

Watson Park – Neighborhood Meeting 3

01/10/24

Boston Parks & Recreation Dept. held a Zoom meeting for the third Community Design Meeting for Improvements to Watson Park. The design team shared a preferred design concept for the park based on feedback from the community and Boston Parks and Recreation, along with furnishings and plant types, and recorded the following feedback.

Design Team: Copley Wolff Design Group - James Heroux, Michael MacNulty

Boston Parks and Recreation: B Chatfield, project manager

John M.

- Discussion of the high curb at the edge of the gathering terrace.
- Asked if the neighboring properties, specifically 245 Shawmut Avenue, had been made aware of the proposed design, in which the property loses its back gate access to the park.
 - Parks confirmed that they have reached out to the property owner, who in favor of the renovation, and do not use the park as fire egress.
 - Copley Wolff also confirmed that a goal of the added wall was to keep the park runoff in the park and not direct it to the back yards of the neighbor's property who have reports flooding occurrences to BPRD as a result of the current conditions.
- Discussion of the potential sculptural granite bench in the park and the form it could take, whether it will be a bench mounted to the granite, or a granite seat wall.
 - Parks notes that a certain portion of seating in the park shall have backs and armrests, for accessibility.
- Voiced concern over tree planting in the park.

John & Linda R.

- Supports no gates at Watson Park, as well as the diversity of planting proposed.
- Asked if there would be landscape irrigation in the park.
 - Boston Parks and Recreation does not irrigate public parks except for sports fields. design team will have to talk with the Friends of Watson Park Group and discuss their planting maintenance capacity.
 - Copley Wolff also noted that the root systems of existing trees will limit the placement of larger plants in the park.

Edward A.

- Requested clarification on the high curb at the edge of the gathering terrace, which Copley Wolff provided.
- Inquired if there could be a locked electrical outlet in the park for seasonal lighting or community events.
 - It's not common, but it could be done if there was enough interest and funds. It would be used on a permitted basis. The design team will investigate this further.
- Inquired if there would be trash receptacles in the park.

- o Community has previously discouraged this, so there are currently no plans to provide trash receptacles in the park.

Ramy R.

- Requested clarification on the grading and drainage at the “back corner” of the park, noted that he was relieved at what he’s heard in the meeting so far relating to it.
 - o Copley Wolff has a civil engineer who will be contracted for this project and will be sure to resolve the grading and drainage in the park to Boston Parks and Recreation’s standards.
- Requested clarification on the difference between the high curb at the edge of the gathering terrace, and the curbs which mitigate the grade change next to 8-10 Taylor Street.
 - o Copley Wolff responded that the “stepping” of curbs along 8-10 Taylor would likely be shallower than the high curb at the bench, approximately ±8” each, and would be sited in conjunction with the architectural expression of the building lattice work.
- Asked if the bench represented in the design section was the bench intended for the park.
 - o Copley Wolff responded that the bench was a placeholder and CW was researching different manufacturers that could provide seating that would dovetail with BPRD preferences, and this would be flushed out during the next phase.
- Asked if the high curb could be incorporated with the curved bench?
 - o While technically possible, it is financially unfeasible for the scope of this project.

Tara F.

- Asked for any tips for advocating for Watson Park at the upcoming public CPA meetings.
 - o Even just sending a chat message showing your support for Watson Park in the meeting is a great way to advocate for the park.
 - If you feel inspired to speak on Watson Park’s behalf, mention why you care about Watson Park and highlight its current issues (like ADA accessibility concerns).

Matthew B.

- Voiced concerns over tree removal, and cites the positive effects of urban canopy, including urban heat reduction.
 - o Team and Parks agree with the importance of our urban canopy and note that the design team will work to offset any loss of vegetation with the park’s new planting.

Meeting Chat is reflected in the comments and conversations listed above.