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Notes from Community Input / Public Meeting #1

<p>MEETING DATE: Thursday, Feb. 1st, 2007 NOTES DATED: Tuesday, February 06, 2007 FROM: Heather Weilnau / Chris Manning LOCATION: Memorial Hall MEETING TIME: 6:00pm DISTRIBUTION: Clients, Consultants, Steering Committee Members, File RE: #20621 Washington Park Master Plan</p> <p>PARTICIPANTS:</p> <p><u>Client Partners:</u> Steve Schuckman, Cincinnati Park Board – 475-9600 Darrick Dansby, 3CDC – 621-4400 x 115</p> <p><u>Consultants:</u> Chris Manning, Human Nature – 281-2211 Heather Weilnau, Human Nature – 281-2211 Tracy Flanagan, Human Nature – 281-2211 Ken Cunningham, KCAI – 381-7131</p>	<p><u>Steering Committee Members/Advisors:</u> Bill Bailey, CRC – OTR Center – 381-1893 Bren Blaine, Tender Mercies – 639-7020 Robin Brandon, CPS – 363-0729 Mary Burke, OTRCH – 381-1171 Mike Burson, CPS – 363-0777 Pat Clifford, DIC – 721-0643 Karyl Cunningham, Emanuel Com Ctr. – 241-2563 Sherry Gale, Nast Trinity Church Marge Hammelrath, OTR Foundation – 721-1317 Jeffrey E. Koopman, CRC – 352-4942 Debbie Mays, OTR Community Council – 784-9137 Norma Petersen, GC Arts & Education Center Brian Tiffany, OTRCC – 214-2690</p> <p><u>Absent Steering Committee Members:</u> Patty Beggs, Cincinnati Opera – 768-5503 Georgia Keith, Resident-At-Large Bobby Maly, The Model Group – 559-5854 Mike Stehlin, Resident, Architect</p>
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Purpose of the meeting was to share with the public the planning process, introduce the clients, consultants and steering committee members and to provide an opportunity to gather public comment about the park and learn what the community would like to see included in the master plan. Approximately 75 people were in attendance either as residents or as representatives from organizations. Organizations listed on the sign-in-sheets are as follows:

- Residents
- Alliance
- Art Academy of Cincinnati
- Aventura Development
- B2B Equities, LLC
- Bentley Koepke, Inc., Landscape Architecture
- Brewery District
- Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC)
- Cincinnati, City of
- Cincinnati Enquirer
- Cincinnati Development Fund (CDF)
- Cincinnati Opera
- Cincinnati Parks Department
- Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS)
- Cincinnati Recreation Commission (CRC)
- Contact Center
- D.P.M, Inc.
- Downtown Cincinnati Inc. (DCI)
- Drop-Inn Center (DIC)
- Eagle Realty Group
- Emanuel Community Center
- First Lutheran Church
- Greater Cincinnati Arts and Education Center (GCAEC)
- Imani Family Center
- Music Hall
- Nast Trinity Church
- Over-The-Rhine Chamber
- Over-The Rhine Housing Network (OTRHN)
- Over-The-Rhine Community Council (OTRCC)
- Over-The-Rhine Community Housing (OTRCH)
- Over-The Rhine Foundation
- Over-The-Rhine Recreation Center
- Peaslee Neighborhood Center
- Power Inspires Progress
- Race Street Cincinnati
- Reading Center, The
- Schickel Design
- Sixth Street Condo Owners Association
- Tender Mercies
- University of Cincinnati Graduate Students
- Urban Historic Properties
- Urban Sites

Steve Schuckman welcomed the guests, thanked them for coming and explained the basic planning process and intent. He explained that the plan was being prepared by the Cincinnati Park Board and that 3CDC was a funding partner. Chris Manning began with a power point presentation which outlined the evening's events, introduced the team and reinforced the planning process. Chris then reviewed the Draft Vision and Objectives with the audience and asked if there were any additions or corrections; a suggestion was made to list "neighborhood residents" first, before "visitors" in one of the objectives. The presentation proceeded on the park's background, comments received at the November Rap Session, and an overview of major projects planned around the perimeter of the park. The presentation then outlined the park's history from cemetery to exposition host to parkland. The park's evolving nature was shown with multiple changes in amenities including the original bandstand, the current bandstand, ponds, fountains, wading pools, playgrounds, recreational changes, planting plans, and the restroom and school additions. An overview was given of current site amenities/furnishings and structures, and an analysis of the site's lighting, topography, vegetation, vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns was shared. Following the conclusion of the power point presentation and brief discussion, each of 13 tables of guests was given an aerial photograph of the site to use for posting their comments. A recorder was selected from each table and was in charge of recording the information on sticky notes and placing them on the aerial photograph. (see below comments). At the end of the evening, Steve and Chris gave their closing comments and thanked everyone for their time. Guest, Vice Mayor Jim Tarbell, took a few minutes to express his appreciation for the energy he experienced in the room and commented that as a unique open space in downtown, Washington Park has been a wonderful friend to him over the years. Announcement as to the next meeting set for Tuesday, March 27th was made and the meeting adjourned.

