

**Walnut Park Play Area and Crawford Street Playground
Community Meeting #1
Meeting Held Over Zoom on June 8, 2021 at 6:00 pm**

Attendees:

Lauren Bryant, Project Manager, Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BRPD);
Christine Brandao, Outreach Coordinator, Boston Parks and Recreation Department;
Megan Tomkins, Principal, CBA Landscape Architects;
Jocelyn Wolff, Landscape Designer, CBA Landscape Architects;
Jessica Choi, Landscape Designer, CBA Landscape Architects;
Various (Neighbors, Little League Coaches).

Presenters:

Lauren Byrant:

- Introduced the meeting and provided a brief overview of the Boston Parks Department general design guidelines and goals; and specific project goals, schedule, and funding allocated for the Walnut Park and Crawford Street Playground renovations.

Megan Tomkins:

- Presented site context and analysis, as well as precedent images to show potential programming and site features for the space.

Community Feedback:

Below is a summary of the questions and comments brought up for discussion during the meeting, organized by topic (please note, the majority of the meeting comments were regarding Crawford Playground; any specific comments on Walnut Park will be noted as such):

Recreation:

- The park is currently used as a place for neighbors to exercise. A walking loop was requested around the ball field.
- There was interest in exercise equipment for children (teenagers?) and adults.
- The field is currently used by the Ellis and Trotter schools, after school programs, and by little league baseball, soccer, and softball. More seating, especially spectator (family and neighbors) seating was requested.
- Residents brought up replacing the grass field at Crawford Street Playground with

artificial turf. The field is currently used for multiple sports and is heavily permitted. The existing raised little league diamond is a tripping hazard for children playing another sport (soccer). BPRD suggested that a movable mound might be a possible solution, whether or not an artificial turf field was installed.

Safety:

- Safety concerns were brought up regarding crosswalks to the parks. Both parks need safer crosswalks to help link them to each other and to the neighborhood. There is a blind curve on Crawford street near a Crawford Street Playground entrance that is especially worrisome to neighbors. Crosswalks are not under the jurisdiction of the BPRD, however BPRD stated that they will follow up with the appropriate City department, so the condition on Crawford Street can be reviewed and addressed.
- A neighbor requested rubber safety surface to replace the existing mulch in the playground. BPRD and CBA expressed that any new playground will have rubber safety surface per BPRD standards.
- Residents requested lights to be installed along the paths and the field in Crawford Street Playground to make it safer to cross at night and extend the park's usable time.
- A desire was expressed for better visibility between Crawford Street Playground's sports field and the playground, so parents can oversee children using both.

Vegetation:

- Flowering vegetation to make the parks a more welcoming environment.
- Screening plants were requested at Walnut Park along Walnut Avenue to create more privacy for children playing at the splash pad.

New Programs and Features:

- Many dog owners use the space to walk their dog. A neighbor suggested having a designated space for dogs, so they can use the park during sports events.
- A neighbor suggested adding features that shared the history of the neighborhood and the Crawford Street Playground, which was part of the historic Abbotsford Estate. The Abbotsford Mansion is now the Museum of NCAAA and abuts the playground.

Play Features:

- A larger playground in Crawford Street Playground is desired. The David A. Ellis School uses the park for recess. Currently, only two classrooms are able to come out at a time to use the playground because of its small size.
- Swings and a splash pad were requested at Crawford Street Playground, and both are desired to be kept at Walnut Park.
- Community members were interested in the two playgrounds having unique play equipment (as in different styles of the same general play equipment), so users can choose between different types of play. Play feature should be colorful and create a unique experience for the children at each park.



General Project Questions:

- BPRD asked if anyone knew the history of the decorative fence panels made of children's hand prints at Walnut Park. Hand prints were from children who attended David A. Ellis School. BPRD, CBA, and community members were all interested in preserving this feature.

END OF NOTES

Prepared by Jocelyn Wolff, CBA Landscape Architects LLC, 06/09/2021.

