Errol Heights Park
Community Advisory Committee
Wednesday, July 18, 2018, 6:30pm – 8:50pm
Portland Community College, Southeast Campus, Mt. Tabor Hall, #146

Meeting Outcomes/Goals:
This was the third meeting of the Errol Heights Park’s Community Advisory Committee. The focus of the meeting was to have the committee review and refine the two design concepts presented by Mayer|Reed. Comments from the committee will be incorporated into the design concepts and park programming and presented at the September Open House for public input.

MEETING SUMMARY

Committee members in attendance:
Joshua Freeman, Pamela Hodge, Adrienne Moat, Michael Riley, Fon Zhang, Caryn Indigo Corwin, Erich Pacheco and Karl Lee.
Absent: Gillian Murr, Anne Hettick, Paul Ciri, Jennon Rugg and Brett Bolstad
Staff present: Christine Egan, George Lozovoy, Christian Haaning, Laura Niemi, Shawn Lindsay and Karen Aker (PP&R) and Ali Young (BES)
Consultants: Carol Mayer Reed, Ryan Carlson, Emily Kuo

Christine Egan (PP&R) welcomed everyone and invited CAC members to grab dinner. She led a round of introductions with everyone present in the meeting – including other city staff and members of the public. The CAC was asked to share responses to ‘What is your favorite playground area in Portland?’

• Play area at West Moreland Park (4)
• Mt. Tabor playground with walkways and tall trees (2)
• Washington Park playground area
• Salmon Springs, fountain and natural features
• Pier Park in North Portland/St. John’s area
• Nature parks in Japan

Review Agenda
Christine reviewed the meeting agenda

Public Comment
Three people provided public comment at the meeting and provided their affiliations:
• Terri Parkin: Errol Heights neighbor
• Gail Kiehly: Neighbor and member of the advisory committee for the 2005 Master Plan
• Paul Tourville: neighbor and Errol Heights community gardener

CAC discussion following public comment:
• **Erich Pacheco:** I noticed that the Errol Heights community gardeners have been regularly attending the meetings and continue to raise same concerns regarding the road alignment.

• **Fon Zhang:** I have noticed that as well and have concerns about moving forward with park planning while there is still controversy about City’s decisions to realign Tenino Court.

• **Karl Lee:** Many people feel like the CAC doesn’t have enough info about neighborhood need and future users and may not be prepared to make decisions re park.

Christine recommended that CAC members take time to do their own research, beginning with reviewing the provided *Errol Heights Park and Community Garden FAQ* handout that has been provided at each of the CAC meetings. It outlines the City’s policies, criteria and decision earlier this year re street alignment. She also suggested that CAC members talk directly with PBOT staff and gardeners to better understand the issue and reach their own conclusions. Christine committed to provide CAC members a PBOT contact name following the meeting. She also noted that information regarding current demographics of the neighborhood was provided at the last CAC meeting, and is now in the CAC online project folder for everyone to review.

She also informed CAC members that PP&R and PBOT staff are presenting and discussing the park and road improvement projects with the Brentwood Darlington Neighborhood Association on **August 21, at 7 pm at the Brentwood Darlington Community Center (7211 SE 62nd Avenue)**. She strongly encouraged CAC members to attend if they are able.

**Project Budget Overview**

Project Manager George Lozovoy presented a budget overview and passed out a handout sheet to the committee outlining hard costs, soft costs, LID costs and total project budget ($5.3 million), which is the total amount of money available to design and build the park and street frontage. The park improvement budget (hard costs) is $1,170,000. This is the budget available for park improvements. This is the dollar amount the cost estimate for the final design must meet. The park improvement budget makes up a portion of the Hard Costs. Hard costs include general contractor overhead and profit, construction including play equipment, community, garden, electrical service, water meters, etc. – specifically materials and labor costs. George then responded to CAC questions:

• **Pam Hodge:** Could we have a detailed itemized list of costs for different park amenities?
  o **George:** Yes, but not at this time. We must be careful not to get ahead of ourselves. We first need to settle on a plan for what we need for the park, then look at the costs. Those costs can fluctuate quite a bit over a short period of time. Consequently, what I might quote today, will change quickly in a short amount of time. For example, currently labor costs are exceptionally high due to the amount of construction going on in our City. At this point in the design process we should focus on what improvements are best for the park and not costs.

