



Minutes City Council's Neighborhood Parks Rehabilitation & Maintenance Committee August 19, 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Neighborhood Parks Rehabilitation & Maintenance Committee held on Wednesday, August 19, 2009, 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:

Mark Richwine, Parks & Rec Mgr
Travis Dray, Dep Rec Mgr
Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Pgm Admn
Decima Sever, Dev Svcs
Edith Ross, Parks & Rec
Jeff Carroll, Parks & Rec
Bob Pohlit, Parks & Rec

Shane Isabell, Rec Coordinator
Jan Hort, City Clerk
Sam Thompson, Dep Mgr, Parks
Lisa Collins, Dev Svcs
Yvette Mesquita, Parks & Rec
Nancy Ryan, Comm Dev

Guests Present:

Natalia Mattinay
Zubin Shroff, ASU
Nancy Hormann, DTC

Catherine Spellmann, ASU
Jackie Keller, Logan Simpson Design
Gillian Baresich, ASU

Councilmember Navarro called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 2 – Review of Minutes

The May 20, 2009, minutes were accepted.

Agenda Item 3 – ASU College of Architecture – ADOT Pit Feasibility Study

Catherine Spellman, School of ASU Architecture representative, stated that ASU is working with the City to determine what land use options are feasible for the ADOT retention basin located south of Warner Road adjacent to the I-10. Parks and Recreation has indicated a desire to use this location for municipal soccer fields. An itemized budget proposal has been prepared, so each amenity element has a specific cost assigned. Gillian Baresich, ASU representative, stated that this retention basin is 80' deep and 114' long. This site is primarily surrounded by residential and school properties. Natalia Mattinay, ASU representative, added that there is an abundance of trees that offer shade and three entry ways into this open space – north, south and east. This open space accommodates up to four soccer competition fields that could be converted to multi-use athletic fields. Other amenities for

consideration are a skate park, splash park, bike rentals, concessions and restrooms. Roadways and parking surfaces would need to be built to gain access to this park.

Ms. Baresich stated that this park design has been named 'salvage park' because there are many existing features such as the girder beams that could be re-used and incorporated into the design of various park features. The graffiti is considered a pre-existing piece of artwork that can also be salvaged. The budget estimate for this project totals \$5,662,739. Councilmember Mitchell commended ASU for their dedication to this project. Councilmember Navarro commented that there is a potential to partner with surrounding jurisdictions to enhance pedestrian pathways between the communities.

DIRECTION: Staff was directed to place this agenda item on the next Council Sports and Recreation Committee for additional consideration and discussion.

Agenda Item 4 – Selleh Park Master Plan

Bob Pohlit and Jackie Keller were asked to present the Selleh Park Master Plan. To date, there have been three public meetings to develop this master plan. The overriding feedback from these public meetings was to preserve as much of the existing park character as possible. Ms. Keller added that residents also identified the following park areas in need of improvement:

- Reinforce pond edge
- Create more habitat for wildlife
- Aerating the pond/fountain feature
- Add a floating lawn in the pond
- Add picnic tables
- Upgrade the play area
- Add a splash pad for children
- Add a basketball court
- Add more walking opportunities (varied walking surfaces/paths)
- General park upgrades

Staff is anticipating that this park rehabilitation will begin in approximately two years. At that time, staff will go back to the neighborhood with the proposed redesign for additional input.

Agenda Item 5 – Parks Maintenance – Levels of Service

Yvette Mesquita stated that staff has been working on developing a parks maintenance plan. In order to accomplish this, staff has created a team that has been working to identify and evaluate the following parks maintenance components of service:

- Inventory of assets
- Identify maintenance tasks
- Estimate time standards for tasks
- Define service levels
- Create an operations manual
- Implement computerized maintenance management system

Over the past five years parks maintenance service levels have remained stable even with a 35% staff reduction and increased park acreage, however some tasks have been outsourced to compensate for the increased workload. Staff is minimizing landscaping maintenance by using low water plant materials and enhancing the Adopt a Park Program. Detailed performance guidelines allow management to monitor park maintenance service level status. Committee members commended staff for finding ways to do more with less staff.

