

**EISENHOWER PARK STUDY COMMITTEE
OPEN HOUSE – CITY HALL
JANUARY 23, 2007**

MEMBERS PRESENT

M. Lofthouse
S. Wing
S. Daniels
J. Casey-Piscitelli

Excused

L. Hurwitz

Also Present: Mayor James L. Richetelli, Jr., G. Sorge, Vollmer Associates, Chris Allen, Land Tech

Mayor James L. Richetelli opened the meeting at 7:08 p.m. and welcomed those present to the Eisenhower Park Study Committee Open House. He stated this meeting was the opportunity for all to look at what the Eisenhower Park Study Committee has been doing. He stated Eisenhower Park needed to be fixed up and worked on and with the blessing of the Board of Aldermen they appointed a committee of seven members with diverse backgrounds. He explained some of their backgrounds and that they started from the ground up with this project. He stated they walked the park weekend after weekend and shortly after funding was approved a consultant was hired. Mayor Richetelli spoke of the beauty of the park with the Wepawaug running through it but also the constraints in the park, the utility power lines. He stated the Committee looked at the existing conditions of the park and came up with possibilities as to what could be done and that the goal was to include the public and thanked the Committee for doing that. He spoke of the numerous meetings held with people currently using the park and those people interested in using the park. He stated the Committee adapted the plans based on what the public said. He spoke of the lengthy process still to be taken and commended the Committee on the first four years which were fact finding. He noted the Committee has put in voluminous amount of hours of their own time and explained the Committee would submit a plan to him and then it would disseminated to many such as Park, Beach and Recreation, Planning and Zoning, etc. He spoke of the many steps that still needed to be undertaken but that this was a starting point. He stressed the importance of keeping an open mind and the importance of the public giving their opinion tonight. Mayor Richetelli also commented this was the third or possibly the fourth time a study has been conducted of this park, and referenced studies done in the 1970's, 1980's and now. He stated those previous studies have sat on shelves and expressed his hope this does not happen here. Mayor Richetelli stated that first and foremost it was important to improve what the City already has and spoke of things such as the trails, defining the waterways, clearing the footbridges and repairs to the pavilions that over the years have not been worked on and are in need of repair. He stated these things would enhance the park and keep its natural beauty. He thanked those present for continuing to come back and give their opinions and his hope they felt the Committee had listened. He spoke of democracy, grassroots and coming to meetings and putting scenarios into plans and passed onto administration. He expressed his thanks to those departments that have done this out of their own time. Mayor Richetelli also spoke of the power lines that separate the park in half. He explained the ultimate decision of the Connecticut Citing Committee that those power lines be above ground. He stated the utilities met with the Committee several times and that he was happy to report that the Citing Council and Army Corp of Engineers ordered the utilities to do certain mitigation. He stated the power companies decided all 2.4 acres of mitigation would take

place in Eisenhower Park. He explained they would take out the invasive species, create new meadows, wetlands, etc. He stated this could have taken place in any of the 23 towns in the area but they choose Milford. He reiterated the environmental enhancements would be paid for by the power company and added if nothing else were to come of this the work of the power company will be worth it. He concluded by thanking those again for being part of this and thanked the Committee and city staff present. He turned the meeting over to Chairman Mark Lofthouse.

Chairman Lofthouse introduced the members of the Committee. He also thanked all those for coming out and thanked the Mayor for giving this Committee the opportunity to do this. He also thanked former Chairman Joe Agro for all the hours and hard work he gave to this Committee. Chairman Lofthouse explained that upon conclusion of the presentation they would invite everyone to come forward and meet with the members of the Committee as well as Mary Rose Palumbo from Inland/Wetlands, David Sulkis from Planning and Zoning, Bill McCarthy from Recreation Department and Marcia Winter, Grant Writer for the City of Milford. He explained each of the maps displayed. He spoke of the four years of work this Committee has endured and their commitment as volunteers to do this. He explained the charge of the Committee and their one objective to create a park for now and the future. He stated the key word is the future with the restoration phase being so very important. He spoke of the many successful parks the Committee visited and the reason being money (stated so many ways) and the lack of funding is why parks don't succeed. He asked those present to keep an open mind and give it the ability to pay its own way. He stated this park needs a rod and reel and quoted Mark Twain.

J. Casey-Piscitelli, Vice Chairman thanked every for coming out tonight and the excitement of seeing so many people here. She expressed her gratitude of being a part of this process. She read from a written statement commenting on the opportunity this park holds, which includes active and passive recreation. She spoke of the value of recreation. She spoke of when a child visits the park they should find three things they should be able to do and that the same holds true for an adult visiting the park and together they should find three things each to do and the park is a success. She spoke of her vision of creating a park that would serve our citizens today, tomorrow and in the future.

Chairman Lofthouse thanked Ms. Casey-Piscitelli and turned the meeting over to Gary Sorge from Vollmer Associates.

Mr. Sorge welcomed those present. He explained the plans displayed tonight resulted from a series of public workshops and public meetings. He stated those public meetings and sessions at Parson last year is the reason the plan is what it is today. He also commented the plan being shown is not subjective to putting money out today. He stated the plan allows for responsible things to happen. He spoke of the hope of creating a wonderful park for all to enjoy today and in the future. He also spoke of the good that came out of this study and that being the mitigation project to be done by the utility company. He explained he would walk through each phase of the plans and that it was important to note that it was set up in three phases, the first being environmental, the second phase, upgrades to the existing facilities and the third phase being a greater vision for the park in the future. He spoke of cost, which is always a concern and noted the plan still needed to go through all the proper channels. He continued with his explanation of the phases.

Chairman Lofthouse thanked Mr. Sorge for his presentation that concluded the presentation portion of the open house. He invited the public to come forward and take a closer look at the maps and ask questions of those present.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K.Huber
Committee Secretary