Presentation Comments

1. On the site inventory slides there were images of tree stumps, "why have some trees already been cut down?" was asked. Response--due to dangerous conditions or irreparable damage.
2. The SCPA plan shows the northwest corner as a plaza, therefore the question was raised if the Drop-Inn Center Transitional housing, currently in that location, would be removed. Representative from CPS stated that their plan was to eventually acquire that property.
3. Question asked, "Why was it named Washington Park". Victoria Schumacher (Cincinnati Parks) stated that George Washington previously owned land in this area.
4. It was pointed out that Drop-Inn Center staff and residents painted the bandstand during the 1997 restoration.
5. A question was asked if there is a budget. The answer given was that the plan would determine what the budget needed to be to design, build and sustain proposed improvements and to operate and maintain the park and park programs and events.

Work Session Comments

Below are comments exactly as recorded on sticky notes from each group's discussion. Comments have been recorded in categories. Some issues fall into more than one category and may be used more than once.

Amenities

- In north section, pool, basketball, spray ground, restroom, reservable shelter, picnic area, drinking fountains
- Café in the park
- Turn the bird bath back on at 12 & Race
- There is no picnic area or lunch spot
- Problem – no proper staging area
- Install Merry-go-round; Ferris wheel; no plastic crap
- Need audio system; pipe music into park from Music Hall
- French park style café/folding chairs like in Luxemburg jardin du Luxemburg
- A columbarium (a place to bury ashes for people who want to stay)
- Ferris wheel
- Have kitchen in concession area to host weddings & other events
- Install bicycle rack
- Concessions, food and beverages
- Can power be provided inconspicuously?
- Would like horse friendly stop for horse and carriage rides – hitching post

Art

- Large art sculpture commissioned by an established artist (Paley)—an idea!
- Art sculpture in the park
- Focus on the arts as a tool to unify the neighborhood
- Have sculptures in park that represent diversity

- Focal point honor? across from Music Hall * fountain or monument
- Have sculpture instead of cannon
- Commission a sculpture that reflects diverse culture – urban environment
- Monument to Gen. Kabaka Oba
- Outdoor gallery
- Place for chalk art
- Something that draws artists to work in park

Bandstand

- Improve “circle” surrounding the bandstand, try surrounding bandstand by a body of water and connecting to it via bridge access
- Bandstand is not functional--encourage more functional attractions instead of bandstand
- Remove bandstand from middle of park and relocate somewhere else in park
-Turn bandstand into a bandshell or add..... bandshell, like Frank Gehry's
- Re-center the bandstand or northern pathways – two centers, maybe?

Connectivity

- Strengthen connection between public and SCPA school
- Streetcar service from Downtown to Findlay Market – up Elm down Race
- Better crosswalks needed; Emanuel Ctr
- There is no transportation to the riverfront downtown, Findlay Market; Need trolley
- Connector to park for SCPA
- Make the park a destination. Connect with Findley programmatically, not physically. Food vendors

Diversity

- We value the Drop Inn Center by the park
- Opportunities for diverse population to interact – Emanuel “Community” center
- Serious awareness of diversity building @ Emanuel

Dog Park

- Dog Park (small area), dogs create year long use of the park and interaction between people. Most will know the dog's name before they know the owner's name....”Oh hi, you're Fido's mom, right?”
- Dog walking area and dog clean up baggies

Environmental Design

- Growing--green roofing such as “grass growing”, fruit trees, growing food
- “Green” bathroom (solar array = heating, recycled rainwater, green lighting, green hot water)
- Green thinking (green pavement, green building, green restaurant)

Fencing/Edges:

