



Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting Six

## **Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Mississippi Gorge Regional Park Master Plan**

09/24/2018 5:30pm – 8:00pm

Augsburg University Conference Room

**CAC members present:** Shawn Sheely, Ukasha Dakane, Elizabeth Hinz, Wang Ping, Edric Lysne, Bill Shroyer, Gabriel Konar-Steenberg, Zev Radziwill, Alexis Troschinetz, Emily Green, Matt Moore

**CAC members absent:** Dan Cross, Nick Rebel, Hinda Abdi, Irene Jones, Arielle Courtney, Linnea Wier, Kevin McDonald, Levi O'Tool, Tom Kilton, David Wiggins,

**17 members of the general public attended the meeting.**

### **Staff, consultants and speakers present:**

Ellen Kennedy, (MPRB), Tyler Pederson (MPRB), Bob Kost, (SEH), Jeff McMenimen (HKGI) Ashlyn Crawford (106 Group), Regine Kennedy (106 Group), Erin Que (106 Group), Maren Hancock (Interfluve)

#### **1. Public Comments: 5:30 pm**

The sixth Community Advisory Committee meeting (CAC #6) was called to order at 5:30pm by Ellen Kennedy, the MPRB Project Manager. Time at the beginning of CAC #6 was given to community members to express their concerns, ask questions, and speak to CAC members and the project team. Due to the number of community members present who wanted to speak, each attendee had 1 minute of uninterrupted time to talk. Shawn Sheely, the CAC Chair and Ellen kept track of time, and introduced each speaker on the speaking list. The following bullets points are a summary of the comments made from various community members:

- Residents of Riverside Park should have an opportunity to respond to the development plan
- There is a spiritual and emotional connection to the park
- The natural spaces should be preserved. Don't take down trees or add more cement spaces
- The angled parking will bring more traffic to the area and this will make it unsafe for children coming and going to the park
- Residents around Riverside Park have signed a petition with over 250 signatures
- The WPA stairs in the park should be restored. This is a priority for the neighborhood
- The proposed idea of a peace garden should be included / implemented
- Riverside Park is a historic park and nothing in the park should be moved, added
- The community members were not consulted with. There was no communication
- There is a concern about safety in this park
- The proposed angled parking will help with the congestion of traffic, it's a good idea
- Cutting down trees isn't always bad and will likely be minimal



- The character of the park is worth preserving
- The proposed new path shouldn't be paved. This seems like a waste of time and money
- The footpaths in the park should stay natural and not be mixed with the mountain biking paths
- The community should have been involved more in this process
- There needs to be more parking in the area but not angled parking
- There should be more picnic areas
- The East African voice is very important to consider
- The playground equipment should be ADA accessible and take into consideration children on the autism spectrum
- There should be more basketball and volley ball courts, and soccer fields
- Parking is a huge issue here and should be addressed

**2. Welcome and Introductions: 5:45 pm**

Ellen thanked each community member for being present and sharing their concerns and comments with the CAC. Shawn shared that if any community members had any other comments or suggestions that were not shared during the public comment time, they should feel free to email himself and Ellen. After community members had an opportunity to speak, the project team introduced themselves and the agenda was reviewed and accepted.

**3. Community Engagement Report: 6:00 pm**

Ellen provided CAC members an overview of the community engagement efforts done for the project to date. To date, the project team has been to listening sessions and special events, including the Earth Day Clean Up, Prospect Park Ice Cream Social, Longfellow Community Council Share the Gorge, Owamni Festival, Open Streets, and Luxton Park Summer Celebration. The team attended the Four Sisters Farmer's Market five times and have held two open houses. Over 900 responses to the first survey and over 120 to the second have been received. A petition with over 250 signatures has also been received from the residents of Riverside Park.

**4. Review of Master Plan Contents:**

Tyler Pederson explained to the CAC how the framework designs and other input from the community will fit into the master plan. During numerous interactions with the community, there has been outreach, informing and listening to community members. Tyler explained that the design process is a multi-year, iterative process. He explained that the framework designs and other visual frameworks are not "set in stone" but help CAC members and community members visualize the ideas and suggestions they provided. The input heard from the community is placed into themes and incorporated into the framework designs and described in the master plan.

