



NORTH COMMONS PARK COMMUNITY PRESENTATION

Project: North Commons Park Phase 1 Improvement

Meeting Date: 04/25/2023

Presenters: **MPRB:** Dan Elias, Adam Arvidson

Minneapolis Parks Foundation: Shawn Lewis

Distributed by: FIHAN Design/Locus Architecture

1. Introduction (Adam Arvidson and Dan Elias introduce the purpose of meeting today)
 - a. Brief Historic Overview: Dan and Adam, commissioners, and others have been really excited about doing something special for this project. Even before the 2019 master plan creation, it had been 1.5 – 2 years in the making at least.
 - b. Today's meeting is not about presenting a concept that will move forward.
 - c. There is a funding conundrum that needs to be discussed with the community, which is a big part of what today's meeting is about.
 - d. We will discuss where we're at with designs and funding, and where we're at with schedule.
 - e. Today, we are going to be very real with you about the project and what we're faced with
 - i. The park board will have a hard time delivering the project w/o input from commissioners and community, which is why we are here today.
 - f. Today we will:
 - i. Give a study item overview.
 - ii. Go over agenda for tomorrow's meeting.
 - iii. Go over how we can influence the project, etc.
2. Presentation
 - a. Commissioner intro
 - i. Commissioner Meg Forney is present today.
 - ii. Commissioner Billy Menz is also present.
 - b. Coach Tate has some info/handouts which include who the commissioners are.
 - c. At tomorrow's board meeting, community members can show up and speak tomorrow at 5:30 and can also submit a written comment by noon tomorrow that will be included in the open portion of the meeting.
 - d. Open time happens for sure at 5:30, but we don't know when study item will happen at the board meeting. Tomorrow, we have a very full agenda. Things move through as they move through, and it will be hard to anticipate when North Commons comes up.
3. Adam turns microphone over to Dan – Study Item Presentation
 - a. Project was envisioned by community members long before beginning of the project in 2019. But that's when the master plan was approved.
 - b. Budget breakdown is intended to ensure the sharing of detailed elements of funding with the Board.
 - c. Currently, NCP does not expect to receive money during this bonding cycle.

- d. Again note- NCP is not in the bonding bill. Reiterated we're not anticipated to receive any bond funds in 2023.

(...Dan continues to go through all other items documented in the North Commons Park Phase 1 Improvements Study Report Slides...)

- e. Concept Option Presentation:
 - i. Options Overview Note: We have site plans and birds eye views for all options, merely to represent the scale of facilities with each of these options but not actually represent the design of the option: SCOPE AND SCALE
 - ii. Breakdown of schedule and project funding concerns
 - iii. Option A and B and C comparison of program and square footage
- f. Community Engagement Update
 - i. January – today
 - ii. Over 300 individuals' interaction – compiled into themes and categorized. Available at the back of the room if we'd like to see it.
- g. In conclusion – for purposes of discussion tomorrow evening, summarized concepts into a few bullet points.
- h. Parks Foundation announcement
 - i. Shawn Lewis: Since you're meeting here tonight with us, and public meeting is tomorrow, we think it would be good idea to have listening session as well. Stop by the open house from 3pm- 6pm in the lounge area on Friday, for the Parks Foundation to hear feedback from us and make sure they're hearing the community's voice correctly. There are flyers in the back!
- i. We'll move into a Q and A portion now. Thanks for your attention. It's a lot of detail. We've got some additional time for clarifications, suggestions, comments. There are options for how to communicate these: Note Cards, write down a question, folks will collect and hand them in to read out loud, otherwise, raise your hand. Comments and questions are welcomed and will be documented.

4. Questions and Answers

- a. Comment: I Like the idea of B or C. If there's a lot of community support for this project, generational investment into this park, it could be worth some delay to deliver what the community needs.
- b. Q: How can the community support the bonding money request?
 - i. A: North Commons has been funded through bonding in the past. The way bonding moves into the consideration to the state; Put in request at agency. Requires legislative support. Moves into jacketed bill. Then moves into a Bonding Bill. At the moment- we have not seen legislative support for the second round of funding. We're on thin ice with this topic. What the community could do – express interest. Not totally over yet.
- c. Q: Clarification on diagrams: What do the red arrows mean? What is the beige area?
 - 1. A: Red arrows suggest circulation into and out of the building to ensure access from the parking lot to various parts of the park. The beige area represents various site improvements that are undefined, something along the lines of enhanced plaza spaces.

