

**ST. ALBANS CITY PARKS COMMISSION**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**December 5th, 2017 6:00 pm**

**HOUGHTON PARK**

Member Present:

Stina Booth

Jeff Young

Tom Koldys

Alec Keading

Joan McGinn (arrived at 6:10)

Staff Present:

Andrew Gratton: Recreation Program Manager

Absent:

Barbara Weistein

Angie Sterm

Also Present:

Jeff Hodgson (Wagner Hodgson)

Hannah Loope (Wagner Hodgson)

Michelle Lockhart (Wagner Hodgson)

Bill (Veterans Association)

Michelle Monroe (SA Messenger)

Heather Blackburn

David Barber

**1. Call to order**

- a. Tom called meeting to order at 6:02

**2. Thanks Jeff Young**

- a. Tom expressed his thanks to Jeff for his knowledge and expertise in all areas of the park and the city. Tom hopes that Jeff will continue to be involved in the parks and the city. Jeff talked about his time with the great commission and hoping that they continue his enthusiasm for the parks. Talked briefly about the start of the master gardeners in the park in 2005.

**3. Presentation and discussion of Taylor Park Master Plan**

- a. Tom spoke about how the details of the park are not what we are discussing at this point. This is a general guideline. Tom talked about how the new map shows a "phase 1" type design that would be some of the first pieces that were implemented and to

please some of the public's concerns. Tom spoke about how we chose to remove some of the contentious parts of the plan in order to respond to the public input.

- b. Chip spoke to the fact that we need to use Hodgson's valuable input while we still have them on board.
- c. Chip spoke to some of the smaller things that we should not be fussing over at this time (street lights, sidewalk). Larger things will not be done without much discussion and more public input but we should also still continue to work on these details.
- d. Chip spoke to putting together a design that we could bring to the city council that is more of an immediate plan and not a larger 10 year plan. We do not need to force anyone or everyone to say ok to everything right now. These are general designs that will occur over time.
- e. Jeff Y. spoke to how everything that happened in the park to date has happened in a minimum of 2 years' time. Each thing, no matter how big or small takes a lot of discussion and public input to get finalized and complete. Explained how there were a lot of moving parts in our concept and that is scared a lot of people. Explained how the oval was proposed in the last plan and not much has changed in the new concept, besides the bandstand.
- f. Hannah Loope spoke to the three elements there were removed in the new design from the concept.
  - i. The overlook
  - ii. The splash pad. Left the existing garden
  - iii. The stage/ bandstand.
- g. Tom talked about maybe moving the bandstand forward and relocating the splash pad to a different spot. Jeff H. spoke to a few of his ideas on this subject. Moving the splash pad to the south end of the park more toward the bandstand.
- h. Chip wanted to have the gazebo represented as it is the phase 1 concept. Also wondered if the commission would want to see what the bandstand would look like moved a bit more forward to the north.
- i. Discussion of the terracing near the stage and view sheds through the park.
- j. Discussion about the removal of some of the pavement and concrete through the park.
- k. Discussion about moving the bandstand forward to get away from the noise of the street. Jeff H. felt that moving the bandstand forward 30 feet would not gain you much in the way of noise retention. Chip explained that when the bandstand was to be discussed there could be a noise study about the area in the park. Many park members felt that the concerns of noise were unwarranted. Ambulance noise is heard from anywhere in the park.
- l. Jeff Y. brought up the idea of a portable stage that was discussed years ago. Also spoke to the economic viability of the park that the bandstand brought to the park. Also discussed that the bandstand size, shape and design will be discussed in depth when time comes. Also mentioned that a long time ago there was a bandstand located near the area recommended in the concept.

