

June 9, 2023

B. Chatfield
Project Manager
Boston Parks and Recreation Department

Re: Watson Park Community #1 Thursday June 8, 2023
Neighborhood Comments

Cc: Michael McNulty (CWDG)

B,

Thank you for the support at the first community meeting on-site at Watson Park. Copley Wolff presented 5-boards briefly summarizing the Site History, Site (existing) Context, Site Conditions Analysis (shortcomings), Passive Park Precedents, and general questions to the community to think about for the park they would like to see.

The meeting was well attended by 19 community members. This list represents a summary of the comments made last night.

1. Several comments about the lack of BPRD coming up short on maintenance, water irregularities, and lack of support.
2. Somewhat related to comment 1, since the park is frequently maintained by the Friends of Watson Park design proposals should be low maintenance.
3. Would like to see the level of Little Watson raised, or intersection, to provide access between parks.
4. Neighbors do not want trash cans because they are not emptied in a timely manner and are a depository for dog feces.
5. One neighbor suggested a trellis structure and lighting was important in the park, implying that the existing lights are not sufficient.
6. There needs to be a plaque in the larger park recognizing the contributions of the Watson family (particularly Charlie who moved to South Boston). (*Note: Julius, worked as a Pullman Porter, raised his family, including Charlie, on Taylor Street and moved to the street in the mid 1940's.*)
7. More sun is needed in the park (too many trees).
8. One resident only felt the high fence was appropriate though it could be different and more visually friendly.
9. Most other residents preferred a lower fence that is easier to look through.
10. Several residents reinforced that the grading is a problem in the park, and it needs to be "leveled".

11. Safety concerns: Two women mentioned that the darkness in the park due to the trees and lack of lighting, and the singular pathway with only gates at either end feels unsafe avoiding entering the park at certain times of the day.
12. Dogs were repeatedly mentioned as an issue and a major contributor to damage to the planting in the park. They would like to see a park that builds in some form of protection for the plants.
13. One resident suggested setting plants back from the fence (protective edges) to avoid damage.
14. Buildings on Shawmut Avenue use the park as egress from the back yard to remove trash.
15. Residents asked if the park could be both open but still secured.
16. Would like the park to be a place of respite and community gathering for events and possibly yoga, and art.
17. One resident felt that the previous concept shown (Pate) to the neighbors had too much "concrete" (pavement) and did not feel appropriate. *(Note: This same resident mentioned Elizabeth Garden (NYC) as a precedent as a good community park. J. Heroux will visit this park before Meeting #2).*
18. The neighbors would like a larger shed/storage structure to store tools and supplies,
19. The current water box and associated (attached) water bib (tap) configuration is not user friendly and asked for a water tap to be installed in Little Watson Park.
One resident supported the idea that walls have seating incorporated into them.

Supplemental notes: BPRD:

- Parks will provide a survey to solicit further feedback from the community, and post notices for this at the park entrances, shared via community groups.
- High use leads to higher maintenance needs - seen at Peters Park. We need to anticipate this in our design.
- Parks reports on the standards that we'll be using, maintainable paving materials, furnishings. We understand we offer a basic level of maintenance, but we need to ensure that we can replace or repair what's installed.
- Accessibility is important, renovation will provide this.
- Support for a plaque to be installed honoring Charlie Watson, who provided the initial move to save this park.
- Proposal to add something, a trellis? to hide the brick building wall by the entrance on Milford St.
- Grading and sun exposure are key issues.
- Fence is appreciated for delineation of "park area" as well as perceived security of the site.
- The slope of the site is problematic.
- Underpopulated and low visibility make it seem unsafe, although it is a safe park.
- Protect plants from dogs - discussion as to how we can achieve this.

- No trash cans are desired, nor are picnic tables. Usable space, however, is supported and sought.
- Childe Hassam Park is noted as a good space, along with Hayes Park (*and Harriet Tubman Square*).
- A functional water connection is desired.
- Project to note emergency egress requirements (if any) of adjacent buildings.
- Too much "passage" through the park leads to a feeling that isn't welcoming.

Sincerely,

James A Heroux, RLA
Principal