Resolution 2011-161

Resolution Accepting the Non-Appointed Citizen Advisory Committee Recommendations and Approving Concept Plans for Levin Triangle Park

Whereas, The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is a steward of the Minneapolis parks;

Whereas, The MPRB has allocated $250,000 for playground and site improvements at Levin Triangle Park within the 2011-2016 Neighborhood and Community Capital Improvement Program (CIP);

Whereas, The Board has approved the formation of a non-appointed citizen advisory committee (CAC) with the charge to provide design recommendations for playground and site improvements at Levin Triangle Park;

Whereas, The Board desires broad and representative stakeholder involvement in decision making when constructing or redeveloping park facilities;

Whereas, A community engagement process, including a series of public meetings, a design open house, and use of social media and digital communication methods have been employed to fulfill the CAC charge;

Whereas, Community members have guided the design recommendations, including selection of the playground designer and manufacturer, resulting in concept plans for Levin Triangle Park; and

Whereas, The MPRB project team has refined the concept plans to balance community approach and project budget parameters;

RESOLVED, That the Board accept the non-appointed CAC recommendations and approve concept plans for Levin Triangle Park; and

RESOLVED, That the President of the Board and Secretary to the Board are authorized to take all necessary administrative actions to implement this resolution.

Adopted by the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
In formal meeting assembled on September 7, 2011.

John Erwin, President

Karen Robinson, Secretary

Approved:

R.T. Rybak, Mayor

TO: Planning Committee

FROM: Bruce Chamberlain, Assistant Superintendent for Planning Services

DATE: August 17, 2011

SUBJECT: Resolution to Accept the Non-appointed Citizen Advisory Committee Recommendations and Approve Concept Plans for Levin Triangle Park

BACKGROUND

Playground and site improvements at Levin Triangle Park were proposed as part of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) neighborhood and community capital improvement program (CIP). Funding in the amount of $250,000 has been allocated for the design and construction of park improvements.

Levin Triangle Park is located near Lake of the Isles and represents 0.32 acres of the Minneapolis park system. This triangle shaped park is bordered by streets 26th St. West, Irving Avenue South, and Euclid Place. The existing playground equipment was added in 1976 at the request of community members led by Minneapolis resident Joanne Levin. Following the improvements, the park was renamed in Levin's honor.

The existing playground equipment does not meet the current federal and state standards for accessibility and playground safety. The intended outcomes of the community engagement and design development phase were to recommend improvements that provide a safe and accessible play environment, and support diverse recreational experiences within the park.

A non-appointed citizen advisory committee process began with the hiring of a consultant firm and formation of a project advisory committee (PAC). In advance of meeting dates, residents and parks users shared their preferences for improvements through an online survey. Survey responses, discussions with community groups, information from the PAC, and park usage data gathered by residents in recent years informed the preliminary design concepts presented at the first community meeting.

At the first community meeting participants reviewed project information and were presented with four (4) preliminary design concepts. Participants selected a preferred concept plan and general play character for the park. A second community meeting presented residents with the community-preferred concept plan, three submissions for play equipment by various playground designers and manufacturers, and options for site furnishings. Participants selected a preferred playground submittal and site furnishings, and commented on revisions to the concept plan. After this second meeting, the community-preferred playground designer refined their proposal to coincide with the preferred concept plan and community response to date. On July 26th, a designer Open House was hosted to present the refined playground equipment proposal and

concept plan. All projects materials throughout the community engagement process were posted online and immediately available for public review and comment. Existing partnerships with neighborhood organizations and the Minneapolis public schools were instrumental in promoting the opportunity to participate within this phase of the project.

Throughout the community engagement process, input from the CAC and online respondents has shaped the concept plans and design character of the play equipment and park improvements. Resident comment indicated high interest in retaining characteristics of the existing playground equipment through a natural look and feel, with the overall park design catering to diverse use, including annual community events held in the park.

Within the concept plan, a custom playground design integrates salvageable play equipment and provides an iconic design displaying a strong sense of place. An open lawn area for community gatherings, including areas for picnics and passive recreational use is proposed. The memorial plaque for Joanne Levin is moved to a prominent gateway location, and additional landscaping plus new park signage will define the park boundaries.

Community concerns brought to the attention of the PAC included resistance to any park improvements and the objection to funding for park improvements in today's budget climate. Some residents objected to the removal of trees in order to comply with guidelines for playground safety within the preferred concept plan. The concept plan was driven by the desire to preserve the existing tree infrastructure to the highest extent possible. Residents inquired if alternate pathway surfaces could be used within the playground area. In considering slopes within the play containers, current maintenance methods and schedules and accessibility needs, it was determined a concrete pathway surface satisfied project goals at the lowest lifecycle cost.

In relation to replacement of the play equipment, project design constraints were twofold, 1) the limited square footage available for play equipment within the park, and 2) the difficulty of replacing the play value of existing equipment within this square footage in compliance with current standards. Guided by community preferences and ideas, these constraints have been satisfied within the proposed concept plan and custom-designed playground equipment.

A notable contribution to a balanced project budget has been the Maintenance division offer to provide demolition and removal services, including salvage of reusable playground pieces.

RELATED BOARD ACTIONS

February 16, 2011	Study Report, Public Participation Recommendations for 2011 Capital Projects (Phase I), Planning Committee
December 13, 2010	Resolution to Adopt the 2011 Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Budget

FUNDING/COST SUMMARY

Sources		$250,000.00
2011-2016 Neighborhood and Community CIP		
Uses		$32,500.00
Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc. Professional Services Agreement	$32,500.00	
Balance		$217,500.00

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board accept the non-appointed CAC recommendations and approve concept plans for site and playground improvements to Levin Triangle Park. The improvements are consistent with the 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan goals to provide park amenities that meet or exceed standards for accessibility, and provide safe places to play, recreate, contemplate, and celebrate. A full suite of community engagement and outreach methods during the design development phase has been completed, and will guide the remaining project phases to temporary park closure for construction in late 2011 and 2012.

ATTACHMENTS

Concept Plans: Levin Triangle Park

Prepared by: Ginger Cannon, Community Outreach & Research Planner, Planning Services
Reviewed by: Bruce Chamberlain, Assistant Superintendent for Planning Services
Approved by: Jayne Miller, Superintendent