



## Meeting Notes

### Franklin Park Bear Dens Safety Improvements Meeting #1

January 04, 2024

#### Attendees:

+/-65 public attendees  
(12 hosts)  
Amy Linne, BPRD  
Lauren Bryant, BPRD  
Kwanna Wise, EEOSC  
Kyle Zick, KZLA  
Mike Doucette, KZLA

Below is a summary of the feedback received at this meeting:

#### Summary

Community Meeting #1 was a comprehensive inventory and analysis covering the current conditions of the Bear Dens in Franklin Park. The analysis broke down those current conditions into safety and stabilization categories, with safety being the priority discussion. The feedback will help facilitate both the short-term and long-term planning for this site.

#### General Discussion

Some participants raised questions on the timing of this project, given that the site has been in a ruin state for several decades. This led to a discussion about the State currently trying to transfer Care and Custody to the City of Boston. As it stands, the State has owned this parcel, as well as some others in Franklin Park such as Peabody Circle. When the Zoo scaled down operations in the 1950's, this site was left abandoned.

There were several discussions about the \$700,000 construction budget allocated for this project. There were some concerns from the public about the funding being allocated to this site without a future plan for the site in place. This 'Make Safe' work is a high priority and would have to be addressed during the construction of the next phase. The goal from Boston Parks and Recreation (BPRD) is to address the safety concerns, to allow park users access this site without concern. This work will not impact or limit future design and programming improvements to this site. Ultimately, Boston Parks and Recreation is hopeful that this safety work will lead to opportunities for Non-profit and BPRD sanctioned pop-up events at the Bear Dens. Hopefully future pop-up events or other use will direct the future programming.

#### Safety

There were several discussions about the state of the Bear Cages and Canopies. There were ideas shared on various ways discussed on how to improve the safety of these cages. The ultimate takeaway from these discussions is that this work is needed as the property transfer is completed. The Boston Parks and Recreation views this area as unsafe in its current state and the work slated to happen would need to be addressed in the future phases of this area. The

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main goal of this project is to make this area safe for park users and not impact or impede any future uses or programming of this site.

### **Lighting**

Lighting was discussed by a few members of the public. This will most likely be addressed in phase 2 of this project, as the budget will most likely only allow us to address the priority safety concerns.

### **Signage**

Some participants brought up the need for signage in this area. The signage should not only be incorporated in the Bear Dens, but as a part of the overall signage plan needed in Franklin Park. Signage will be incorporated and planned in future phases.

### **Fencing**

A few participants brought up the need for fencing along the drop off that runs parallel to Seaver Street.

### **Vegetation**

There was a discussion about the (5) trees that will be removed due to poor conditions within the scope of this project. These trees were assessed by an independent arborist and the City of Boston Arborists and due to the extensive declining condition of these trees, they will be removed prior to construction beginning.

If the budget allows, there could be the opportunity to replant trees, but the priority of the funding is to make the Bear Dens safe.

### **Existing Pools**

There were several discussions on how to temporarily fill in the pools to alleviate the fall hazard. The discussion of various options such as gravel, sand and decking were all covered. The goal of this specific safety measure will be a temporary solution that will provide public users, a safer space without jeopardizing any future use of these pools.

### **Programming and Future Use**

Future programming will be developed in the next phase in approximately 5 years. This project will make this area safe in the short term, while not limiting any opportunities for future use. Boston Parks and Recreation wants this space to be utilized in that window by the public in various forms and is hopeful that this safety work will lead to opportunities for Non-profit and BPRD sanctioned pop-up events at the Bear Dens. Hopefully future pop-up events or other use will direct the future programming.

### **Timeframe**

Construction is hopefully going to start this summer, per the property transfer.

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### Public Meeting Chat:

17:42:31: Can we do that now? I can't unmute myself

17:42:45: I can't talk

17:42:50: Can you unmute me please?