- d. Q: What efforts did MPRB take to make sure community still feels welcome to the space? Sometimes a community can feel pushed out when a new project is done.
 - i. A: Critical part of the design we've been doing so far. Will continue to be, no matter what concept is selected. One of the guiding principles we feel bound to. There are a couple of ways we can do this, but the community is still the expert. As we continue through next phase of the design, we'll continue community engagement.
- e. Q: What design can be done to ensure the community feels welcome? What programming/staffing things?
 - i. A: Super important that people feel welcome who come here now. We understand that there are potential gentrifying effects of this project. Our primary audience is people who are here now. Ongoing convo – will continue to engage. Even around programming decisions and access, to make sure folks are included in every aspect of how the park and facilities operate.
- f. Comment: Dale, the director of hockey and figure skating for the North Commons Park program. He has been the point person for refrigerated concepts.
 - i. Would like to point out that the highest number of comments is about the inclusion of the refrigerated hockey rink, from the constituency of people who use the ice rink.
 - ii. Dale feels strongly about this.
 - iii. Troubling thing- when the refrigerated ref rink went from Phase 1 to Phase 2. How does one raise money to build a refrigerated rink without public support? This expense seems to be about 1 million dollars. Things to get in the way are two “no” decisions on plan A or Plan B. Is there any way to get a maybe on option a and option b, so that if there is one million dollars raised it could be included in the planning?
 - 1. A: What we're noting in the chart; as we looked at size and scope, there is not dedicated funding for hockey rink in options A and B. What we always do as we go into preferred concept development, is give the board to make the decision. If commissioners have a desire to bring this into the project, they can elect to do this. But as of right now, we don't have the money allocated to this currently. Could make a no into a yes during concept review process.
- g. Q: Is the board determining which option?
 - 1. Tomorrow, the board will discuss and provide some options on how to proceed. They won't be taking formal action but hoping for a robust convo to provide some discussion.
 - 2. Ultimately yes –the board will discuss. Going forward at some point the board will approve a concept plan and scope and scale and budget.
 - 3. The perspective is being heard by commissioners currently, as we speak, and the idea of this meeting is for voices to be heard in advance of commissioners having the conversation.
- h. Q: How the does playground fit in?

- i. A: Playground does have dedicated 2023 capital improvement funding. Planning on bringing project forward this year. As soon as board sees plan for playground, will deliver that independently, before rest of the project is nailed down.
- i. Comment: Decision making seems opaque. I am unclear about what decision making will be made tomorrow at the board meeting? What community input looks like tomorrow? The second issue, is around funding options and strategy – curious about interplay with nonpublic dollars with whatever project moves forward? Want to be careful and mindful and as intentional about community input and community voices as possible. Some voices that are important that aren't heard. I'd like to caution Park Board and staff with cherry picking certain aspects. Very important to reflect the actual needs of the community. Let's be careful what we build just because there is money for a certain thing. Super important to realize that there aren't people who have the opportunity to make their voices heard.
 - i. A: Tomorrow's meeting may result in a particular route being advised. We can't totally know. We haven't asked them to pass a resolution. We haven't asked them to pick which option is the answer. We've asked to discuss and decide on a way forward, but that may not be choice of "option x". There are Board of Commissioner mtgs 5:30 every other Wednesday at Headquarters. Sign up on a list and have the opportunity to speak to the board from their podium. Can send an email during open time and those will go into public record that the board sees. Testifying at the meeting tomorrow will happen at 5:30 pm.
 - ii. Variety of decisions that could happen tomorrow.
- j. Comment – no question.
 - i. Mike Tate – the park board is leaving out little parts of how we got to where we're at. Started at YMCA 13 years ago. Sat in a room one day, why not us? Loosing kids to the suburbs. Our kids were leaving this city to go play sports. Sat there and said why not us? SO, for 10 years, we kept thinking why not us?
 - ii. Meanwhile, Broadway, no economic development, or Plymouth. Only economic development is lake street, after George Floyd. 70,000 ppl or more live in North MPLs. 87% of our tax dollars take care of their salary. Telling you the history of what I know. Been here for 4 decades. Park board never gave Mike Take a penny. When we first got the 5.125 million dollars, message delivered by community. Community came into talk to senators. The park board keeps leaving this part out. Called on by who? For the 3 million dollars, the community led that too. Mike Tate and community did not represent at the bonding bill. The Senator is thinking we didn't involve the community anymore, so why would they give us a bonding bill? Nostalgia in community for rec center? How much does it really have? Won't even fix the roof in the gym? But it has nostalgia. This is a group of wonderful people. This board we hope are wonderful people too. What north MPLS needs is a redevelopment. When governor Waltz gave people money, he wanted people to come to north Minneapolis. Everyone knows you can't play tournaments in 2 gym facility. Everyone knows that. Other communities don't have to worry about gun play. Because why, their kids got something to do. Our kids don't have anything to do. That's why we're here. And dreaming takes a