- No or little fencing or just fencing for children's area
- No gates & no fences – keep area open
- Add wrought iron fence around perimeter (very decorative)
- Need fence back so people move into park & not sit on wall
- Perimeter? Wrought iron fencing put it back
- Existing stone fence base needs addressed – remove or add fence back
- Add fence back
- The wall is a barrier. Take it down at south and west edges

Furnishings

- More benches; recycle bins; drinking fountains
- Benches facing each other for conversations
- More seating – creative seating area
- Install benches along 12th street
- Install benches along Race St
- There should be enough comfortable seating – comfortable and inviting
- Moveable seating
- Keep peace bench

- Recycling bins that encourage recycling
- Picnic tables and grills; picnic shelter
- Install tables, chairs & grills
- Install picnic tables
- Picnic tables and grills; picnic shelter

Gateways

- Better entrance. Focal points
- Make entrance like 14th Street like the rest
- New gateway at north end of park
- Improve sidewalks all around to invite people in the park
- Park too closed off, not inviting, especially along south end

History/Preservation

- Entire park should respect historic architecture of neighborhood
- The park softens the city – keep it green
- Preserve the history of the park (all inventory items)
- Contemplate the merits of the 1907 plan for the park
- Preserve historic character

Lighting

- Change time parameter of park, 24 hour access?, how will lighting support this use?
- Uplighting on trees; downlight on paths (beautiful historic lights)
- Ample lighting; keep ground lighting also
- Lighting – make sure appropriate
- Park is not well lit
- More lighting, more metal halide

Open Space

- Maintain open space and view of Music Hall
- Extend green park north all (*..to 14th street?*) or at least to original boundary
- Need to have flexible space that attracts children
- Study possibility of a lawn at north end
- Look at St. Stephen's Green in Dublin, Ireland
- There are so many trees – open it up more
- Open green beneficial to students, families, spring and summer activities
- Open field
- "Front lawn" for Music Hall – open green space
- Wide open green space

Parking / Streets

- Close off 12th street during SCPA school hours
- Possibly close 12th Street between Race & Elm during school day
- Temporary closing of street for special events
- Where will visitors park?
- Underground parking – people come up in park
- Have underground parking under new area of park

Paving

- More interesting ground surface than asphalt in center of park & throughout
- Include area or bricks that honor residents, supporter, history – whatever
- Brick/cobble-stone street @ 12th; repair cobblestones on Elm

Play Area / Activity

- Place to play that engages parents "shade for mom & dad"
- Provide space for game, & playground area – horseshoes, cornhole
- Chess tables, checker tables
- Game tables – chess

- (Think Venice Beach); check board, chess board, tables, (stone?), w. bench, tournaments
- Playground – not conducive to 5 yr olds & under; openness is safety issue; equipment needs upgrade
- Well designed play equipment
- Recreation – have some area reserved for recreation
- Children’s play/recreational area
- Basketball, playground equipment for older kids
- Climbing trees for kids

Pool / Water Feature

- Swimming pool should be ornate feature if it remains as an amenity
- Location of the pool as it relates to the connection / vista to Music Hall
- Design of pool, supplemental pool, add water features
- Pool is important but maybe not at current site
- Maybe put pool and playground near SCPA
- Pool should stay
- Retain swimming pool and playground
- Swimming pool – stay open longer into the evening
- Pool location is problem
- Need pool or some “type of water function”
- Keep the pool and transform it to an aquatics spray ground pool.
- Turn concrete pool into lake/beach front across from park
- A way to get wet and cool off rather than swim- not necessarily “water play”
- “Interactive water park” in place of pool
- Decorative fountain that kids can play in
- Interactive sculpture & water feature for children/families
- “Water park”; water sculpture
- Children/Adult water feature
- Splash park like Pearl District in Portland—supports both a younger and older crowd
- Water fountain in center of park
- Reflecting pool from bandstand to new monument or water feature
- Pond
- Strongly appreciate a pond! A pond, reflecting pool or large body of water can change the dynamic of the outdoor space

Programming

- Public events
- Events that appeal to broader audience at least 1x per mo.; advertise broadly to all downtown residents
- Over the Rhine festival
- Street vendors and musicians
- Washington Park Bookfair
- Movies in the park
- Music, arts and crafts with tables to accommodate
- Concerts, theater in the park to attract all ages – empty nesters, students
- Accommodate diverse age groups
- Start an events planning committee
- Something that draws artists to work in park
- Focus on the arts as a tool to unify the neighborhood
- Needs to be staffed – park greeter, ranger, etc.
- More active features on Northern end of park. More passive features on southern end