• **Pam:** Does this budget estimate reference costs listed for planned alignment for Tenino Court?
  o **George:** Yes, but design and construction are lumped together because PBOT did not break them out.
Hybrid Park Primer

George presented the Nature People Experiences approach to better understand PP&R’s overarching framework for integrating the bureau’s three-mission areas – recreation programs, developed parks, and natural resource protection. He handed out a graphic representing a spectrum of park settings, using existing Portland parks as examples for each. On one end of the spectrum is “Nature-Nature”, and on the other end is “People-People.” In the middle is “Nature-People.”

He explained that Forest Park is an example of the “Nature-Nature” setting, where the primary goal is to protect the City’s ecological health and diversity of wildlife and native plants. These areas provide nature-based recreation, such as walking, and people can have access through volunteering to restore habitat or using the site to learn about nature.

Gabriel park and South Park Blocks represent a People-Nature or Nature-People setting. These hybrid parks are important for linking people with the natural environment in contrast to the surrounding urban environment. Vegetation is dominant, creating opportunities to see wildlife, smell fragrant flowers, hear leaves rustling and mark the natural progression of the seasons. These type of hybrid parks have decreased in size as property values have increased and may be compromised if there is not enough buffer from the more people-oriented parts of the park.

On the other side of the spectrum would be Pioneer Courthouse Square representing a “People-People” setting. These are highly developed “urban” settings, where recreation is primarily social, and the main motivation is interaction with others. People come to these settings either with friends or family or as part of a group such as a team or club. Examples include community centers, pools and fields for competitive sports. People settings are in high demand across the City. Play areas are also popular – where families often visit playgrounds daily, weekly or monthly. While these parks may not be wild or even dramatic, these experiences become significant parts of people’s lives and their sense of attachment and belonging to their communities.

Questions and answers with the CAC:

- **Fon Zhang:** Would a soccer field be in a people-centric park? None of the listed parks on George’s handout have soccer fields. Which parks have soccer and nature?
- **Christian Haaning/PP&R:** Westmoreland Park is a hybrid park having soccer, baseball and a natural area.
- **Karl Lee:** West Moreland Park is an example of a park evolving into a hybrid park when it was originally a “People-People” developed park. Natural features were added later.
- **Pam Hodge:** Would Errol Heights qualify as a hybrid park if it had a community garden and a natural area?
Say Our Name! Neighborhood Assessment and Action Plan

To respond to the CAC’s repeated requests to better understand what local neighbors, kids and residents within the Brentwood Darlington neighborhood would want / need for this new park, George reminded the CAC about the Say Our Name! Neighborhood Assessment and Action Plan, which was published in 2017 by the City of Portland’s Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, and developed by team of PSU Master of Urban Planning Students. The team of six graduate students interviewed and conducted focus groups with various stakeholders in the Brentwood Darlington Neighborhood to assess how “livability and housing stability for the people of Brentwood-Darlington can be increased, and what do neighbors feel are the most pressing challenges.” The intended audiences for the final report are city agencies that will be responsible for the large-scale capital improvement projects and engaged neighborhood residents who will be the steadfast advocates driving the direction of Brentwood-Darlington’s evolution.

George explained that the youth focus groups (page 101) with students from Woodmere and Whitman elementary schools (3rd-5th grade) were asked to “share their desired amenities for their local parks.” The first focus group, which included students from the Woodmere Leadership Class, identified “water play features, fun/creative playground equipment, as well as opportunities for science lessons and sports programming.” The second youth focus group included 4th and 5th grade students and they “hoped for a skateboard park, water features, and a nature playground” for their local outdoor parks.

The adults interviewed noted lack of park programming children’s’ activities and youth sports. Questions from the CAC:

- **Fon Zhang**: After the last CAC meeting, I went over to the Errol Heights park. I was amazed to see the amount of natural beauty already there. I took my family there the next weekend; it was so beautiful. As we grow denser as a city, we need these types of spaces more and more. A soccer field limits what you can do with the area. It feels silly to take away the beauty and to put something in that only gets used some of the time.

