

**EISENHOWER PARK STUDY COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE MEETING
NOVEMBER 21, 2006**

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

Excused: L. Hurwitz

Also Present: G. Sorge, Vollmer Associates

Vice Chairman M. Lofthouse called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Vice Chairman Lofthouse stated with the recent resignation of Mr. Agro the Committee would need to elect a new Vice Chairman and he as the current Vice Chairman would fill the role of Chairman. He stated he would entertain a motion to elect a Vice Chairman and as the Committee to consider Mrs. Casey-Piscitelli.

Mrs. Daniels and Mr. Wing moved to nominate Mrs. Casey-Piscitelli as Vice Chairman. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Lofthouse spoke briefly regarding the property purchase on Orange Avenue.

Mr. Sorge reported he had been informed the City had purchased property the property and that it was an opportunity to consolidate recreation fields, which may have been one of the considerations in making this purchase. He spoke of some of the issues brought forward by the public, i.e. current facilities, field maintenance (critical mass of fields) location of current fields and potentially moving fields to the orange Avenue location to accomplish critical mass.

Proposed Overlays

Mr. Sorge displayed a “rough” draft of the proposed overlays. He gave a lengthy description of each of the proposed overlays and that the optimum goal was efficiency. He stated he also had an opportunity to reconfigure the parking as well as increase the amount of area available for soccer. He discussed the entrances in the central area between the soccer/garden and configuration potentials. He stated the community gardens would remain possible with expansion toward North Street. He also spoke of the passive uses of the gardens, play area, the slope and reiterated it would not displace the gardens and that there was the potential to expand. He also spoke of a possible designated user parking area to avoid over paving and discussed the efficient uses and the critical corridor of uninterrupted areas. He also spoke regarding the restroom facilities.

Chairman Lofthouse asked about the possibility of other surfaces rather than asphalt such as stone dust.

Mr. Sorge stated if it is not paved there is the potential to lose efficiency.

Mr. Sorge continued with the overlays and spoke of the maintenance structures.

Chairman Lofthouse asked what type of equipment they would have for maintenance.

Mr. Sorge stated he anticipated smaller equipment such as mowers, etc.

Mr. Sorge spoke regarding the West River area, the equestrian ring and that it was still proposed larger, also a loop around the ring and trailer parking. He stated the visible use allows access to the upper meadow with a potential for a sledding hill in the plan.

Mr. Wing asked about parking for the gardeners and if it was still reasonable.

Mrs. Daniels asked about shared parking.

Chairman Lofthouse asked if the soccer fields could accommodate different size fields.

Mr. Sorge stated in that area he anticipated 90-100 parking spaces as well as a smaller usage area.

Chairman Lofthouse noted that sometimes there can be as many as 30 plus cars per game.

Mr. Sorge stated the overflow could use other parking areas that are for shared uses.

Chairman Lofthouse stated it would be a big plus as well as the bathrooms.

Mr. Wing asked about the overlay for the softball fit on the Orange Avenue site.

Mr. Sorge replied he has not looked at it or been shown it as yet. He continued with his presentation and spoke briefly regarding the restrooms and how nice it would be to finally have working facilities.

Mr. Wing asked about the equestrian rings and asked if it was still the thought to have two rings one of which would be used as a warm up.

Mr. Sorge replied they are looking at phasing.

Chairman Lofthouse invited those in attendance to look at the plan and explained some of the changes. He spoke of the youth softball fields and also stated the existing fields would be renovated.

Mr. Wing spoke as to the question of an independent study being conducted and stated there could be some validity to that.

Mr. Sorge continued with the overlays. He explained the “green lines” which he stated represented the work that could happen in Phase I which would include removal of invasive plants, work on the trails, etc. all of which could be very passive. He stated the bridge is also in need of repair. He stated much of the work in the “green phase” is items that could grant worthy. He also spoke of the wetland creation and the flying fields as

well as the soil, which is in poor condition. He stated the wildflower area is really not a wildflower area as people think.

Mr. Wing asked the significance of the “dash lines”.

Mr. Sorge replied they were things that can be funded by other sources such as grants, etc. Mr. Sorge continued with his explanation of Phase II (yellow). He stated when funds become available other things could happen such as renovation of the fields, organization of parking, possibly a new playground, landscaping, and the community garden upgrades. He stated these could also include the banks of the pond and new equestrian upgrades.

Chairman Lofthouse commented with the idea of phasing it was important to look at the environmental aspects.

Mr. Sorge spoke of some of the work that could be done through community resources, such as the boy scouts.

Chairman Lofthouse noted that until there was a plan in place they could not proceed with these types of organizations but referred the work to that of a future roadmap.

Mr. Sorge noted that previously they had not submitted a phase-in plan and that some of items talked of could actually be as long as 15 years down the road.

Mr. Wing stated the charge of this Committee is to come up with a physical plan that meets with the projected needs of the entire City.

Chairman Lofthouse spoke of the priorities and spoke of the damage and neglect in the park and that it was their goal to see this park gets the attention it needs.

Mr. Wing commended Mr. Sorge and the work Vollmer and Associates have done. He stated they had done an excellent job with the changes. He also stated he was pleased with the acquisition of the other property. He stated he sensed they were ready to ask Mr. Sorge and Associates to re-shuffle and between him and this Committee report to the Mayor with an outline. He also spoke of the necessity of having program information i.e. field and sports usage for those who wish to look at it.

Mr. Sorge spoke of the revised plan and that it was based on the recent happenings. He stated that Phase I and Phase II both make sense but that it is Phase III that raises the issues. He explained the importance of letting people see the phases and how they got to this point. He also stated it was important to know how things will fit and where they will go. He also stated the financial aspects of Phase III would have to be thought out by the other Boards in the City, i.e. Board of Aldermen, etc.

Chairman Lofthouse stated it was important to look at the big picture and how to accommodate for the future and commented you can't just jump in without a plan. He referenced it to planning a road trip.

Mr. Wing spoke of the work of the Committee relative to their charge and the need for another “open house” possibly early in the new year. He stated there would need to be discussions with the Mayor as to whether these next steps are doable and also the timing of the next public session.

Mr. Sorge spoke of the final map with color image as well as showing the progression with Phase I and Phase II dropping into the background and finally Phase III and what they mean. He stated they would focus their attention on Phase I.

Chairman Lofthouse stated it would be appropriate for the Committee to meet in December prior to a public hearing in January. He also concurred with the open house format and stated possibly they could break out into smaller groups. He also commented the existing facilities should be better than they are now and that the gardeners should not have to use a plastic outhouse. He noted many times the bathrooms are locked and that when they are left open they get destroyed.

Mr. Sorge spoke of the bridges that someday would become impassable if the work is not done and that currently some areas are beyond maintenance.

Chairman Lofthouse stated the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, December 18, 2006 at 7:00 p.m.

Being no further business to discuss the Committee adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber
Committee Secretary