
Minutes
City Council's Neighborhood Parks
Rehabilitation & Maintenance Committee
November 19, 2008

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Neighborhood Parks Rehabilitation & Maintenance Committee held on Wednesday, November 19, 2008, 3:00 p.m., in the 3rd Floor Conference Room, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Members Present:

Councilmember Joel Navarro, Chair
Councilmember Mark Mitchell

City Staff Present:

Travis Dray, Dep Mgr, Recreation
Kathy Gasperich, Council Aide
Jan Hort, City Clerk
Bob Pohlit, CIP Coordinator
Mark Richwine, Parks & Rec Mgr
Sam Thompson, Dep Mgr, Parks
Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Svcs Dir

Guests Present:

Denise Dunlap, J2 Design
Bob Gasser, Chair, Historic Preservation Commission
Jeff Velasquez, J2 Design
Doug Whiteaker, Water Technology, Inc.

Councilmember Navarro called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. and everyone introduced themselves.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 2 – Presentation of the Clark Park and Swimming Pool Master Plan

Jeff Velasquez, J2 Design, introduced Denise Dunlap, J2 Design, and Doug Whiteaker, Water Technology, Inc., the aquatic consultant. Mr. Velasquez summarized:

- Clark Park is an existing 10-acre park, north of Broadway Road, at 19th Street and McKemy.
- It has a 30-year old aquatic pool in need of refurbishment and redevelopment.
- J2 Design will assist with public involvement and master planning of this site.
- Three step public involvement process has been done:
 - February – public meeting with 26 in attendance to gather input

- May – returned to the public with the 3 master plan concepts
- July – returned to the public, gathered input to develop a preferred alternative plan
- Currently, the park includes an existing baseball field and aquatic complex, some ramadas, restroom building, basketball courts, play area and small recreation center.
- The public would like ADA accessible sidewalks, redevelopment of the aquatic center, and the homeless situation to be addressed through design by making the park a success to bring community life back into the park.
- The proposed conceptual master plan includes:
 - Baseball field would remain as is.
 - Aquatic center would be redeveloped.
 - Restructure of the recreation center to 10,000 sq. ft. to serve as a combination 7,000 sq. ft. of recreation space and 3,000 sq. ft. of aquatic bathhouse facilities, with restroom facility on one side for the park.
 - Two major entrances on the west, one major entrance on the east, with 10 ft. concrete trail through the middle.
 - Consolidate parking into one parking lot fronting the two driveways between the mid streets to minimize traffic conflict (44 spaces increased to 70 spaces), with alternative paving system on the stalls to minimize the urban heat island effect.
 - Incorporation of green and sustainable building practices (LEED aspects).
 - Plan includes one volley ball court, two basketball courts, three shaded play areas, four ramadas, one horseshoe pit, open space area, a stabilized decomposed granite, ADA accessible, walking/jogging surface, a meditation garden, and splash playground.

Bob Gasser asked about how the homeless situation would be handled.

Mr. Valesquez responded that there aren't many seating areas, ramadas or covered areas. Often when park revitalizations are done, more families are drawn to the park and with activity in the park, the homeless problem seems to lessen. With low shrubs, there are less places to hide.

Mark Richwine added that this firm also redeveloped Esquer Park and they brought a lot of good ideas to that neighborhood to address that issue.

Councilmember Mitchell added that the more successful a park, the more the dynamics of the park change.

Doug Whiteacre summarized the proposed water feature and added that a great segment of the community was involved with the discussions. They wanted to celebrate the existing pool, but desired a multi-generational feel.

- Inclusion of a lap pool which could be utilized for competitive swimming (6 lanes with diving board), but including a "0" depth entry, an activities program zone for water basketball and swimming instruction.
- A water slide with "lazy river" feature for all ages.
- Shade units, including some over the water, with 12,000 sq. ft. of decking area.
- Spray ground either in the park setting or enclosed in the pool setting.
- Possible solar for heating of the pool.
- Consolidate the bathhouse/restrooms of the existing pool with the recreation center that was on the north side of the property into one location for efficient management for classes and activities.
- Opportunity for concession/vending.

Councilmember Navarro asked if the City allows vending on the property.

Mr. Richwine responded that the City Code requires that it be done through bid solicitation. The problem is that traditionally the pools are open for a short season while school is out for the summer and there isn't an opportunity for someone to make the investment to have a food service concession. There are ways, however, that it could be made more workable.

Councilmember Navarro asked about the cost of using the pool.

Mr. Richwine responded that Council has adopted rates for pool admission at \$.75 for children and \$1.25 for adults. Monthly memberships are available but people haven't traditionally purchased those because the daily admission rate is so reasonable.

Councilmember Navarro asked about the feasibility of a year-around pool.

Mr. Richwine responded that once school resumes, attendance drops off significantly. At this point, staff is considering a seasonal operation, with possible extension of weekends through September. Options could be investigated, especially with the splash playground.

Mr. Whiteacre added that the present proposal is to have the splash playground part of the pool area, but it could be opened up. Different options could be considered. The community prefers to have something that is available when the pool is closed, either during the season or at night.