- **Adrienne Moat**: The draw of natural spaces is what has drawn people to Portland. Where in the budget would maintenance come from to take care of a soccer field? I tend to agree with what Fon said. [Adrienne then shared a map showing where other soccer fields and baseball fields are located as they relate geographically to Errol Heights in distance.]

- **George**: Operations and maintenance funding comes from the City’s General Fund, not from project funding.

- **Pam Hodge**: I read somewhere that soccer is declining nationwide. [Following the meeting, Pam shared New York Times article entitled: Youth Soccer Participation Has Fallen Significantly in America. Christine shared the story with the CAC via email.]

- **Shawn Lindsay/PP&R**: Soccer participation in Portland is continues to increase. Portland is often referred to as “Soccer City USA.” An immigrant and refugee program sponsored by PP&R called New Portlanders World Cup Soccer Tournament has tripled in participation this year. Soccer fields are also open space to do other types of outside activities – kickball, frisbee, baseball, tag, etc. Not just soccer.
• **Indigo Corwin**: As someone who takes her middle school students to the Errol Heights park and the flat areas, my students need somewhere to run and play – where they won’t trip. A mowed lawn would work perfectly.
• **Shawn Lindsay**: A soccer field can be small, not the huge fields some of you may be thinking of.
• **Fon**: So many baseball fields and baseball participation is declining.

**Review Conceptual Designs and Park Programming with Mayer Reed**

Christine split the CAC into two groups. Ryan facilitated Group 1; Emily facilitated Group 2; Carol floated between the groups. To start the small group exercise, Carol presented a topography map to illustrate how steep the drop off is between the flat area and the natural areas below. Ryan explained that the existing trail through the natural areas is delineated by dark line.

Erich Pacheco asked if there were trails in the upper area of the site to the east. He said that he had tried to walk it with his wife. Various members of the CAC responded to Erich’s question noting that the drop off between the upper land and lower lands is so steep that a trail is not feasible at this time.

**“Inclusive Play” and “Nature Play” Briefing by Mayer Reed**

Prior to beginning the small group work, Mayer Reed presented display boards illustrating the concept of “inclusive play”, which is an idea many CAC members have expressed interest in both in and outside of CAC meetings. Carol explained that the idea of inclusive play to provide an enriching play area for kids of all abilities. This may mean that a play area includes accessible ramps, elevated sand tables, merry go-rounds lower to the ground, or splash pads, for example. It includes providing a secured area and shared spaces.
Ryan with Mayer Reed presented the concept of “nature play,” which focuses on the theme of nature in the design of playground/areas. It usually includes elements that provide children a tactile experience, such as sand boxes, building materials, natural shelters, climbing areas and spaces that encourage interaction and scientific exploration. Other elements would include logs or stumps for balancing and multi-sensory environments. He underscored that “inclusive play areas” and “nature play areas” are not mutually exclusive; they can be combined – and often are. Everyone’s favorite park – Westmoreland Park – is a good example.

Carol explained that Mayer Reed will use these images depicting inclusive play and nature play at the upcoming Open House (September 8) to solicit public input regarding what type of playground people might want to have at Errol Heights.

Questions:
- **Erich Pacheco**: I love the idea of having a playground for kids. I have a small child. What about spaces for seniors?
- **Terri Parkin (member of the public)**: This feels like a tarantula of a plan, too much going on.
- **Carol Mayer Reed**: No one is talking about tree removal. This flat developable area is not huge. We heard people were very interested in preserving the natural area and natural features.

**Small Work Group: Reviewing Conceptual Designs and Programming**

Carol had each group review two conceptual designs. The first would be a natural/nature focused design (“low key”) and the second would be a people-focused/active play design. Mayer Reed reminded everyone that although the entire park is 16-acres, only 3-acres in the upper plateau is developable, which “really isn’t much space to do a lot.” Both groups will have a chance to review both designs.

