will emphasize seasonality in 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.
22 MAY 2008 (continued)

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.