

Public Realm Committee - Meeting Minutes
September 5, 2019

Attendees: Jon Fure, CRC E.D.; Jauston-Charles Campbell, PR Committee Co-Chair; Crystal Meriwether, CRC Board; LeeAnn LaBore, PR Committee; Roger Fuller, PR Committee; Jonathan Reisetter, PR Committee Co-Chair; Catherine Sweet, CRC Board; John Ganey, CRC Board; Brad Meyer, City of St. Paul Parks and Rec; Alice Messer, City of St. Paul Parks and Rec.

Minutes:

- Co-Chair Reisetter called the meeting to order and asked attendees to introduce themselves and share whether they went on any summer vacations or, if not, what they enjoyed closer to home like a vacation. Two attendees had recently been to Austin, Texas. One to Bend, Oregon. Others had upcoming trips scheduled or had enjoyed local/area things like the state fair and state parks.
- The floor was turned over to Alice Messer and Brad Meyer of the City Parks Dept. They provided an overview of their responsibilities and how the department prioritizes parks improvements. Mr. Meyer is the CFO of the Parks Dept. and Alice Messer is Design and Construction Manager.
 - Mr. Meyer gave an overview of the parks budget, including that system-wide comprehensive planning for parks has a \$14 M “ask list” for future parks improvements.
 - Mr. Meyer stated that Clare Cloyd, Marketing and PR Manager for St. Paul Parks Dept., is the liaison for district councils on all things outside of capital improvement projects.
 - Ms. Messer gave an overview of her role. She stated that Parks Dept. Design and Construction is not funded by City monies, but rather by the CIP (Capital Improvements Plan) process, Met Council funding, DNR grants, MN Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment funding, etc. In this way, the Design and Construction arm of the Parks Dept. effectively operates like a private Landscape Architecture firm.

Notes (these are part of the minutes but record as to who said what, or in what order, are not exact):

- Regional Parks (there are 7 in St. P.) are improved in accordance with the master planning process ultimately approved by the Met Council. This differs from “Neighborhood Parks,” which are not part of the larger master planning process, do not receive Met Council funding usually, but are funded by the CIP process or through City bonding measures.
- The CIP process outlines a plan for how money will be allocated for the next 2 years. This is for all City departments, not just Parks.

- Lower Landing is a regional park. There are improvements scheduled to take place soon. Designs have been completed for an initial phase of work, which will likely be bid to contractors sometime after Jan. 1, 2020, with work potentially/hopefully happening the following spring. Bianca Paz is the project designer/manager for Lower Landing. Bianca has been to a Public Realm meeting in the recent past.
- The Lower Landing renovation website includes details of community engagement meeting notes and [concept drawings](#) of the design, as well as a [presentation](#). The website is found at: <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-recreation/design-construction/current-projects/lower-landing-park-renovation>
- At one point, Mr. Meyer referenced Ms. Messer's work on POPS, or Privately-Owned Public Spaces. The conversation was about something else, though, and this did not get talked about further. This has been a discussion topic at Public Realm Committee meetings in the past, and Ms. Messer could be a contact for any future questions on POPS.
- The Parks Dept. has issued surveys to the public. There was one about 10 years ago, which was fairly comprehensive in nature. Then, about 5 years ago, it was reissued in an abridged format. We asked if the Committee could look at these surveys, and their results. Brad and Alice said yes, we can. Either Jon Fure or Jonathan Reisetter will follow up with Parks staff to get this information and send it out to the Committee.
- The Committee is also advised to look at the approved master plans affecting Lower Landing Park. They can be found on the website link above. They include master plans for [Great River Passage](#), [East Bank Mississippi River Regional Trail Corridor](#), and [Greater Lowertown Master Plan](#).
- After Mr. Meyer and Ms. Messer left, the Committee talked about how to proceed with its survey. It was talked about and agreed upon that we should proceed with trying to use our survey to figure out what the public wants, as the last time people were surveyed was perhaps 5 years ago.
- Questions/comments raised at this point included:
 - (Why) is the dog park a need in Lower Landing?
 - As a means of eliminating options either from the survey, or with the survey results, the Committee should consider the cost of maintenance for something we find a want or need for. A lot of what Mr. Meyer talked about was the lack of full-time resources the Department has to allocate toward maintenance of amenities. The likelihood of an expensive-to-maintain amenity receiving consideration is lower.
 - How to get our survey out to enough, and the right, people.

- Programming that includes free memberships to the YMCA for interested kids as a way to make up for District 17's lack of a rec center
- Four our survey now:
 - Lower Landing is time sensitive. Should we produce a survey specifically around it?
 - Kellogg Park was also mentioned by Ms. Messer as a place that may be up for consideration with planning.
 - It was suggested that our survey should be sure to include a question about where people are from / what brings them to downtown.
- The action points were left somewhat ambiguous at the end of the meeting, but it was said that Co-Chairs Reisetter and Campbell will meet between Committee meetings, produce a survey for the Committee to look at, at least by the next meeting if not to send out via email between meetings, and that we would proceed with an administration strategy from there.
- The Committee will invite Tabitha Benci DeRango to our October meeting to facilitate a discussion around engagement opportunities for revising the Downtown Development Strategy, which was last produced in 2005. Tabitha has expressed interest in meeting with each committee about this document revision.