Mr. Richwine added that Mr. Whiteacre represents a firm that recently opened an office in Tempe and is are the number one design firm in the country for aquatic facilities. As part of the last CIP process, Council directed staff to move forward with the pool project as part of the overall park renovation and restoration. The pool project alone from a construction cost is estimated at about \$7M, with the park at about \$3M. Staff had estimated about \$6M per year for park renovation and restoration. This project for combined park and pool uses almost two years of the five year program. Staff will bring it back to the CIP process to make sure Council is aware of that. Hudson Park is nearly complete. Hallman and Daley Parks are currently in construction document phase, and as soon as construction documents are complete, staff will move forward with construction documents for Goodwin, Scuder, and Clark Park, and it will be up to Council to move forward with Clark Pool simultaneously with Clark Park. It would take approximately a year to design.

Agenda Item 3 – Develop Work Plan and Assign Work Duties

Councilmember Navarro summarized the Work Plan points.

- a. **Work to develop the coordination and assessment of neighborhood park design process.**
- b. **Assessment of Master Plan process.**
- c. **Assessment of the park maintenance program.**

Sam Thompson responded that a park inventory has been established and staff would like to take the plan to Council for adoption by late June or July of 2009.

Mr. Richwine added that staff has done a wonderful job of developing comprehensive maintenance standards so there is system accountability for all parks. It is based on national standards.

- d. **Arterials Landscape (maintenance of City landscape right-of-ways)**

Councilmember Navarro suggested that this process and timelines be discussed at a future meeting.

Mr. Richwine added that staff is looking at partnering with Development Services from a design standpoint. Not all rights-of-way are City-owned, but there should be consistent themes so transition from public right-of-way to private right-of-way is more seamless. The City may not have the resources to maintain it at the same level as the private right-of-way, but at least the transition would have continuity.

e. Urban Forest Management Plan.

Sam Thompson summarized that a consultant is on board to finalize an Urban Forest Management Plan and staff would like to present to Council ordinances to help sustain the urban forest.

Shauna Warner suggested making it more generic and, instead, following with a bullet for Urban Forest Management Plan ordinance and a bullet for the Trees for Tempe program.

Mr. Richwine added that the goal would be for suggestions for the ordinance and working with Development Services for ways to have better decision making on the front end to avoid challenges on the back end that have a more sustainable environmental condition to maximize the life of trees.

Ms. Warner added that with the neighborhood grants, a lot of the voluntary associations apply just for the trees to shade their sidewalks, and it would be helpful to know how to choose the right trees.

f. Improving sports field playability at Benedict Sports Complex

Councilmember Mitchell suggested putting this item on the next agenda.

g. Locating sites for additional sports fields.

h. Communications from Parks to the community.

Councilmember Navarro had a concern with communication. He asked how communication efforts are organized to get the neighborhoods involved.

Mr. Thompson responded that communication is achieved using direct mail to the homes within the service area of the park.

i. Volunteerism

Mr. Thompson stated that an update will be provided on the current volunteer coordinator's efforts. Staff is trying to capture any volunteer services within the City to offset the labor shortage. A staff person is also working the ADOPT-A-Park program and more information will be provided at the next meeting.

There was a suggestion to include graffiti removal by volunteers.

Ms. Warner suggested adding the utilization of the neighborhood grant program for parks.

There was a question about putting art in the parks.

Ms. Warner responded that each of the master plans has an aspect of public art, and some of the neighborhoods have applied for neighborhood grants to add a public art feature, or where a master plan may not cover that, to use the grant to enhance it. The neighborhood grant program was changed this year with the addition of \$50K for a ramada with art aspects for Joyce Park.

Mr. Richwine added that the biggest challenge has been the lack of money in the Parks CIP over the last few years but hopefully the bond will provide an opportunity to partner closer on the 1% money.

Councilmember Navarro suggested plaques showing the park name with descriptions of historic information.

Mr. Richwine added that, based on neighborhood suggestions, they are looking at incorporating the year the park was developed or founded within the park signage. The park names are always subject to reconsideration based on Council direction, and staff has also avoided suggestions to create mini-memorials within the parks. Staff wants to make sure there is an appropriate balance.

Councilmember Navarro asked for ideas of how to help the neighborhoods get together to improve fencing.

Councilmember Mitchell added that years ago on Guadalupe, east of McClintock, there was a program that used federal dollars. It was a fifty-fifty program and the residents had to agree to it.

Ms. Warner added that the problem with that project was that the City had to collect from the homeowner, so if they didn't want it, it was hard to collect. To use the federal funds, the City had to act as the bonding agent.

Councilmember Navarro suggested placing it on a future agenda to get ideas.

Agenda Item 4 – Request for Community Members to Serve on this Committee

Councilmember Mitchell suggesting inviting the chairs of the boards and commission to attend when there are topics on the agenda that concern them.

Agenda Item 5 – Future Agenda Items

- Update on rights-of-way
- Option for fencing needs
- Benedict Sports Complex/schedule
- Volunteer Update

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Prepared by: Connie Krosschell
Reviewed by: Sam Thompson

Jan Hort
City Clerk