



## Carroll Park Master Plan Review - Community Meeting

Location: Carroll Park Center  
Date: January 21<sup>st</sup> 2014  
Time: 7 pm

### Minutes of Meeting

Ms. Jan Arnold, Executive Director of the Park District, made the introductions to the meeting. Ms. Arnold welcomed the attendees and introduced a member of the Citizens Design Committee and staffs present at the meeting and then gave some of the background leading up to the meeting.

“The park district completed a comprehensive master plan in 2004 which led to:

- Complete separation of Park District from the Village
- Identified need to pass a referendum for an additional \$.25 to invest in capital projects; and the
- Need to develop master plans for each of our 20+ parks and to ensure that the Park District invest in each to improve the infrastructure as well as meet our residents recreational needs.

Carroll Park Master Plan was one of the first parks reviewed after the passing of the 2005 Referendum, which took place in the fall 2005 along with Andersen Park.

During the review of our parks and facilities over the past ten years, the need to rebuild Ridgeland Common and to build a new home for our very popular and growing gymnastics program was identified.

Beginning in 2011 and for the next two years, POPD issued a total of \$30M in bonds to allow for the construction of these two facilities as well as the ability to renovate 218 for our Building and Grounds Department.

Additionally, with 50% of the additional PDOP tax revenue going to capital projects each of our parks has received some improvements over the past 9 years. Now those tax dollars along with generated funds will be used to repay the bonds as well as to continue to improve our parks and facilities.

Lastly, PDOP will be launching the creation of its new District wide comprehensive master plan next month, where the community will be asked to help us shape the vision for our next ten years. If you receive a survey, I ask that you please complete it and also participate in the focus group meetings that we will be hosing in the spring and fall.



In keeping with Park District policy each master plan is to be reviewed at least every ten years. Thus we are here this evening.”

Ms. Arnold then turned the meeting to John Mac Manus from Altamanu.

**Summary:**

1. Presentation

Mr. Mac Manus presented a PowerPoint presentation. This can be viewed on the PDOP website <http://www.pdop.org>. The presentation outlined the original Master Plan process in 2005, the main items of community consensus; the improvements made in the first Phase of construction and then outlined the main community recommendations from 2005. Mr. Mac Manus then asked the attendees if these recommendations are still valid and that if funds were available would these recommendations still be priorities for the community.

2. Phase 1 Construction :

- A. Relocated the turnaround
- B. Relocated and updated the playground
- C. Added a tree-lined path through the park to make a link for residents and to demarcate school playground from the ball fields
- D. Added seating
- E. Added lighting to improve safety
- F. Improved drainage under the playground
- G. Gained green space

3. Additional Recommendations from 2005:

- A. Add a circulation path around the park with distance markers for school and residents.
- B. Add a new entry in NW corner
- C. Improve the field and add irrigation system
- D. Add "field box" storage for bases, nets, lining material etc.
- E. Have all baseball facilities installed to high standard of design.
- F. The concept of creating an outside classroom/waiting area discussed

Discussion: There are house foundations under the field. Areas of the field dry out much quicker than others and then you can see the lines of the foundations.

Some asphalt below grade south of the Center. It comes up to the surface periodically.



Some kids do not like the current play equipment. It does not provide for imagination.

In 1965, part of Kenilworth was closed between Carroll Park and Lincoln School to connect school to the park. What are below grade conditions? Some of that street could still be below grade.

Soil borings and permeability test will be made this week and will give us some idea of what is below grade.

Current drainage of the fields is very poor. There is occasional flooding. During Phase 1 Construction a series of catch basins were installed by the path. They were part of infrastructure that was planned then, to take water from the fields after the fields are improved.

The infield clay runs off everywhere

If the field is improved, we will use the same detail that was used at Field Park where a small concrete gutter runs around the backstop and collects the clay. This would be used at Carroll to prevent the overflow.

The field may have been enlarged in the Phase 1 construction; however it is still cramped behind the backstop.

The fields are junk (poor condition). The field is full of weeds. Why don't you use herbicides?

District 97 and the PDOP do not use herbicides. State law prevents D97 using herbicides.

MWRD is asking that people stop using herbicides as they can't remove it from the water. It is poison.

The fields never get a rest; just too many people too little space.

The PDOP added soil/filled professionals who now focus on our fields and there are already real signs of improvement.

Why is the grass always cut so short?

The PDOP is making adjustments to our maintenance contracts. We will let our professionals take care of the fields in future. The PDOP is also developing artificial turf fields.

I do not usually praise the Park District but we (OPYSB) have really enjoyed working the turf expert hired by the Park District and we have seen immediate improvement. Kudos to the Park District.



**Result:** Attendees were in favor of improving the fields, continuing the periphery path and formalizing the NW entryway. However, care must be taken not to reduce the outfield too much when the path is constructed.

4. Additional Recommendations from 2005:

In the long-term, construct a new recreation center, connected to the north side of the school and use as a joint PDOP/D97 facility. The existing Center should be retained until after the new facility is constructed.

