

SOUTH END LIBRARY PARK  
COMMUNITY MEETING  
MEETING MINUTES

DATE: 11.29.2017 @ 6:30pm

LOCATION: South End Branch, Boston Public Library  
685 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02118

PRESENTERS: Lauren Bryant (LB) | Boston Parks & Recreation Department (BPRD)  
Brandon Kunkel (BK) | Weston & Sampson  
Cassie Bethoney (CB) | Weston & Sampson

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PRESENTATION:

- LB opened the meeting with introductions. She discussed the project schedule, funding and both City of Boston and BPRD priorities and goals. LB also discussed that the park is technically owned by the Library system and, since BPRD has historically maintained the park, they agreed to provide \$115,000 for park improvements. These improvements were originally intended solely for removal and replacement of the hardscape material; however, at the start of the project, the community expressed the desire for 'more' beyond paver replacement. BPRD offered to explore additional improvements and holistically rethink the park design. This community meeting was an opportunity to review three ideas that re-envision the park within the budget.
  - BK reviewed an analysis of the current conditions of the park with notes about conditions, opportunities and constraints.
  - CB walked through the concept plans in detail and shared precedent images of the look and feel of each concept's vision.
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GENERAL COMMENTS:

- The park is shared; it is meant for everyone.
- Adding new brick-clad columns to match existing is not as important as having other amenities (in terms of where to spend money). Columns were added in 1991.
- Children's concerts are attended by around 100 kids, who fill the current space; adult concerts fill up half the space.
- The general consensus from the community is that the park needs to be refreshed and a new look will bring excitement to fundraising opportunities.
- Creating a large space close to the Library entrance is preferred.
- Bluestone replacement is not desired; preference between concrete unit pavers and concrete pavement is split. Some members expressed being supportive of sawcuts, color

and patterns to make the concrete pavement more interesting.

- The area near the lightwell closest to the Library is frequently used for urination. Is there any way to prevent this via the park design?
- The lightwells can be relocated based on the park design.
- Option C is the preferred option and the direction that the design team will move forward with as the design progresses.

#### FENCING:

- The importance of both the perimeter fence and fencing interior to the park was debated. Some expressed the idea that, even without the gates, the perimeter fence provides a visual barrier such that children stay within the park limits. Others would prefer the park be open to the street. Some people use the gates; others don't. All agreed that the gates are used for the egg hunt.
- The perimeter fence's corner attachment to the Library requires repair. It has been broken since the Library façade repair project.

#### UTILITIES:

- Electricity would be useful for concerts. Currently, power is hooked up through a library window to an interior outlet. As a result, extension cords run across the plaza and become significant tripping hazards. If providing an electric line is too cost prohibitive to include in the construction budget, the community asked to be provided a cost for fundraising efforts. LB explained that any money raised for the park improvements would need to be submitted to the City by early February at the latest, because it needs to be incorporated into the total construction budget prior to bidding.
- Is it possible to add an outlet to an existing light pole? LB discussed the departmental jurisdictions between Boston Street Lighting and BPRD.
- The hose connection against the building is broken.
- A resident set up a drip-irrigation system last year that was successful.
- A hose bib (and drip irrigation) is preferred over adding a drinking fountain. Any drip irrigation would need a commitment to maintenance from the Friends group.
- Is it possible to stub an electrical line for future connections?

#### SITE FURNISHINGS

- Movable café tables and chairs is preferred. LB explained that historically movable furniture has fallen under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a 'Friends' group in which the Friends agree to open and lock up furniture on a daily basis as well as store furniture in the winter. The City nor the Library will have capacity to care for movable furniture. If a MOU is not reached, fixed café tables and chairs will be used instead.
- If café tables and chairs must be fixed, the community requested that they be placed in locations that do not obstruct the use of a large open area for concerts.
- Against the planting islands in Concept C, a mix of backed and backless benches is preferred. Backless benches would allow people to sit in whichever direction they choose, either looking at the planting or at the plaza.
- Does the Library have a standard product for trash receptacles? If not, BPRD offers their standard that can be made without the BPRD seal.
- Discrete signage about park rules was requested.

## GRADING, VEGETATION, & SOILS

- Is it possible to incorporate a raised curb around the plaza to prevent soil wash out?
- Grading is of the utmost importance because the ground has heaved so much in the past. Material choice and correct installation are paramount. There was debate over which of the two – concrete pavement or concrete unit pavers – would be the most resilient against heaving.
- Soil is depleted, especially in the southwest corner of the park (corner of Rutland Square and Tremont Street)
- Concept C – Although preferred everywhere, amending the soil in just the planting islands would allow for the community to fundraise for plantings in those areas at a later date.

End of Notes. CB