long time. Got to make people feel uncomfortable. Started dreaming 10 years ago. Got a god that looks after me and pays me for what I work for. I didn't get a dime for any effort he put into kids. IT CAN BE DONE. This can be done but you ant going to do it without community. They're overseers of our money. Stop it. Taxation without representation is dead. Got to stop it.

- k. Comment: Brian Taylor from North Minneapolis. My friend Tally asked me to come. He finds this to be offensive. How many people on the board have ever lived in North Minneapolis? Find it offensive that they would come here and take into consideration what this community is asked for? Based on presentation – decision has already been made. I'm not stupid. I listen to what you have to say. Find it extremely offensive. To come here and give consideration into what we are saying. People don't skate. They play basketball. You have come here talking about an ice rink. Who lives here and lives in the community. Hopes and prays that people in North Minneapolis would wake up and realize that MPRB Is full of s***
- l. Q: Are cost to maintain and heat being considered?
 - i. This will be taken into account operation costs. Option C – haven't fully assessed escalation beyond 49 million. Over time costs to implement this would increase.
- m. Q: Have there been any meetings to have the youth sit down and give their ideas about what they want, and they need? Are we having conversations with people who will be using the park?
 - i. A: Festival of fathers, engagement with the YMCA, apprentices at JXTA, youth attending open houses, pop up at the park, always would strive have youth more involved
- n. Comment: The Youth don't really even know what's going on in this room. Do they even know what's happening in this park? How welcoming have you really been? Those kids you talked to aren't really at this park. How welcoming have we been to youth? Has anyone gone out to actually talk to the kids?
 - i. Didn't align with schedule to meet people to the pool.
 - 1. Response: Don't want to hear lies. Every Saturday and every weekend kids are in the pool. Nobody went to talk to them. 20,000 people are in the pool every year. People are in the gym every day. Don't lie to the people. Stop lying to the people.
- o. Q: How much room is left to schedule and plan spaces and community engagement?
 - i. There are still opportunities.
- p. Comment from Park Board: We didn't have opportunity to make it to other events that have happened – we should've invited youth and kids out in the lobby, etc. into these spaces. Could always do better. Not accurate to say it's been nothing. Not accurate that nothing has been done to hear from youth. We acknowledge we could always do better.
- q. Q: Who is involved in design process? Why is this happening WHILE we are in the engagement process?
 - i. A: There has been engagement across 2 years, 2017- 2019, before any design happened. Pre-master plan. The design process is an iterative one. At every design phase, we check back in with the community about this. We will continue to engage with the community as the design gets more and more finalized.

