



Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, P.C.

Memorandum

To: File - Simpson Park
From: Cara Smith/Elisabeth Lardner
Date: September 13, 2016
Subject: Simpson Playground + Passive Lawn Renovation Public Mtg. 09/08/16

Simpson Park Playground + Passive Lawn Renovation Preferred Alternative Discussion

September 8th 2016

Mount Vernon Recreation Center

7:00 – Welcome and Introductions (Dana)
7:10 – Presentation of Revised Concept Design (L/KLA)
7:35 – Public Art (Diane/May + Watkins Design)
8:00 – Group Discussion
8:25 – Next Steps
8:30 – Adjourn

Key Points from Group Discussions

- A gate with appropriate dimensions is needed. Artists may design gate for E. Duncan Ave. entrance plaza.
- L/KLA should consider locating picnic tables in the general area of the playground.
- Bikes will be able to use the existing concrete path at the western side of the park to continue to access Leslie Ave. An added 2'-wide swath of gravel or stonedust will allow for ease of passing pedestrians and bikes.
- Trash and recycling cans will be included in the construction drawings for the park.
- The climbable art structure must meet ADA accessibility standards.
- Colors and paving materials will be determined during the development of construction documents.
- The revised concept may be updated slightly to reflect feedback from the workshop and the online survey (available from September 6th – 20th) and will be made available to the community.
- The renovation will occur in the Spring of 2017 and likely be completed by the end of Summer 2017.

Group Discussion Notes Transcription

- Keep online survey up for two weeks
- Interest on word cloud for May survey results – questions on what the size of the words meant or were related to (explained the size equaled responses – more responses, bigger sized word)
- Question on playground surfacing and ability to repel bacteria – challenged on ability of rubber surface and rubber mulch to have same positive drainage ability as that of wood mulch; concern regarding disease transmission, claimed child

Equal Opportunity Employer

815 North Royal Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-739-0972 (PHONE)
703-739-0973 (FAX)

- caught hand foot and mouth disease from playground rubber surfacing at Mount Vernon Community School
- Transfer station on art piece – either the ramp must be made to meet ADA accessibility standards or a transfer station incorporated in structure
 - Carol said the intent of their art piece was to create a ‘folly’, a structure of interest in the English gardening tradition
 - Gate – discussion on northwest entry to the park from East Duncan.
 - Is the sculpture too close to the entry so that children will run out into the street?
 - Will dogs on their way to and from the dog park disturb the playground if the playground is not fenced internally and the angle walk bisects the space?
 - Why is there no actual gate?
 - Is the opening too wide (or too narrow)?
 - Will bikes want to cut through this formal entry and not use the existing concrete walk due to its southern terminus in the parking lot of the YMCA?
 - Carol suggested the Sketch-up drawing of the entry was off – the sculpture is further south from the entry; regardless of how shown in perspective drawing, sculpture could be reoriented to direct children away from the entry [this engendered conversation where some said they liked how the sculpture as located invited you into the park, might lose that with a reorientation]
 - Like how the sculpture in its current location invites you into the park – draws you in
 - Concern regarding whether double strollers will fit through entry and on paths
 - Where are the locations of the trash and recycling cans?
 - Currently four of each in the park – some in attendance said that was not enough, particularly if picnic tables are added
 - Will include locations on construction drawings
 - Park has lots of broken glass – more trash cans needed
 - What is the type of fence and how does it transition along the entry?
 - Cara explained the concrete entry seat wall and pillars, attached to metal fencing that extends from the entry to the east and to the south
 - Eastern metal fencing is absorbed into the berm for the three seatwalls, then east of the seatwalls, sidewalk and turf are the same plane as the berm tapers to meet the sidewalk grade
 - Question on white line – what is it? (project boundary, labeled as such on the revised concept)
 - Bicycle path still follows the existing concrete path
 - Concern raised by Master Gardeners regarding impact on their garden space and wall and that the route ‘dumps’ the rider into the parking lot
 - On the concept plan it is noted that there is an accessible transition from the existing stone dust path to the permeable pavers. (Need to make it clear that the path does not terminate, but that it switches from pervious pavers to stone dust in the PowerPoint for the Park and Rec Commission meeting 9/15.)
 - Two additional feet of stone dust paving is added to the eastern edge of the existing concrete path – fenceline move east as well
 - Water source

- Master Gardner did not think the water in the park was potable or good for drinking water and a new water source was needed (Dan Roush later clarified it – there is a backflow preventer installed at the water fountain – it has good water; the hose bib extended from the area of the drinking fountain is also supplied with City/potable water, but given that it stands in the pipe for long periods of time, it is not advisable to drink it – message – there is access to good potable clean water near the playground)
- Judy to confirm and verify safety of water and location of back flow preventer
- Tie into water source from under the street instead of current tie-in to address Master Gardeners concern
- Picnic tables
 - Are all tables on concrete pads? (yes)
 - Could any of the tables be moved to the western side for families that wanted to be closer to the playground?
 - L/KLA said they would look at options
- Pavers
 - What do they look like? (Cara responded that they have not yet been selected)
- Concern regarding balls coming into this area from Big Simpson
 - Is there a net system proposed to catch home runs?
 - Someone in the audience surmised that the big tree was ‘catching’ the balls hit over the fence (will this tree remain?)
 - If there is a problem with balls coming north, additional netting can be provided
 - Balls do end up in the Master Gardener area – many balls land in the garden
- Water Ponding
 - Water ponds on old road bed under Master Gardener area – will drainage also be a problem for the portion of the park north of the garden given the road continued north to East Duncan at one time?
- Lighting
 - Desire for lighting for night time
 - Would require a special use permit
 - Becomes a catch-22: if you put lights in, you create an evening gathering space
 - People use the concrete path to travel for errands (groceries, etc.); could bollard lighting be installed?
 - Will bollard lighting also require a special use permit? – probably yes, but Judy and Dana will look into the situation
 - Solar lights are a possibility – unclear if they will require any permits
- Construction Schedule
 - What is the construction schedule?
 - Likely 3 months will be required for construction, goal is to have it complete by end of summer 2017
- Posting
 - Final Concept (as shown at meeting on 090816 with some tweaks (paving surfaces; white boundary line) will be posted on line and sent to all via email
- Art

- Can the tops of the sculpture be kinetic if replacing disks (no, won't work according to Carol)
- Balls on top of piers at entry
 - Like concept, consider somehow to integrate color into actual entry
 - Balls may not be way to do such
 - Later development – additional funds may be available to design a gate with the artist team – removes need for balls on piers
- Sculpture provides eye candy – color pop
- Sculpture will look nice in snow
- Will the sculpture have a railing internal to the ramp for people to hang on to?
- Later conversation with City staff – the sculpture MUST be made accessible – need to hit ground at ramp (no 6 inch step) and either incorporate transfer station(s) or make the ramp itself in accordance with ADA standards