**5. New Draft Frameworks and Framework Refinements:**

At CAC #5, Jeff McMenimen and Bob Kost presented preliminary framework designs to CAC members and asked for feedback, comments, suggestions, and other input. Input has continued to be provided by CAC members via email, project area listening sessions and feedback from the online survey. This input has been used to further inform the refinement of the draft frameworks designs. Jeff and Bob led CAC members in a discussion about the changes to the



framework designs (since the previous CAC meeting) and presented the revised framework designs. The following are a summary of the comments and questions regarding the edits to each framework design:

**Bohemian Flats:**

- A zipline across the river was suggested for this park. It will require increased maintenance and upkeep. Trained professionals will also need to operate the zipline. It poses an opportunity for generating revenue.
- The addition of this feels like the park will turn into an amusement park
- The U of M students will probably be the most frequent users, there could be a membership program.
- A zipline compliments the themes of the park (adventure and exploration).

**Riverside Park:**

- Ellen explained that there are city zoning codes that require a certain amount of parking be available at parks. Angled parking is one way to meet the requirements of the zoning code and does not intrude on the natural park spaces
- How does parking effect the safety of the park for children?
  - Ellen explained that angled parking is known to slow down traffic
- Community members and CAC members called out a need to make the area of the park adjacent to the street more safe
  - There should be a barrier, fence or landscaping to keep children from running into the street.
- The amenities here should be ADA accessible.

**East River Flats:**

- The climbing wall in this area is a good idea
- The expansions in East River Flats will need additional / necessary maintenance
- There are great opportunities to enhance and improve accessible ways to get directly to the river

**Franklin Flats:**

- How will the removal of the damn impact Franklin Flats?
  - Maren Hancock, consultant team member from Inter-Fluve explained that based on aerial photos of the previous conditions of the river, this park is anticipated to stay close to the same if the dams are removed.
- Walkers/hikers shouldn't share a path with mountain bikers. This could prove to be dangerous. The trails should be designed to accommodate the necessary audience. Trail signing is also needed.

**Oak Savannah:**

- This is an appropriate place for interpretation to be used as an educational tool to explain the different birds, plant life, sounds, etc. but it needs to be done carefully and not detract from the user experience.

**Longfellow Beach:**

- The culverts in this area are a good opportunity for a boardwalk
- The staircase in this park should be winter friendly
- This is an appropriate place for interpretation to be used as an educational tool to explain the different birds, plant life, sounds, etc.

**Area North of the Ford Dam:**



Maren Hancock provided a brief presentation on the potential for islands to be revealed or reestablished in the lower Gorge area. She explained that images from 1895 show multiple small and medium sized islands that existed in the Gorge. If the dams were to be removed, a deeper and narrower channel would be apparent due to dredging and faster moving water and small islands might appear. This would create an environment for potential flood plain restoration and fish spawning. If the islands develop, they would become the property of the nearest city. The lack of detailed bathometric data pre and post dredging makes it difficult to predict the shape and elevation of the underlying ground structure at this time.

#### 6. Interpretive Frameworks: 7:30pm

Regine Kennedy from 106 Group introduced the basics of interpretation to CAC members. Interpretation is a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meaning inherent in the resource. Regine shared how the different senses can be used in interpretive design and shared the framework designs for interpretation in the Gorge. Below is a summary of the interpretive ideas for each park based on the themes below.

#### **Overarching interpretive themes for the Mississippi Gorge Regional Park:**

1. Spiritual Connection
2. Geology & River Ecology
3. Flora/Fauna
4. Recreation
5. People

#### **Bohemian Flats**

- Welcome/cultural center including space for historic interpretation, prayer/meditation space, and vendors
- Festival space
- Interpretive signage for indigenous and immigrant communities and connections to people
- Interpretive play area

#### **Riverside Park and Annie Young Meadow**

- Stewardship/pollinator garden
- Peace garden
- Interpretive signage for the park history, WPA infrastructure, and oak trees

#### **East River Flats**

- Climbing wall that can be used to convey geological significance in Gorge
- Interpretive signage connecting the University to the river, highlighting geographic and ecological features, recreational opportunities

#### **Franklin Flats**

- Interpretive signage highlighting river ecology, the Meeker Dam, Bridal Veil Falls, and plant identification
- A view through to the white sand beach

#### **Oak Savannah**

- Binoculars and birding book



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- Interpretive signage for the Winchell Trail, signage for the oak savannah and remnant prairie

**Longfellow Flats / Beach**

- Binoculars and birding book
- Interpretive signage / landscape element for plant identification, the beach and its views, celebrating the people/nature connection

**7. Next Steps: 7:55pm**

- CAC Meeting #7 will be on November 5<sup>th</sup> at the Minneapolis Park Board Headquarters
- If anyone has additional comments, please reach out to Ellen Kennedy.

**8. Adjourn: 8:00pm**

*Handouts: Agenda, refined and new framework designs, Interpretive framework designs*