- m. Tom spoke to the fact that the concept design of the band space may have scared many people and that we should just represent it with a blank circle to show that the area will contain a band area but not show it in any aspect. He also spoke to the fact that there are so many options for the band area and that we are not discussing them because we are not at that stage in the project.
- n. Angie voiced that we should represent that things on the map. Spoke that we were removing essentially every large piece of the park that we have changed. Joanie agreed.
- o. Chip mentioned that he would talk to Kevin Loomis again about the future bandstand and his thoughts about it.
- p. Jeff Y. spoke to how the city has done a lot of work with the concerts in the park and how they have grown. Making it family oriented and how this new concept does a large part to help make the concerts better.
- q. Tom brought up the movement of (n) on the map more west toward the oval so that it would be away from the stage area and gives it more accessibility.
- r. Jeff Y. mentioned that the greenspace would actually be bigger with the new design and how the flagpole fits in to the park much better in the current design than it does right now. Jeff Y. also talked about the vehicle access (f) and how he was concerned about large tent trucks getting in the area. Hodgson explained that there is reinforced turf in the area to help hold up to large trucks
- s. Tom spoke to (W) and how the sidewalk may not need to be there as there are no vehicle parking there and traffic is coming through that area. Jeff H. said that this sidewalk is there currently and putting a grass area there may not be the best solution as the salt from plowing would make this a tough spot for grass to grow.
- t. Bill from the Veterans association spoke to how they do not think that the bandstand in the south side is the best spot as it takes away from the solidarity of the monuments and the south end of the park. The location and design of the band shell was discussed more in-depth. Having a circular performance area with no set front or back. Discussion of moving the monuments to the edges of the oval to give them more viewing and putting the performance area in the middle of the oval.
- u. Andrew mentioned that the performance area would only be in use for minimal times during the week and when there are performances leaving more quiet/ reflective time for the south end of the park. There would be much more time for reflection than there would be performances.
- v. Public input from Heather Blackburn about the accessibility to the monument and how if they are placed along the oval they are much more accessible to people of disabilities and other illness. Talk about the accessibility of the oval and the inward focus that is creates.
- w. Heather Blackburn spoke more to the accessibility of the park and how it would be great to have an area such as the splash pad that would be accessible for people with disabilities. How there are no parks that are accessible for people in wheel chairs and such.

- x. Michelle spoke to the fact that member of the performing arts community are thrilled about the idea of a move usable performance space for theater, music, and plays that are much needed in the community.
  - y. Jeff H. spoke about how we can incorporate kids into the park without splash pads and things like that. Different interactive areas that will bring kids to the park but do not take away from the balance and heritage of the park.
  - z. David Barber spoke to his concerns about the tree removal or mature shade trees and the gazebo.
  - aa. Lots of talk about the “interactive water feature” and how we can bring more kids to the park. What these features can be. They do not have to include water, but kids do like water.
  - bb. Chip talked about adding spaces to the park where art can be located.
  - cc. Extensive talk about location of the kids feature.
  - dd. Joanie voiced opinion about hoping that these kids’ features do not take away from what the park is. Her concern with the tree removal and about the current state of the gazebo.
  - ee. Alec spoke to the maintenance of some of the things that people are bringing up in the park.
  - ff. Jeff Y. brought up the completion of the area around the fountain as well as the benches.
  - gg. Chip talked about the things we were going to change (email chip for those)
    - i. Designate potential kids area
    - ii. Show the current Loomis gazebo.
    - iii. Leave in the historic round garden.
    - iv. Put a bridge back in L.
    - v. Signify the area where the new performance space could go.
    - vi. Show a couple areas where an interactive children’s feature could go.
    - vii. Move N west to the oval walkway.
    - viii. Move Q east to the oval walkway.
    - ix. Note that the diagonal walkways in the south end of the oval are only recommended if pedestrians form desire lines in the grass.
  - hh. Talk about the east side sidewalks of the park. And a supplemental grading plan to make sure the sidewalks all worked well when implemented in phases.
  - ii. Jeff Y. brought up the storm water concerns. These will be addressed when a civil engineer is brought on in the future.
  - jj. Talk about the walkways allowing access to the oval. And what they may be made of.
- 4. Discuss next steps and presentation to the city council (D&V)**
- a. Stina made a motion to take the revisions talked about tonight to Wagner Hodgson and present the new draft of the plan to city council on Monday. Alec seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously.
5. Update on miscellaneous items

- a. Tom spoke about the budget and getting specific budget items added to the budget so that we can have them set aside for us. Such as a dozen trees for Houghton Park. Jeff talked about the Cottonwoods that were growing at Houghton and how they need to be addressed and taken out before they take over.

**6. Consider approval of meeting minutes**

- a. No meeting minutes. Both sets will be approved at the next meeting (November and December)

**7. Other business**

- a. Tom talked about some of the cool ideas he had seen in different parks magazines.

**8. Adjourn**

- a. Jeff Y. made a motion to adjourn. Second by Alec . Motion passed unanimously Meeting adjourned at 8:05