- r. Q: Who is this revitalization really for? Is it for kids who live here or for someone else? IS it going to be like Theodore Wirth?
 - i. A: There was a question a little about this earlier – our hope through the design decisions and programming decisions, is that this center is a place where this community wants to be and that it works for this community. That its not for someone else to come in and use it.
- s. Comment: Addressing gentrification - The sport of hockey is very expensive – North Commons Park is a place for low-income people to access the rink. Worry and scare of people coming from outside and using a rink is unfounded. People aren't going to be rushing here to use an outdoor rink. Would be beneficial for people HERE to have more time to play at the rink. Could encourage people to have same opportunities as indoor, refrigerated rink. An Example is out in St Louis Park. This guy is quite sure it wouldn't really happen.
- t. Comment: I have lived a block and a half from the park for 52 years. To address children's engagement. When it was started an eon ago, I remember park people being outside with the kids. Concern expressed from youth – are there going to be jobs for us? Can we be integrated into this place? Why are fixing outside basketball courts being pushed back to a later phase?
 - i. A: Courts resurfaced right now. North Commons is on the list this year, with a series of other parks. Depends on when it comes in. Vision plan for NCP. Is to have the refrigerated rink and basketball court in same space. Possible that the North Commons courts would be resurfaced in this phase.
- u. Comment: The Park Board has been out here a million time, thank you for this, all trying to be helpful.
- v. Comment: I'm all for the development and renovation. Looking around the room right now, the communication and input doesn't seem like its leveling out right. I Live a block or 2 away and didn't know about this today. We are not being told what's going on here in our area. Now we hear there's a whole bunch of money for the park. IF we have all this money to renovate a park? Where is this money now to keep these kids engaged in activities? Talking about billions of dollars going into a park? How about investing money into the park and programming that's already here? Where was this money to keep us engaged when we were growing up?
 - i. Response: There was not a lot of money for a long period of time to put into the parks. Prior to this project, the state had never been bonded for a park on the North side. We must build a building to build a program to serve these kids. We would love to build a building like that original project meeting all of community needs. That's while we are here.
- w. Comment: Option C seems the best – when you have teams in here, we're going to need more than 2 courts. Option C is the only one that has sufficient parking for family and friends who are coming.
- x. End of meeting- if people must leave, feel free. Reminder: Board meeting open Tomorrow at 5:30, right down by West River Parkway and Broadway. Parks foundation – additional listening session on Friday.

- y. Comment: We want to push the Park board to be as bold and aggressive as possible. This is yet another iteration of the under investment in North MPLS. When you underfund community needs, we fight. I Don't know much about funding process. But the system needs to feel some pressure to fund this park. Appropriate tradeoff to give these people what they need if some other projects need to become pushed back- no biggie. The people who are left out are the people who are repeatedly intergenerationally left out. This is extremely important. Staff will inform the Park board in some ways. As big and as difficult and as hard to fund as possible. When we whittle it down to what is possible, we tend to make bad choices. Want there to be some pain. Want to feel it by the system. To make sure North Side gets what they deserve.
- z. Q: For the current waterpark, it was intended to be a partnership between YMCA and North Commons- and this didn't work. How much is going to be left to resolve this in the future? Is this Baseball field a high school or kids? Will there be a fence around much of the park?
 - i. A: Waterpark will have to be fenced. The baseball field in SW Corner will remain the same. May have fence to keep balls from running into the road. Wouldn't be a locked-up field. Controlled access?? Like Conway rec center? Not controlled. The intent would be to not enclose and block off parts of the park. Not part of Phase 1. Waterpark would be fully operated by the park board.
- aa. Concern about Not enough youth being engaged: First question is about if designers have gone to schools? If that hasn't occurred? Is this possible to do? As a youth, we're not super interested in coming into these events. Youths won't come to a space like this. Adults must be very intentional about this.
 - i. Response: Most fruitful conversation was with the YMCA youth. We also went to North Minneapolis High School Gym and classes. Had direct conversations within their program- most direct comparison with what with they're talking about
- bb. Q: Are other parks having trouble getting money? Or just North Commons?
 - i. A: Highest single allocations we tend to make in neighborhood parks are sometimes 2 million. That's a typical amount that goes into capital planning. MPRB knew they'd have to reach beyond normal funding levels for this project.
- cc. Q/Comment: Unfortunately, we know schools and parks don't get along very well. Any way to leverage more money for bringing schools into this?
 - i. A: Lots of convo about Lincoln school at that time. In the masterplan, partnership with school to bring Lincoln in as potential green space. Haven't had a conversation with them for a while. The plan to re begin conversation with Minneapolis Schools.
- dd. Meeting called to a close.