

**EISENHOWER PARK STUDY COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 18, 2006**

MEMBERS PRESENT

M. Lofthouse

S. Wing

S. Daniels

J. Casey-Piscitelli

Excused

L. Hurwitz

Also Present: G. Sorge, Vollmer Associates

Chairman M. Lofthouse called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Minutes of the November 21, 2006 meeting

Mr. Wing and Mrs. Casey-Piscitelli moved to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2006 meeting with the following corrections:

Page 1, 1st paragraph, last sentence should read “to elect a Vice Harman and *asked* the”

Page 1, last paragraph, first sentence should read “of the proposed overlays for *revisions to the park*”.

Page 2, paragraph 13 should read “for the softball *field*”.

Page 2, paragraph 18 should read “independent study *of ball field utilization citywide*”.

Page 3, paragraph 10, Mr. Wing noted he was referring to the report preparation.

Motion carried unanimously.

Updates

Chairman Lofthouse deferred to Mr. Sorge.

Mr. Sorge recapped their last meeting where they discussed they discussed a phasing plan with 4 exhibits with an anticipated open house in January.

Phase I – Mr. Sorge outlined the areas per their discussions and meeting with the Mayor. He explained the soft side included the green, river corridor improvements wetland enhancements, etc. and that it did not include the right of way. He continued with a detailed explanation of Phase I and stated this phase is flexible and can happen at any time. He also stated it could be done with volunteer groups.

Chairman Lofthouse commented they would need some direction and that the trails are in accordance with how they are engineered.

Mr. Sorge emphasized the perimeter and areas that would have to be secured.

Phase II – Mr. Sorge stated this included the renovations of Foot Field, the creation of the dog field. He also commented regarding the lighting changes, spoke of the fairgrounds where events are held, the portable military

bridge back there. He spoke of the possibility of putting something permanent there. He talked of the riverbank and it's importance. He stated there is no timeframe however the plans seem to make sense. He explained the renovations to the soccer field, which would include making it slightly wider and the community gardens that are the same with some possibility of expansion. He also spoke of the parking that will be dedicated for soccer but could also be used for the gardens.

Chairman Lofthouse mentioned the model airplane flyers, which may change to electrical at sometime in the future and asked if the electrical lines could be run through to a box for power for them.

Mr. Sorge stated he did not think it would be a problem. He continued with his explanation and spoke of the playground to be restored, a storage building, a hill, which could possibly be a sledding hill and enhancing the perimeter by removing the evasive plants.

Mr. Wing pointed out parking in Phase II and asked if it would stay the same at this time until Phase III comes into play.

Phase III – Mr. Sorge spoke of re-creating the campground and connections to Fowler Field and the possibility of bridges in the future. He also spoke of the possibility of a spray park in the future, if it makes sense, creating open space with some type of café and a trail connection to the south meadow. He also spoke of the wetlands work with connection to West River Street and the connection to North Street.

Chairman Lofthouse asked if as part of the phasing the riverbank, dams, etc would they get costs and would it be from the Army Corp of Engineers.

Mr. Sorge stated the grants are out there and that they have identified some of them. He stated the initial grassroots work could be done on the local level with volunteers. He stated Phase II is an upgrade of facilities that are in the park already and that they are committee to upgrading those things. Phase III would be moving forward progressively.

Chairman Lofthouse commented how at the state level they are having trouble with funding for our state parks and getting it in place and have had to outsource.

Mr. Wing noted that per capita in our State we are ranked 47th in state park spending.

Chairman Lofthouse stated no funding has ever been applied to this park previously. He also stated he has received calls from scout troops interested in helping out. A brief discussion ensued.

Ms. Daniels commented the phasing of the project helps to understand what will happen in the park and that it is no so overwhelming.

Mrs. Casey-Piscitelli asked if the dam was proposed to be a bi-way for emergency vehicles.

Mr. Sorge replied yes and that it would also be used for maintenance vehicles as well.

Chairman Lofthouse added it would be used by the Police Department for security.

Mr. Wing commented regarding the security aspect and stated it should be highlighted.

Mr. Sorge spoke of having a swing gate there where it could be opened and then closed/locked.

Chairman Lofthouse spoke of a meeting he attended concerning the power lines with the U.I. present as well as Inland/Wetlands, Planning and Zoning, attorneys. He stated he picked up data regarding the Wetland Mitigation Plan in the South corridor and that they seemed to be focused to do this in Milford.

Ms. Daniels asked the timetable.

Mr. Sorge replied he expected permitting in a few months.

Chairman Lofthouse stated he would entertain a motion to accept.

Mr. Sorge interjected and explained the utility has affected 2.3 or 2.4 acres that they want to replace and spoke of the temporal affect. He explained they approached the town with an area that could be replaced. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Sorge added they still have to go through the various Boards and Commissions.

Chairman Lofthouse commented although they really need to approve it in speaking with the City Attorney it was thought it would be important that the Committee review it and comment on it. He stated he would entertain a motion to accept the UI wetland mitigation plan. He also noted the airplane field could still continue and would not be affected.

Mr. Wing asked who was doing the technical work.

Mr. Sorge replied it is through an environmental firm.

Chairman Lofthouse explained Mr. Sorge and Mr. Agro, Jr. were at the table a very long time ago with this. He explained this came about sometime ago in discussions regarding utility poles.

Mr. Wing asked about the river circle and if there is a change between the river water and the water storm.

Mr. Sorge stated it could be every two years.

Mrs. J. Casey-Piscitelli and Mrs. S. Daniels moved to support the finding of CL&P regarding the Wetland Mitigation Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion: Open House

Mr. Sorge stated he would have the existing map and condition. He stated after that he would deliver a final report and a synopsis of all the Committee has done. He also stated they have responded to things that have been addressed.

Chairman Lofthouse commented regarding one of the concerns being the cost but noted how do you do it without a plan. He stated Phase III is the part that makes this part self-sufficient and gives the perpetuity. A brief discussion ensued.

Mrs. Daniels spoke of the importance of understanding the phasing adding the final plan can be overwhelming.

Mr. Sorge stated Phase I and Phase II need to happen and should be factored into the capital improvement for the City.

Chairman Lofthouse stated they would look at January 23, 2007 for the open house with a snow date of January 24, 2007. He stated if those dates were not available at City Hall then he would look at January 30, 2007 with a snow date of January 21, 2007.

Mr. Wing asked the format of the open house and if it would be like the last two or like the one held in the auditorium.

Mr. Sorge responded it would be like neither of those and that he would see it as walking around looking at the Phases with the possibility of a slide show.

Mr. Wing suggested it would be helpful to have a recap as to the progress and compare this re-shifting of the master plan as compared to the plan of the Preferred Alternative.

Chairman Lofthouse added he would check the availability of Bob Jontos. He also added nothing new has been added regarding the sports fields.

Mr. Sorge concurred stating it was only upgrading of the facilities.

Chairman Lofthouse stated he would have Bill McCarthy from the Recreation Department as well as Mary Rose Palumbo from the Inland Wetlands Office.

Mr. Wing commented there are two groups in town with experience in remediation and removal of evasive plants.

Chairman Lofthouse stated he would check into it.

Being no further business to discuss the Committee adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber
Committee Secretary