**Discussion:** The building was designed by John Van Bergen and is one of two "Prairie" style Centers in the system. However there was almost no support for keeping the existing Center during the master planning process in 2005. Some comments from the meeting:

- Building changed many times, not original design.
- Building has been maintained but is older and "tired"
- Small footprint, using basement for programs
- Site lines an issue-police/school concern. Center/playground block views
- Could make an open space that has a multipurpose green

Some people latter requested that the PDOP save the building stating that it was of historic significance. The PDOP set up a commission to examine the issue and found that the building had been altered too much to be renovated.

One attendee stated that he was still in favor of keeping the building. There were and could be again excellent views from the building to the entire park. He stated that he had prepared plans that retained the building and still provided all the various potential soccer and baseball fields in the master plan. He presented his plan for consideration to Jan Arnold after the meeting.

I have not heard anyone say they liked this building.

I thought it was a done deal.

Neither the PDOP nor D 97 currently have the funds to build a new recreation center so it is a moot point.

**Result:** The PDOP will retain the building as is until there are funds available to consider building a new recreation center.



5. Additional Recommendations from 2005:

Add an outdoor classroom/waiting area in new green space by the drop-off, close to the school, playground and Center. But it should not block views and elements should be movable if tot lot relocated in the future.

Discussion: That area is always wet.

It needs to be regraded.

During Phase 1 construction we made sure the old drop-off was removed so remnants of the turnaround below grade

Use it for storm water detention.

A rain garden/bioswale?

Who would maintain it?

We have avoided adding elements that increase maintenance.

Does the PDOP have a policy on this?

Not a good idea with 500 kids playing in mud.

The school would be against it. During the master planning process the principal was against anything that would get the kids mucky. They bring it into the school on their shoes.

It would have to be fenced.

We would have to look into the regulations. We wanted to create one at Irving School but were not able to do so because of codes.

(Note: D 97 was concerned with potential safety and maintenance issues of a water feature on site. MWRD will be enacting a new ordinance in May of this year the Watershed Management Ordinance. It can be viewed online at <http://www.mwrdd.org/irj/portal/anonymous/managementordinance>

MWRD will be insisting on on-site detention unless the applicant can prove inability to do so on-site. Currently MWRD allows below grade detention in tanks and pipes. They also allow detention below grade in stone in the City of Chicago; however they do not allow the use of stone outside the City. )

It is right in the center of the park at the drop-off; not a good idea.

(There was a discussion as to where the school drop-off areas were)

It would be an attractive nuisance.



We would need bombproof plants.

What about the idea of the outdoor classroom?

Ok, maybe link it to the memorial. There is a service at the school every Memorial Day. Link the stones to the memorial. It used to be in the center of the street.

The planting around the Center doesn't make any sense. It is overgrown and difficult to see across the park. It is also difficult to see into the park from the south. The planting should be examined and cut back. Then the memorial and the Center could relate better to the new green space.

There were also comments by attendees about the poor light levels in the park.

Result: There needs to be a mini master plan developed that addresses the surroundings of the existing Center including exterior lighting, surrounding landscape, views and connections to the fields and to the new green space. If an outdoor classroom is developed it should relate to the existing stone memorial. The best approach to on-site storm water detention or retention is to provide it underground. However this is a more expensive solution than a bioswale.

6. The new open space on the east side of Kenilworth:

The PDOP purchased two houses on Kenilworth in 2008 with the assistance of The Trust for Public Land. The houses were demolished to create new green space. The long term plan is to purchase and demolish the remaining two houses, remove Kenilworth in the park, expand the green space and create new fields.

Discussion: Drivers in the alley can't see kids playing on that lot because of the fence of the house to the south. Kids rush into the alley. There should be a hedge along the alley to stop the kids.

That would not stop them, but a fence with a hedge in front would work.

We would love to see a double tunnel batting cage. We want 3 locations, south middle and north. We (OPYSB) are willing to make a contribution to the cost.

We might be able to take down the nets in winter.

There would have to be a landscaped buffer to the house.

Could solve two issues: If the cages are set N-S along the alley they would act as the fence and the rest of the site could be green space.

What about maintenance and ware patterns?



We would like something permanent not dirt but open to ideas.

What about a kick board for soccer and lacrosse?

As long as sight lines are kept.

What about keeping it a temporary space and then putting them back on the tax roles (selling the property).

It might violate the grant.

Oak Park is seriously underserved by green space. These sites were hard won and should remain as green space.

They are part of a long range plan to green the entire site.

What about taking the entire block.

It will be a long time before the houses on Kenilworth come on the market.

The PDOP has a fund for acquiring property. Whether to acquire more land or not will be looked at in the Comprehensive Plan.

Result: The site may remain as open space with batting cages and a kick board on the eastern side.

The above minutes constitute the author's understanding of the issues discussed and conclusions reached. Please notify the author of any comments or revisions to these minutes within ten (10) days of issue.

Prepared by: John Mac Manus ASLA,

Date: January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014

**Comments received via email included:**

Buy the remaining houses on Kenilworth. Remove the street and move the parking lot to the south end. A longer distance for the teachers to walk - good way to get more exercise.

Build a rec center on the south west corner of the park.

Remove the additions to the shelter house built in the 40s and 60s leaving only the footprint of the original. Restore the stucco on the outside. This would leave bathroom and warming facilities that could be open when the rec center is closed.