Restroom

- Restroom structures to be designed in a manner to promote safety (no areas to hide)
- Bathrooms do not function!
- Tear down restrooms and rebuild or at least put doors on stall in woman
- Incorporate restrooms into park “experience” part of entry or other pedestrian element relative to street
- Remove restroom & build it in another area of the park
- Restrooms – have attendant

- Keep - better develop restroom. Staff it. Open more. Clean etc.
- Restrooms need to be replaced – needs to be kid friendly
- Multiple bathrooms needed

Safety / Security

- Drug sales are a problem
- Public urination; loitering; trash; pan handling
- Bandstand used as drug sellers lookout
- More police – mounted / on bikes

Signage

- Historic sign refreshed and updated
- Interpretive signs along path / timeline

Structures

- 3 season shelter added to park
- Picnic shelter
- Open shelter for picnics
- There is no good bus seating & shelter; shelter can be a problem
- Stage or platform – covered shelter with power for microphones
- Performance area other than bandstand with built in seating – show movies
- Mini amphitheater
- Concessions – identify areas for vendors
- Concessions stands
- Small barn for police horses so they don't have to keep carting them in – the- horses could exercise on path around park
- Lectern for public speaking with utilities/power

Trails / Pathways

- Walking trail within park and consider connections to “green streets”
- Walking trail around perimeter of park
- Central path all around park
- Walking path throughout
- Fitness trail
- Exercise Trail
- Skate trail through park
- Bike trail
- Marker for mileage (walking & jogging)

Vegetation

- New trees should accent all of park
- Buddy's tree to be protected. Protect trees that are like family
- Leave as much nature as possible
- Keep trees
- More bushes and undergrowth, small trees – more on child scale
- Canopy too dense
- Map of major trees as constraints for development
- Plantings around perimeter please—while you're walking now, there is not much to pull the eye inward
- Plant daffodil bulbs under tree rings
- Park space w/native trees @ school site
- Butterfly garden, meditation place
- Maybe have different nature themes in the mound areas
- Like the topography – the mounds. Floral concept in the different areas
- Flowers/plants (daylilies or ?); (emphasis on green – attract garden/plant lover to enjoy & move to city.
- Real intense floral
- More flowers; wild flowers; indigenous flowers

Views

- Visual axis from the intersection of 14th & Pleasant streets, north to Findlay market
- Maintain open space and view of Music Hall
- Location of the pool as it relates to the connection / vista to Music Hall

Other

- What is the attendance of the various gatherings that occur in the park? What capacity does the central area accommodate?
- Churches not a part of community are not being held accountable for distribution
- Management is more important than design
- Keep it a public park not managed by private entity
- Develop more cohesive relationship between/among Washington Park stakeholders
- Need more resident input on advisory committee
- Keep design simple
- Family friendly
- Who will live around the park? Want it to be a mix. Families and children
- House built before Music Hall
- Wireless internet access – lily pad
- More color – plantings, furnishings

Next Steps

Human Nature to:

- Synthesize recorded information gained
- Develop a list of issues / concerns / conceptual approaches for client partner and committee to review, think about, expand and respond to. These issues will be sent via email in lieu of an additional meeting.
- Explore conceptual alternatives
- Prepare presentation for Steering Committee/Public meeting #2

Client Partners to:

- Send Public Meeting #1 notes to Steering Committee members, public meeting attendees and others
- Post power point presentation and meeting notes on website(s).
- Organize a method for discussion with Steering Committee to receive their review of the list of issues.
- Inform Steering Committee Members of date, time and length of their second meeting
- Client Partner's to review and comment on conceptual designs
- Create flyer for Public Meeting #2 and distribute

Steering Committee to:

- Review Community Input meeting notes
- Review, consider and respond to list of issues/concerns
- Review and discuss above material and discuss design concepts at 3/20 committee meeting

Schedule

- March 20th: 4:00-6:00pm @ Emanuel Center Steering Committee meeting #2
- March 27th: 6:00-8:00pm @ Memorial Hall Public Meeting #2

The statements above summarize the essential contents and agreements reached in the meeting. If there are any mistakes or misinterpretations, please notify Human Nature immediately. If Human Nature is not notified within 5 working days of the date of this correspondence, we will assume that the contents are acceptable to all recipients.