JOHN C. LITTLE SR. PARK
PLAY AREA RENOVATION
Minutes - Community Meeting #1
Saturday, May 2, 2009, 2:00 – 3:00 PM
Design Open House in the Park

Meeting Purpose: To present the project to the neighborhood and to discuss design options with community members. The project includes play area improvements for children ages 2-12, safety surfacing, improvements to accessibility and site improvements that may include picnic tables.

Attendees: Parks: Shwu-jen Hwang (Sr. Landscaper Architect), Virginia Hassinger (Project Manager), Cheryl Fraser (Parks SE District Manager), Mary Preuss (Parks Gardener). Audience: approximately fifteen community members, including several families with children.

Overview: The project is one of the first projects funded by the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy to proceed. It is being accelerated as part of "Seattle Jobs Forward" initiative, the mayor's action plan to create jobs and boost the local economy. The project will provide play area improvements for children ages 2-12, including safety issues, safety surfacing, play equipment and to accessibility. It will be designed by Seattle Parks Sr. Landscape architect, Shwu-jen Hwang, and built by a private contractor through a public bid process.. We want to be sure we have community input prior to design. Our goal is to provide improvements to the park that will make the park and play area a desirable place to gather and play. The project is on a very fast timeline, we will complete design in June and will be ready for construction by August as promised to the mayor's office. We recognize that summer use is important and will work to coordinate construction closure to minimize impact to your community during summer.

We are proposing to replace the existing play equipment within the existing play area with new play equipment, and to also add a new play area for swings adjacent to the water play area. We are proposing to paint hopscotch games from various countries of immigrants live around this park to increase multiple use of the existing water spray area. We also are showing more pathways which would provide a walking loop with adult exercise stations (Life trails), seating, BBQ and picnic tables. This would be installed as funding allows. A variety of play equipment configurations and styles were displayed.

We recognize that there are many other aspects within the park which could be improved. Members of New Holly Community Traffic, Parks and Safety Committee have discussed these with us. We recognize the desire to provide a better entrance and identity to the park, to provide a separate gathering area for teenagers that would reduce conflict of use at the play area, and to provide for better overall circulation through the park by way of a full loop trail. A Pea Patch is suggested for the north corner of the site, and this could provide more positive activity and "eyes on the park. We included these various concepts in a graphic site concept plan. We do not have funding or scope to address most of these elements but we recognize them as future possibilities.

The Park is eligible for Park upgrade funding, which Parks management can apply for to make some of the above mentioned improvements. We also encourage the community to pursue funding through Department of Neighborhoods Neighborhood Matching Funds Grants or King County Sports Utility Grant. The six year Parks and Green Spaces Levy also has an "Opportunity Fund" through which the community could nominate this site for additional Levy funding. Upcoming meetings about the Levy will include information on how the Opportunity Fund will work. See 'Events" listing on web:
http://seattle.gov/parks/levy/default.htm

Generally speaking, people like the proposed elements:

1. Provide new play equipment for kids age 2-5 and 5-12 at existing play area.
2. Provide new play area for swings including two toddler bucket swings, 1 belt swing, 1 ADA swing and 1 relocated tire swing.
3. Paint hopscotch games from different countries of the immigrant neighbors on the existing water spray area to increase the multiple use of the plaza and foster community senses.
4. Provide complete circulated loop trail with adult/teen exercise stations along the loop trail.
5. Provide picnic tables & BBQ at the existing large open lawn area along the proposed loop trail.
6. Improve entrance identity along S Mrytle Place to draw people in to use the park.
7. Provide p-patch opportunity or 4-H program at north side to increase park use and on-site surveillance as well as fostering community sense, satisfying horticultural therapy needs, etc.
8. Provide pedestrian lighting at the existing dark corner at northwest corner along the trail.

After the concept plan discussion, we presented 5 playground proposals from different companies: Landscape Structure, Kompan, Big Toy, Game Time and Play World. The majority of people favor the proposal from Game Time. It provides many different varieties of activities for age 2-5 and 5-12 kids within reasonable budget.

Some other comments from Community:

- Please consider other play elements, such as a zip swing.
- What is wrong with the existing play equipment, Can't you just add to it and save money?
- How can we work with Parks to reforest the un-maintained slope between existing houses and the west edge of the parks?
- Rubberized play surfacing would be helpful because it would be easier to clean up the cigarettes.
- It would be very helpful to build a place for teens.
- Can some of the funding go towards benches etc for teen gathering area? It will make people feel safer or more comfortable to use the playground.
- How much are the "LifeTrail features used at other parks? Not sure how much parents will use it.
- LifeTrail use and walking trail use is important for the many seniors who live nearby and use the park for daily exercise.
- Six people preferred for the "Site Lines" play configuration; three or four preferred the Play World Configuration
- Kids will play on whatever equipment is provided, but make sure you include the seniors. Leave enough in the budget to do the loop and exercise stations.

Meeting conclusion: These ideas will be used to help us develop the design. We are on a fast track to complete the project, and we will hold another meeting to show you what we have developed. We do not have that scheduled yet, but we expect it will be an evening open house in the Park in early June (June 10?). Meeting notes will be on website, see reference on agenda, the new websites will be operational in about a week. Our plans are to get this design completed as soon as possible and to construct late this summer. Our design team will have the project ready to build in August but will propose actual site work occur after summer vacation.