

PARK COMMITTEE

Thursday, January 9, 2014

4 - 5:30 p.m.

Room 319 City Hall

Meeting Minutes

Committee members present: Chair: Tom Fisher. Members: Lester Bagley, Bruce Chamberlain, Dan Collison, Jacob Frey, Brent Hanson, Penny Hunt, Michele Kelm-Helgen, Eric Laska, Aron Lipkin, Peggy Lucas, Tom Nordyke, Jim Norkosky, Mike Ryan

Committee members excused: Chair: David Wilson. Members: Hussein Ahmed, David Fields, Barbara Johnson, Peter McLaughlin, David Miller, Brian Pietsch, R.T. Rybak, Matt Tucker, Trent Tucker

Guests: John Crosby Sr., Varun Kharbanda, Claudia Kittock, Rick Kittock, Ben Johnson, Sam Newberg, Doug Hoskin, Jenna Fletcher

Staff/consultants present: Ann Calvert, Hilary Dvorak, Heidi Hamilton, Brian Schaffer, Marsha Wagner

- 1. Welcome and Introductions.** Chair Tom Fisher called the meeting to order at 4:08. After inquiring if there were any Park Committee members attending for the first time, he invited Jacob Frey, Third Ward Council Member, and Jim Norkosky, Thrivent, to introduce themselves.

Chair Fisher then read a note from R.T. Rybak, who said he is making a call this month on a potential donor to purchase the development rights above the ramp. If a sale is complete by the end of February it will bring considerable funding for the park; if not the Park Committee will have to readjust its vision, focusing on “haves” and “nice-to-haves.” For Mr. Rybak must-haves include: (1) a playing field – the donor is most interested in that; and (2) the Park Committee should broaden its role to include key parts of the public realm: the public space around the stadium and Samatar Crossing.

- 2. Committee Business**

- a. Approval of Minutes of 12/12/13 Meeting** – It was MOVED and SECONDED that the minutes be approved. Motion CARRIED.

- b. Second January meeting added:** January 30, 2014 City Hall, Room 333, 4-5:30

- 3. Recent Judgment: City/Park Board collaboration.** A lawsuit was brought challenging whether or not the City has authority to own and operate a park. The ruling found that the City Council has the authority to buy the land for the park in the Downtown East project, but the city charter gives the Park Board and not the city the authority to run parks. The City and the Park Board have been and will continue to be cooperative and collaborative. They will continue to work as partners, and look to the Planning Committee to play a primary role.

- 4. Vision, Program & Principles Exercise.** Kjerste Monson introduced a Vision, Principles and Program Value Map and corresponding text [Appendix A and Appendix B] that captured the comments submitted by Planning Committee members. Comments were categorized and plotted along the following lines: single use to flexible; daily user/focus on routines to visitor/promote image of the city; passive to active/programmed (which would require organization, management and funding); seasonal to year-round.

Park Committee members and guests offered their thoughts, feedback and suggestions:

Tom Fisher: If flexible, might be able to accommodate single use some of the time. Railgating during sports events would be active use of space. Wondered if models of management were available for heavily-programmed parks, i.e. Bryant Park in New York.

Dan Collison: Should be multi-dimensional. Wondered about the use of the term “visitor,” adding that there’s a difference between daily and occasional use.

Penny Hunt: Would historic interpretation be included?

Brent Hanson: Said tailgating will happen in this space regardless, so space should be created.

Wondered what would take place in the winter months; would it get used in January and February?

Jim Norkosky: What will naturally happen? As things evolve they will have to be managed. A large expanse of grass will lead to some sort of playing field, even if it is not created or designated as such.

Jacob Frey: Supports stationery benches instead of movable chairs; fountain. Said people watching is the best programming in parks.

Tom Nordyke: Were there any negative comments? Kjerste Monson pointed out one: no large sporting. Commenting on passive vs. active, said that R.T. Rybak proposed aggressively considering programming in design considerations.

John Crosby, Sr: Park should be a gateway, like the Hennepin Avenue Bridge. Movable feast; not permanent but movable programming. Keep flexible by moving art, other components around.

Regarding the issue of seasonal vs. year-round use, all of the comments were at the year-round end of the spectrum. Suggestions on this topic included:

Jim Norkosky: It should not be a windswept, cavernous expanse in winter.