17:53:24: (how to access Cantonese + Mandarin interpretation): **大家好! 我们会为大家提供广东话 + 普通话 同步翻译服务。你看到萤光屏下面有一个地球仪的图标, 请你去点击这个图标, 选择“Cantonese”, 广东话, 你便会听到广东话的同步翻译; 点击Mandarin图标, 选择“Mandarin”, 普通话, 你便会听到普通话的同步翻译, 谢谢大家。**

如果您使用的是手机或平板电脑, 请点击3个点, 选着更多, 选“Cantonese”, 广东话, 这样也可以进入广东话同步翻译的频道; 选择“Mandarin”, 普通话, 你便会听到普通话的同步翻译频道, 谢谢大家参与会议。(Anna+Terry)

18:04:27: Buenas tardes, solo dando un par de minutos mientras esperamos que mas gente se registre y entre a esta llamada, gracias por estar aqui.

18:06:11: Hello everyone, My name is Angie and I am representing D7's Councilor Anderson. If you have any D7 related questions feel free to email Angelique.brutus@boston.gov. Thank you all! We're happy to connect with you

18:08:18: Reacted to Hello everyone, My n... with "👍"

18:09:25: Vietnamese is good.

18:09:35: Cantonese is good

18:09:54: Spanish is good to go, thanks

18:09:59: Cv is good

18:10:52: Hi Everyone, Happy New Year ❤️ My name is Asha Janay the Roxbury liaison from the Mayor's office. If you have any questions or concerns in regards to Roxbury feel free to email me at Asha.janay@boston.gov 617-635-3296. Thank you

18:11:11: Cape interpreter is on mute. You may want to remind her to turn on

18:11:34: Reacted to "Cape interpreter is ..." with 👍

18:11:40: to interpretation

18:12:11 *From Boston Parks:hello! it looks like you are on mute and participants may not be able to hear your interpretation*

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18:14:49: Hello everyone, My name is Angie and I am representing D7's Councilor Anderson. If you have any D7 related questions feel free to email [Angelique.brutus@boston.gov](mailto:Angelique.brutus@boston.gov). Thank you all! We're happy to connect with you

18:15:16: Hello everyone Happy New Year! Happy to be here, like my colleague Asha mentioned I am Melissa Beltran the Jamaica Plain Liaison from the Mayor's office. Please feel free to email me directly at [Melissa.Beltran@boston.gov](mailto:Melissa.Beltran@boston.gov)

18:20:46: Excited for the Glen rd repaving and stair improvements! Are there volunteer opportunities to help remove invasive species?

18:21:06 From Amy Linne To Everyone: [project webpage: www.boston.gov/bear-dens](http://www.boston.gov/bear-dens)

18:21:10 From Lauren Bryant\_Boston Parks To Everyone: [Lauren.Bryant@boston.gov](mailto:Lauren.Bryant@boston.gov)

18:21:24 From Lauren Bryant\_Boston Parks To Everyone: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/franklin-park-action-plan>

18:21:32 From Amy Linne To Everyone: [amy.linne@boston.gov](mailto:amy.linne@boston.gov)

18:22:58 From Jack Schleifer, Emerald Necklace Conservancy To Everyone: Replying to "Excited for the Glen..." There are tons of opportunities working with the Emerald Necklace Conservancy! There is more information on our volunteer page <https://www.emeraldnecklace.org/volunteer/>

18:24:29 From Lauren Bryant\_Boston Parks To Everyone: Thanks for adding that info Jack!

18:24:47 From Jack Schleifer, Emerald Necklace Conservancy To Everyone: Reacted to "Thanks for adding th..." with 👍

18:29:02: Reacted to "There are tons of op..." with 👍

18:36:41: Could the pools be filled with sand as an option? Thinking for kids in the area that might love a giant sand pit to play in (full disclosure: I don't have kids so caregivers would know better)

18:38:45: uncovered sand boxes can become litter boxes, I think

18:40:06 From Lauren Bryant\_Boston Parks To Everyone: You are correct, sand can become a place where animals go to the bathroom and where items like needles are hard to see.