Agenda Item 6 – Criteria for Redevelopment ROW Landscape

Jeff Carroll talked about criteria for renovating medians and right of way property. Staff is in the process of creating sustainable, low water/maintenance type renovations. Councilmember Mitchell mentioned the importance of ensuring that commercial properties adhere to their originally approved landscaping plan designs. Mr. Carroll assured Councilmember Mitchell there are staff dedicated to monitoring performance based contracts that include landscape architecture design features. Councilmember Navarro stressed the importance of accentuating a look/feel that illustrates the uniqueness of Tempe, especially at the entryways into the City. Councilmember Mitchell suggested that staff collaborate with ASU officials on developing ideas that signify distinctive landscape architecture. Councilmember Navarro asked staff to incorporate DTC's expertise in creating a world class atmosphere.

Direction: Staff was directed to place this item on the next meeting agenda and asked that staff have drawings that depict the 'feel' of how vegetation will look.

Agenda Item 7 – Urban Forest Management Plan

Sam Thompson stated that staff has taken an inventory of trees in Tempe, the condition of their health and how each species reacts to their environment. There will be a staff person assigned to respond to staff requests regarding trees – placement, removal and upkeep. Preserving the existing inventory of trees is the goal. However, when diseased trees are discovered then staff must react accordingly to remedy the situation. Councilmember Mitchell commented that there are locations in the downtown where trees have been removed and not replaced. Mr. Thompson responded that the DTC has had input on situations where they did not want trees to be replaced. Councilmember Mitchell stated that staff needs defer to the City Council directives on landscaping when these issues arise.

Councilmember Mitchell reiterated that it is important that staff begin following up on commercial properties that have been approved for landscaping plans by the City, yet have fallen out of compliance with those plans. Lisa Collins stated that staff is in the process of creating a landscaping section to add to the city code and perhaps even the General Plan. When plans are received by staff for initial review, a landscape architect employed by the City is part of the plan review process, which helps to ensure consistency in landscape design.

Councilmember Mitchell voiced concern with vacant strip centers and commercial areas within Tempe that lack appealing landscaping. It is essential to get the Chamber of Commerce to encourage members within the business community to maintain their landscaping. DTC should also be part of this public effort. The more aesthetically pleasing the community is, the more Tempe will attract new businesses to this community. Councilmember Navarro agreed that having the support of the business community will create a win/win scenario. Ms. Collins concluded by announcing that Development Services has created a community outreach position to liaison with departments and the public to educate individuals on various community wide developmental topics, including landscaping issues.

Agenda Item 8 – Parks Maintenance Volunteers

Sam Thompson stated that staff is preparing a presentation on an enhanced version of the Adopt a Park Program, which targets volunteerism and the value that brings to the community.

Agenda Item 9 – Sports Field Use and Analysis of Need

Shane Isabell stated that staff has devised an athletic field allocation process. The first priority is that fields are allocated to city sponsored youth/adult sports programs. The second priority would be to a school that has an intergovernmental agreement with the City. The third priority is youth sports organizations.

Over the past year, neighboring cities have created policies to only allow their fields to be used by their respective residents. Tempe has not yet instituted a policy of this type yet. A majority of groups that use Tempe athletic fields are comprised of 20% or less Tempe residents. As a result of the policy of neighboring communities, there has been a dramatic increase in field usage, creating damaged playing surfaces and increased maintenance costs.

Fields deteriorate at approximately 1,800 hours of play. Goal posts are shifted periodically so that portions of the fields are not stressed more than other portions of the field. Until fields are renovated, it is impractical to 'retrofit' them with a more durable grass product.

Staff is proposing that there be a 70% residency requirement for groups reserving athletic fields at no charge. Charges would be assessed on a sliding scale based on Tempe residency amounting to less than 70% of participants. Instituting this policy would give Tempe residents the priority for field usage at a low or no cost.

Currently, there are approximately 70 teams waiting to utilize Tempe athletic fields. If Council were to consider adding another four field athletic complex, staff is confident that would gross approximately \$170,000 annually. Councilmember Mitchell asked if using bond funding has been considered to construct additional athletic fields. Mark Richwine stated that a bond ballot question could be included on an upcoming ballot to cover capital and maintenance costs associated with adding additional athletic fields. Mr. Richwine added that currently the athletic fields are operating at 100% cost recovery.

Agenda Item 10 – Future Agenda Items

Diagrams of downtown vegetation concepts

Right of Way improvement concepts

Next meeting will be in September.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Prepared by: Kay Savard

Reviewed by: Sam Thompson

Jan Hort
City Clerk