

Walsh Playground

Community Meeting #3

Meeting Held Over Zoom on December 5, 2023, from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Attendees:

Amy Linné, Project Manager, Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BRPD);

Kwanna Wise, Director of Community Engagement, Environment, Energy, and Open Space Cabinet at the City of Boston.

Megan Tomkins, Principal, CBA Landscape Architects;

Amy Foster, Landscape Architect, CBA Landscape Architects;

Interpreters for Spanish, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole

Community Members, Neighbors

Presenters:

Amy Linné:

- Introduced the meeting and provided a brief overview of the project goals, schedule, and current design funding.

Megan Tomkins:

- Presented site context and existing conditions.
- Presented project outreach context including feedback from Survey #2 and the three previously presented design options.
- Presented funding priorities.

Amy Foster:

- Presented proposed renovations and two design concepts.

Community Feedback:

Below is a summary of the questions and comments brought up for discussion during the meeting, organized by topic:

General Comments:

- Some feel that path lighting should be a high priority for safety reasons.
- Some neighbors commented that they would like to see the previously discussed fence improvements/replacement on Clancy Road as a higher priority. The design team clarified that the fence will hopefully be replaced as part of the project, but the “low priorities” items may not be built if they do not fit into the

final budget.

- A meeting attendee asked for an update on having a more permanent porta-potty on site. They stated that the flag football league pays for and manages a porta-potty for the league's use. Amy Linne noted that the City will not provide porta-potties to parks, but that the project can incorporate into the park a pad/designated area for sports league to place their porta-potties.

Softball Fields / Multi-Purpose Fields:

- Users commented that they would like any hard surface paving near the softball outfield to be farther than the current softball conditions (which appears to be around 200' from home plate). In the current conditions, high school girls do hit past the existing pavement, which can be an interference.
- An outfield fence was requested for the primary softball field. Community members noted that outfield fencing has been provided for boys' baseball fields but not for girls' softball fields and this is a gender equity problem in Boston Parks. They stated that the girls deserve a field with an outfield fence.
- The current softball field has poor drainage especially at home base; the design team clarifies that the grading and soil conditions will be improved for better drainage as part of the project.
- A community member asks about installing synthetic turf for the softball and multi-use lawn. Amy Linne clarified that the City's current policy is not to replace an existing natural grass field with synthetic turf. The improvement of the grading and soil profile will improve the condition of the grass field.
- Users of the multi-use field for flag football and soccer reiterated that minimal overlap with the softball infields is ideal.
- The design team clarified that some manhole covers located within the field can likely be buried, and that some structures or manhole covers may be eligible for removal as well. This will be studied further in the next phase of design.

Basketball Court:

- Some community members feel that lighting the basketball court should be a higher priority.

Tennis Court:

- The tennis court did not come up as a priority during Meeting 3

Playground

- Community members expressed support the playground renovation options but did not express a preference for either of the two playground concepts or have input regarding the equipment.

Natural Site Features – Vegetation & Topography:

- One community member commented that the natural area at the south-east corner of the park along Washington Street has a steep slope/rock ledge that seems dangerous and wondered if it can be cleared and re-graded; he also asked if some of the proposed programming could be relocated into that area. The design team explained the cost implications removing rock ledge; it could take away from the project's capacity to complete other park improvements, as well as impact the schedule.

END OF NOTES

Prepared by Amy Foster for CBA Landscape Architects LLC, 12/06/2023.