18:40:29: Reacted to "you are corre..." with 👍

18:41:18: Are climbing holds, like in the playgrounds, possible on the steeper incline?

18:43:49: Reacted to "Could the pools be f..." with ❤️

18:45:15: What are the other priority projects in FP? White Stadium Shattuck?

18:45:26 From Boston Parks To Everyone:

Interpretation instructions for anyone who arrived later:

Spanish: Para traducción en Español,

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1. Vaya a la parte baja de la pantalla, en la barra horizontal, y presione la tecla "Interpretation".
2. Luego seleccione el idioma que desea escuchar.
3. Después de seleccionar, usted entrará a la reunión en el idioma "Español".

Cantonese: 若需粵語口譯服務:

1. 與屏幕下方之長方形控制欄中,煩請點擊 "Intepretation."
2. 煩請點擊您所需收聽的語言。
3. 您即可聽到粵語的會議口譯。

Haitian Creole: Pou entèpretasyon Kreyòl ayisyen,

1. Ale nan kontwòl ba nan pati anba ekran an epi Klike sou "Interpretation"
2. Apre sa, klike sou lang ke ou ta renmen tande a.
3. Kounye a ou gen aksè a reyinyon an Kreyòl ayisyen

Mandarin: 若需普通话口译服务:

1. 在屏幕下方的长方形控制栏中,请点击 "Intepretation."
2. 请点击您所需收聽的語言。
3. 您即可收听普通话的会议口译。

18:45:39: Thank you for that question

18:45:43 From Boston Parks To Everyone:

Vietnamese: Cho thông dịch Tiếng Việt

1. Tìm thanh điều khiển ngang phía dưới màn hình

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của bạn. Bấm vô từ: "Interpretation"

2. Sau đó chọn lựa ngôn ngữ mà bạn cần lắng nghe.

3. Hiện tại bạn đang tham gia buổi họp bằng Tiếng

Việt

Cabo Verdean Creole: Gossim bu ta entra na reuniao

na kriolu,

1. Bai na barra de controlo horizontal na parte

inferior di computador bu kalka na

"Interpretation".

2. Depos kalka na idioma qui bu kre ovi.

3. Agora djabu sta ta entra na reuniaun em creole.

18:50:14: Reacted to "You are corre..." with 👍

18:50:20: Reacted to "uncovered sand boxes..." with 👍

18:51:39: Whether filling the pools with gravel or sand, or covering with wood, plants will grow in the pools. Instead of creating yet another need to weed and fight invasive species, what if we \*actively\* plant local and adapted species in the pools? E.g., shrubs, flowers.

18:51:43: Thank you!!

18:52:09: Reacted to "Whether filling the ..." with 👍

18:52:33: Reacted to "Whether filling the ..." with 👍

18:52:53: Yes! it is a lovely quite place. It already does get a lot of use

18:53:08: Reacted to "Thank you!!" with 👍

18:53:14: Reacted to "Yes! it is a lovely ..." with 👍

18:53:38: We cannot weigh in on (eg) removing extra bars and filling in pools with material X or Y unless we know what we're designing for. E.g., are we designing for a music venue? If so, definitely remove the extra bars. Are we designing for a playground? Then don't remove the extra bars. Can you shed light on the nearest-term envisioned use case post-safety improvements?

18:53:41: Reacted to "Whether filling the ..." with 👍

18:54:07: Reacted to "We cannot weigh in o..." with 👍

18:54:23: Reacted to We cannot weigh in o... with " 👍 "

18:56:19: Reacted to "We cannot weigh in o..." with 👍

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18:56:24: I think a music venue is unrealistic in that area. Let's stabilize those ruins now so the area will be safe. Stabilizing the overlook ruins cost 200k decades ago so 700k does not seem unreasonable to me.