Jacob Frey: A large movie screen could be used in summer or winter. Noted Rockefeller Center’s Christmas tree, skating rink, shops, with hundreds of people watching from the sides.

Peggy Lucas: With the demise of Holidazzle, there might be an opportunity to do something in the park, with bonfires or other heating elements. Shallow pond/boat concession in the summer could be used for skating in the winter.

Bruce Chamberlain: For winter use there should be groupings of elements. Programming needs to include fire or an indoor space for people to use the space flexibly.

Penny Hunt: Cold-weather cities in Europe have holiday marts, using heating elements.

Tom Fisher: Bryant Park has activities and kiosks in the winter.

Mike Ryan: Hockey, sledding, skating, ice hotel. Also mentioned villages in Bryant Park.

On the topic of ecological considerations for the Park, Bruce Chamberlain offered the example of rainfall. The old technique was to put it in a pipe and get rid of it. Current methods would make it part of the park by using it for irrigation. Several members also mentioned the Armory District, and said efforts should be made to including programming around the Armory.

Overarching consistent themes: inspiring, world-class destination with everyday appeal, flexible and multipurpose, year-round, and actively programmed. Kjerste Monson reiterated that these documents were created from comments submitted by some but not all Planning Committee members. Those who have not already submitted their ideas are invited to do so.

Additional discussion followed about the block owned by the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority. It will contain the transit hub, which will increase in size due to expansion of light rail. This topic was discussed during the tour on December 12; the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority (MSFA) design process is underway, but they will make it as seamless as possible from a design perspective. Connectivity is not only with the park but with the Cedar-Riverside area. Heidi Hamilton said they plan to repurpose the bridge, making it pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly, possibly allowing cars. Chair Fisher suggested that Tom Oslund, who was involved with preliminary design, be invited to a Park Committee meeting to talk about the open space around the stadium.

5. Project Presentations & Updates

- a. **Ryan Development** – Mike Ryan reported that December was a big month for Ryan, and thanked those involved for their support and efforts. They have finished the design development phase, and will soon begin the final phase of creating construction documents. Construction will begin in April or May. Ryan has finalized its term sheet with Wells Fargo. The next component involves agreement among Ryan, the City and MSFA regarding the parking ramp. An RFP has been issued for air right development above the ramp; March 7 is the award date, and the city is managing that process.

Mr. Ryan presented some renderings and a fly-through video of the site, showing the size and scale of the stadium and how its front door connects to the city. He described the Wells Fargo towers, residential units and retail space. The Ryan development offers a tree boulevard and wider sidewalks for restaurant seating and landscaping. The second phase of the project, residential units on the north side of the blocks, will provide a bridge to the Stone Arch Bridge, Mill District and Guthrie. A skyway will connect the parking ramp, through the Wells Fargo towers, to the Haaf Ramp. The renderings and video can be accessed through Ryan's website: [Renderings](#) and [Video](#).

- b. **MSFA/Stadium Update** – Michelle Kelm-Helgen reported that the State of Minnesota is getting ready for the bond sale, and MSFA is closing on Downtown East. Development on the 2.7 acre plaza space, across the street from the Stadium, is in very early discussion. Showing some maps and renderings of the area [Appendix C], Ms. Kelm-Helgen talked about some possibilities for the site. The corner of 4th Street and Park Avenue will have to be built up; this could be connected to the park. On the other side of the tracks, the arch will be kept and integrated. There will be a continuous park from the back of the stadium to the park, with interesting green space. As MSFA continues design discussions they are open to input from the Park Committee.

A meeting is planned for Metro Transit, the City and MSFA to discuss the LRT station, which will become a major hub. Metro Transit will put funds into upgrading ticket machines; queuing has to be improved, with additional temporary lines on game days.

Hilary Dvorak reported that they are starting to review the design, and most principles are being met for the stadium and grounds. There will be a walking path around the entire site, and a parking lot for players, staff, and media trucks during nationally-televised games. The bike path will move off the street to the stadium site. Fifth Street between Chicago and Park will remain open as it is a key access point for the hospital and ambulances. There is revenue to be generated from the Use Agreement with the Vikings and MSFA; Fridays and Saturdays are key dates.

6. **Next Meeting.** Thursday, January 30, Room 333 City Hall (next to the Mayor's office) – program development working session.
7. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.