

MINUTES

CITY OF DEKALB

Annie Glidden North Revitalization Plan Task Force

Transportation, Infrastructure, and Open Space Subcommittee Meeting

DeKalb City Hall, March 19, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm

A. Roll Call

Members present were David Castro, Patti Perkins, Kurt Thurmaier, Andrew Knox, Joe Gastiger, and Derek Hiland. Members absent were: None.

Also present were City liaison Aaron Stevens, Park District Executive Director Amy Doll, and CGS Research Associate Mim Evans.

Notes were taken by Mim Evans.

B. Approval of Agenda-motion by Patti Perkins, second by Joe Gastiger

C. Approval of Minutes from the March 2, 2018 meeting

Minutes approved with correction that Deanna Cada should not be listed under roll call as she was not present.

D. Public Participation

Mayor Smith spoke about the positive outcomes of the subcommittees and thanked the members for their time and commitment to the project.

E. Items for Discussion

1. Discussion on defining potential projects related to parks and open space, and recreational activities.

Amy Doll from the DeKalb Park District was invited to make some comments and answer questions. She said that the Welsh Park playground will be replaced in FY 2020. At that time they will look at what else needs to be done in the park. They know they need more places for people to gather, more seating by basketball court, maybe another court, and the soccer area needs work. They have recently installed more benches.

It was commented that at one time there was a plan to expand housing in the area and the Council rejected additional housing. There was never a real park plan. The park is not interesting. It needs landscaping, hills, and running water. Right now there is no reason to go there. It might have a better reputation if it was attractive to more people from across the city and they had a reason to go there.

Amy was asked what the real constraint on improving the park is.

She replied that it was funding. The playground will cost \$70,000 plus ADA costs. The Park District issues \$1.2m in bonds each year for park improvements. The money does not cover everything that needs to be done or that they would like to do. The playground will definitely be done. There could be grant funds or other options. State grant funds are unreliable.

Amy was asked if volunteers could help. She said there is an organization called Kaboom that does playground projects but has not been in DeKalb. The \$70,000 cost does not include labor but they do it in-house. Amy was asked what the cost would be to get a landscaping company to design the park. Amy replied that it cost \$14,000 the last time they did that.

It was commented that the cost could be reduced by having a local group do the facilitation.

It was agreed that the cost is not out of reach and is worth it for to design a park people will use.

The discussion then turned to disc golf. The Greek students and students in general are interested in this. Amy asked if they would come for just three holes. There used to be three holes but they were vandalized. There is not enough space for a full course unless the whole park is used.

It was suggested that there could be 4-5 shorter holes. That would be an attraction.

The bisecting of the park by what appears to be a road but might just be a drive was discussed and agreed not to be a significant issue due to light traffic and low speeds. The location of the playground might be in the way.

It was then discussed that there is not a community garden in the park and that might be a possibility. The point was raised that we don't really know what is needed in the park. For example, is the playground crowded?

Amy replied that the playground and basketball courts are well used, but she can't say that they are overcrowded. The Park District does not have hard data on usage.

It was asked if there is programming in the park. Amy replied that Camp Power uses this park. That is the only programming. There is a backstop at the south end but no programming for that. The Park District does not program this park. The enclosed soccer space could be useful with programming. The recreational facilities in University Village are not part of the park. There was discussion of what surveys have been done and if copies were available. Aaron will check on whether there is anything available.

There was some discussion of ensuring that recreation needs not met in the park but available elsewhere should be accessible by public transit. It was pointed out that the landscape planning process would include getting input on what was needed in the park. Then the designers can figure out what fits together. The DSATS plan can address accessibility. An attraction like a splash pad could attract kids from all over. It's a city park, not just a neighborhood park. An 8-10 foot sledding hill was suggested.

Does the Park District have a position on use after dark? Amy replied that the Police Department requested that the Park District close the park at sunset. We did some research and made all parks open until 1/2 hour after sunset. This applies even if there are lights. Exceptions can be made for special events or programmed activities. It was commented that it is nice to see people playing basketball later. How can we have the positive aspects? Amy replied that right now the park doesn't have anything that brings people to the park after sunset, so people should not be there. It

would be great if we got to the point where there were good reasons for people to stay later. We can look at this again as needed.

A portable stage and sculpture were suggested.

Amy said that a splash pad is expensive-maybe \$150,000 to start. We only have one in Hopkins Park. Welsh does have water, which some other parks do not. It was commented that if we could make the park a destination for people from other parts of town, it could help with supporting nearby businesses.

Some additional information arrived regarding disc golf. The estimate that Andrew Knox received was \$2,160 for six baskets. This does not include installation. Installation could be done by Greeks or Park District staff. Amy commented that disc golf is not expensive for the materials, but is expensive in terms of the amount of land/labor used.

There was then a discussion of other nearby green spaces.

Amy commented that Boardman and Pappas Parks are to the west. There is a playground and a loop path around the pond. There isn't much there. Garden of Eden is a small park in Edens Garden. There used to be a park by the Nursing school. Amy is not sure who owns the green space, possibly NIU. There was a playground there long ago that was removed because of drug use. It was decided that the green space is owned by NIU. The group would like to engage NIU regarding use of the site. Aaron will look into the NIU contact for the next meeting.

It was requested that a nonstudent resident talk to the subcommittee. Two possibilities were mentioned. Kendall Thu did some work in University Village and might have some insights. Nicki Cox and perhaps a Camp Power contact through the YMCA were other possibilities. The Edgebrook site was discussed as a possible community garden when demolished. Council wants input from task force on what to do with the property before going ahead with demolition. Parking is a possibility.

For the next meeting staff will try to arrange for a resident or Kendall Thu to attend to discuss resident needs and someone from NIU to discuss the green space.

The next meeting will be in the Executive Conference Room on Monday, 3/26 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be extended until 5:00 pm, with the time from 3:00-4:00 to talk with any guests that staff can arrange, and the time from 4:00-5:00 to wrap up the subcommittee's work.

F. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.