18:56:53: Replying to "We cannot weigh in o..." YES! That's what I was trying to say. Thanks.

18:57:06: I agree that any permeant changes that require alterations of the pools and gates need to be more deeply discussed and designed as the use and SAFETY beyond physical safety must be kept in mine.

18:57:19: mind

18:57:35: Where is the \$750K coming from? The FP fund or the Parks department budget?

18:57:39: Reacted to "YES! That's what I w..." with ❤️

18:57:50: Reacted to "YES! That's what I w..." with 👍

18:57:51: But how do you know what the future renovation is going to be?

18:57:53: Removed a ❤️ reaction from "YES! That's what I w..."

18:58:18: Thank you.

18:58:44: Reacted to "But how do you know ..." with 👍

18:59:19: All proposed changes should be discussed with community and the coalition.

18:59:48: Reacted to " All proposed changes..." with 👍

19:00:04: The Seaver Street drop is part of the landscape and if the forestry work was properly done it would be less of a hazzard

19:00:06: It sounds as though the City has been working to get legal ownership of this area, which is about to happen - and they have realized that they will have legal liability if anyone is injured, Hence the emphasis on a quick fix for safety. Is this essentially correct?

19:00:09: When does implementation start? Agree that it's a space that is not safe for everyone. Our kids love to play here, but there are so many features that I'm waiting for someone to fall through or on. It makes sense to stage work so that what is done now is part of future repairs work. And agreed with \_\_\_\_\_, you can't see that drop until you're right on top of it. With an increased of foot traffic up through here, that drop needs to be addressed.

19:01:23: Reacted to But how do you know ... with " 👍 "

19:01:45: Reacted to "It sounds as though ..." with 😬

19:02:00: GREAT point!

19:02:18: Yes! Thank you. Community input is what is missing for a lot of these projects.

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19:03:32: I appreciate your point, and want to acknowledge that (in my opinion and observation at least) Franklin Park has had many meetings for (eg) the action plan and solicited lots of community impact.

19:04:00: I agree but have had a good experience with this, I moved to the area a few years ago and attended a lot of the zoom meetings before the action plan so I believe nearby neighborhoods were invited to these

19:04:04: Reacted to Yes! Thank you... with "👏"

19:04:06: Reacted to "It sounds as though ..." with 😊

19:04:20: Will you please minimize your post so we can see each other

19:04:46: Thank you!

19:05:27: Not every part of the park should be lit up

19:05:30: I believe I said LIGHTING and clear views by removing invasive growth

19:05:41: @Kyle, kzla — Can you please help me understand why removing the trees is necessary? And if you'll plant additional in their place? Aside from general environmental concerns, Franklin Park is a bastion of noise pollution in the summers (e.g., spontaneous bass-filled parties in the parking lots) and trees help shield those on neighboring streets from noise pollution.

19:05:50: Reacted to "Not every part of th..." with 👍

19:06:01: Reacted to "I agree but have had..." with 👍

19:06:06: Signage would be a good addition to all over Franklin Park. More wayfinding please!

19:06:38: My understanding is that increasing artificial lighting in parks has shown NO significant reduction in crime but DOES show significant impact on wildlife.

19:07:27: All greenery are not trees. What are trees should be saved, pruned and maintained. But as they are there is a lack of use and access.

19:08:23: Thank you for clarifying, @Amy, bprd.

19:08:57: Reacted to "My understanding is ..." with 👍

19:09:28: @Kyle, kzla — I'll give you the tree saplings. ;)

19:09:33: Reacted to "My understanding is ..." with 👍

19:09:51: Park Capital is that company located in Asheville North Carolina.

19:10:09: The space is idle for large gatherings now. Also for many activities at the last time.

19:10:35: Yes Amy, bprd... no trees if construction is planned.

19:10:52: Now would be a good time to speak of possible future use

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19:11:03: Replying to "Not every part of th..." I agree. The wildlife would be impacted by too much lighting. And with White Stadium redesign, we are already looking at a lot of additional lighting.

