



Taylor Park Community Meeting

Re: Review of the Master Plan from 2008 and Park Improvements

Location: Anderson Park Field House

Date: March 8th, 2017

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Minutes of Meeting

Ms. Jan Arnold, Executive Director of the Park District, made the introductions and provided background on the funding for park improvements, how each park has been improved and how the Park District is returning again to start phase 2 of improvements. Ms. Arnold also gave a short history of the master planning process for Taylor Park and delineated the improvements that have been made in the park since 2008.

Ms. Arnold introduced Josephine Bellalta and John Mac Manus of Altamanu who worked on the Master Plan and Phase 1 design and construction.

Mr. Mac Manus gave a presentation that reexamined the Master Plan, described the improvements already carried out and then listed the recommendations remaining from the MASTER Plan.

[The PowerPoint presentation can be viewed here](#) or at www.pdop.org.

Public Comment (Notes only)

There was general agreement on adding a Natural Play Area to the NE side of the park. Maggie Daley Park is great for unstructured play as well as the Arboretum.

Pickle ball

In 2008 (when the master plan was done) Pickle Ball wasn't an "in" thing. Please put in a couple Pickle Ball courts.

Ms. Arnold explained the rules and regulation size of Pickle Ball courts.

Oak Park has some in Maple Park and there are Pickle Ball courts going in as part of Euclid Square Park Phase 2 that is in construction. It is more than stripping. Attachments for nets etc. have to be installed in the court. We can look at adding it to Taylor.



Dogs Off Leash

There is no place to take a dog off-leash in the north side (of the village). It could be revenue generating.

John Mac Manus in response explained the history of the various investigations into adding a dog parks to the parks and to Taylor Park in particular and for larger off-leash areas within the village. All of the parks were examined. There were recommendations for the use of Taylor, Anderson Park and Stevenson Park on the North Side. All proposed recommendations were disputed strongly by the community. The Cook County Medical Examiner in addition banned mixed use of spaces between dogs and children citing health concerns. The recommendation for a dog park at Taylor was firmly rejected by the community.

Ms. Arnold explained that Oak Park is underserved by open space and there is not enough space for all our wants and needs. She also explained that there is a very large off-leash area in the Forest Preserve at Roosevelt Road and 1st Avenue.

Ms. Arnold gave specific figures for what open green space is recommended and what is available in Oak Park. She then asked the attendees: “who is in favor of a dog park at Taylor?” Only 2 of 19 attendees wanted to examine the possibility of a dog park at Taylor. (No staff or board members were counted)

Picnic Grove

Many community members expressed concern over issues relating to the Picnic Grove. These included use late into the night; undesirable uses after hours, noise etc.

Ms. Arnold stated that the Grove is permitted. After receiving complaints, the PDOP reduced the number of people allowed to use the Grove at any one time from 75 to 50. The use of privately owned grills has been banned. Vegetation was cut back to allow views into the Park and the Picnic Grove. Also the permit allowed time ends at 8 p.m. However the Park itself closes at 10 pm. Staff will monitor people at 8 pm but of course they can't prevent people from using the Park until 10 pm.

There was support for moving the location of the Grove further south into the Park and moving the Park path closer to Berkshire. Trees should be limbed up to improve sight lines. The new Grove should be designed in a style that interprets Jensen's original design intent. It has improved with some trimming of plant material.

Limit parking along Berkshire

Parking is controlled by the Village and the Transportation Committee.

People pour their hot coals on tree roots.



The grill pit is the only one in the District.
Staff will monitor and add some signage.
Some attendees love the redesign of the picnic area in Jensen style. It will make it welcoming.

Native Planting and the Wetland

A meeting attendee monitors birds at Taylor once a week. The number and diversity has increased since the wetland went in. It and the native plantings are great for native birds and migratory birds.
Excited about native plants and expanded wetland.
Love the Nature/Discovery Area proposal, very cool.
Add more shrubs. Birds use shrubs all four seasons during the year.
They provide food and protection.
Incorporate more natives like viburnums.
The south side of the park on the slope would be a great place to add more shrubs as it faces Division and there is no parking on Division.

Playground

Playground is not large enough for the number of people using it.
Too many older kids use the equipment and younger kids get pushed around.
Not enough swings (there are never enough swings)
Is it possible to add play equipment on slope? Too, steep.
Might be able to expand the area where it is now.
Love Discovery Area idea
There has been a big increase in young families and young children in the area since 2008. As demographics change, will the Master Plan change too?

Need for Sports Lighting

Lighting of soccer fields would be desirable.
AYSO practices and plays into November.
The high school lights are on a timer.

Jan Arnold gave a clarification about the potential sports light on the NW corner. The kids have re-directed themselves to Ridgeland. She did not think there is still the same demand for the light.

Park Entryways

This is a huge issue. There was wonderful work done to the Park but the NE and SE entries are very poor. The corners feel like concrete slabs.
Coming from east is not welcoming.
Want entrances like SE corner of Scoville; the sort of design/image we need.



Plaza in front of Comfort Station

What was behind the idea?

Perhaps seat wall is sufficient?

Probably other better places to put the money.

Future Projects:

Drainage and Expanding the Wetlands

The drainage project to be constructed this year is being paid for by AYSO.

Expansion of the wetland is the only planned future improvement.

Extending the fen is great!!

Jan Arnold stated that no funds have been allocated for the next phase of the project as yet.

We would like to put picnic area at the top of the list.

It has been an issue for s very long time.

It has become a safety issue.

Next Steps

Ms. Arnold stated that Altamanu will tweak the Master Plan to reflect tonight's meeting. They will present to the Board who will use the information in deciding 2018-2022 C.I.P. allocation.

However, please be aware that Stevenson Park is next on the list for improvements.

The PowerPoint presentation from tonight will be posted on the PDOP website tomorrow and the notes will be posted next week.

Thank you all for coming out tonight and providing great input.

We look forward to making many more improvements throughout the system.

End of Minutes

This is a general understanding of the comments made at the meeting.

Minutes prepared by Josephine Bellalta and John Mac Manus of Altamanu Inc.