19:11:19: Reacted to My understanding is ... with "👍"

19:11:25: Reacted to "I agree. The wildli..." with ❤️

19:11:31: Reacted to I agree. The wildli... with "❤️"

19:11:32: Reacted to Not every part of th... with "👍"

19:12:08: Replying to "Not every part of th..." "... artificial nighttime lighting has a quite pervasive and marked impact on ecological systems, that the rapid expansion in the global extent of both direct illuminance and skyglow is thus of significant concern, and that a widespread implementation of mitigation measures is required."

<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-ecolsys-110316-022745>

19:12:47: Reacted to "Not every part of th..." with ❤️

19:12:56: Reacted to "I agree. The wildli..." with 👍

19:14:40: The question of how much coarse woody debris is appropriate here (in these woods generally) is a big one. It's great for wildlife but hazardous for people potentially, and not very attractive.

19:14:50: Reacted to "The question of how ..." with 👍

19:14:54: I totally get that point, but we're beyond habitat maintenance, there are trees down everywhere. And sometimes after a storm limbs and sections will be adjacent to paths for a while. Let's use that mulch to spiffy up some pathways! Appreciate the work you're doing!

19:15:25: Replying to "The question of how ..." The welfare of the ecosystem is more important than the aesthetics, IMHO.

19:17:44 From Jack Schleifer, Emerald Necklace Conservancy To Everyone: The Emerald Necklace Conservancy has put over \$800,000 into tree care in Franklin Park (mostly pruning and planting) over the past 5 years. It's a big park, but we are committed to helping the city with our tree care and continuing our work and I'm certainly hearing these comments as I'm working on planning our tree care for future seasons/years!

19:17:49: More than happy to do a tour with you just like with \_\_\_ and the commissioner

19:18:00: Reacted to "The Emerald Necklace..." with ❤️

19:18:07: Reacted to "The Emerald Necklace..." with ❤️

19:18:10: Reacted to "The Emerald Necklace..." with ❤️

19:18:45: The new tree plantings in Franklin Park are wonderful! It's clear they were overdue but it's nice to see the next generation of trees coming in

19:18:50: who own the land now

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19:18:54: Reacted to The Emerald Necklace... with "❤️"

19:18:59: Reacted to "The new tree plantin..." with ❤️

19:19:15: Reacted to "Not every part of th..." with 👍

19:19:27: thanks

19:19:34: Can lighting be towards human safety without compromising the lives of wildlife?

19:19:48: Level the space, remove the bars and cages, make it a nice stage for outdoor plays, concerts and events.

19:20:13: When is the next FP Action plan meeting?

19:20:23: Reacted to "The new tree plantin..." with ❤️

19:21:00: Replying to "Can lighting be towa..." Based on the research I've seen, there is NO significant impact of lighting on human safety.

19:21:11: I hope the tree team takes wildlife and safety into consideration—we have a lot of great birds in the park that I'd love to keep seeing!

19:21:38: How does the White Stadium project impact the larger FP plan?

19:22:53: Absolutely, the space is ideal for concerts, plays and special gatherings

19:24:02: GTNA remains committed to park maintenance and improvements. However, when we work we would like to see support from the parks department.

19:24:46 *From Lauren Bryant\_Boston Parks To Everyone: <https://www.boston.gov/education/white-stadium>*

19:24:57: Reacted to "Absolutely, th..." with 👍

19:25:07: Thank you all for joining us tonight!

19:25:08: Thank you!

19:25:09: Reacted to "Absolutely, th..." with 👍

19:25:09: Thanks!

19:25:15: Thank you all so much!

19:25:16: Thank you!

19:25:16: Thank you!

19:25:20: Thank you

19:25:25: Thank you!

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19:25:37: I would also be interested in touring the space in order to have more of an idea of the space. I did email the Coalition to do a quick tour before this meeting however I was emailed later which was not convenient.

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