- **Group A with Ryan**: Pam, Adrienne, Erich and Mike
- **Group B with Emily**: Josh, Fon, Karl and Indigo

The nature-focused design provided natural play area that would be adaptable to existing trees, tree canopy, bark chips and outdoor classrooms. The play area would not be huge as the equipment is often expensive. There are picnic shelters but no soccer field.
The people-focused design looks closely at carrying capacity of the flat area for active play. The concept suggests a community gathering space or a pollinator garden on the Tenino Court parcel.

**Comments/Questions in the small groups:**

- **Josh Freeman**: Sitting/picnic areas are dispersed around the site.
- **Fon**: Instead of just one play area, can we move play area elements around the site?
- **Karl Lee**: Once you are down by the wetlands, here is not where to go. So maybe we should not put playground equipment in natural wetland areas?
- **Indigo**: What about bathrooms? Is it possible that this part of the garden can be moved around, and not move the garden from the isolated parcel?
- **Karl**: There is a huge benefit to keeping the garden altogether and for families and their kids on the main park land.
- **Carol**: Would community gardeners maintain this isolated parcel as a common orchard?
- **Fon**: At the Brentwood Community Garden, we have an open common area berry patch for kids to pick and eat berries.
- **Karl**: Brentwood Garden is a great model, especially the educational component.
- **Fon**: Taking care of the orchard could be part of the gardeners’ responsibility and open for other members of the public to enjoy.
- **Josh**: I live a couple blocks from the garden, and I haven’t seen huge groups of gardeners at the site.
- **Indigo**: What is the lowest cost to make the flexible field useful for kids and a low-cost soccer field?
- **Ali Young/BES**: Reach out to Precision Castparts regarding any employee recreational/physical fitness programs. Get their two cents on the park uses. Could do this at Open House in September, or through a survey.
- **Karl**: I want to understand walls around soccer field, basketball. What about the money – cost perspective to do this?
- **Indigo**: Tanner Springs is nice because it has a natural sitting area where adults can relax and/or watch their kids play.
- **Emily/Mayer Reed**: Soccer field 60 x 90 feet dimensions. If you add the 20-foot runoff border on all sides, it becomes 100 x 130 feet.
- **Karl**: I have concerns about tree removal on downhill side of the garden. There are oak trees planted in that area.
- **Fon**: I prefer to keep park as minimal as possible.

**Reporting Out – Small Groups**

**Group 1/Ryan (Pam, Adrienne, Erich and Mike):**

- Didn’t discuss the Active Play/People-focused scheme much. Focused on taking things out of that scheme.
• Looked mostly on the Nature-scheme.
• Liked the idea of using logs and other natural features for amenities and creating opportunities to “ramble along the trails.”
• People highlighted the need to make sure trails are ADA accessible.
• Want to preserve existing trees
• Liked the idea of a flexible field – but not a programmable field. [Per Erich, there was a lot of discussion re soccer field vs. flexible field]
• Suggest a picnic area be located where the old substation is.
• Make sure community garden has enough sun.

Group 2/Emily (Josh, Fon, Karl and Indigo):

• Group focused mostly on nature-scheme.
• Group acknowledged that a soccer field doesn’t have to be huge, or have huge goals, but more for little kids to run around. It doesn’t even need the definition of a field.
• Make sure there are amenities and space for kids to play and for families to hang outside.
• Play area that blends with the natural surroundings
• Supports inclusive play concepts

Group Discussion about concepts and next steps

Carol Mayer Reed: Is it good to test both schemes at the open house with the broader community or narrow it down to one?

Fon: Or can we do a hybrid of the two? Or one more nature focused?

Pam: You are hearing from others too that we represent.

Indigo: Could we do a survey to hear from more voices in the community. Perhaps a postcard to hear from more people?

Erich: I second Indigo’s idea. My neighbors asked about providing input?
Christine: The goals of the upcoming Open House event on September 8, scheduled from 10am to 1 pm, is to solicit input from the broader Errol Heights community (including neighbors in Brentwood Darlington, Woodstock and Ardenwald Johnson Creek neighborhoods). We could launch a survey to coincide with the Open House, if we were able to collect input that would be useful to Mayer Reed and PP&R. For example, could we provide enough background information in the survey instrument so that a respondent was able to provide informed input, while also keeping the survey short enough (brief) so that people are willing to take the time to review the maps and background info and respond to the questions.

Carol: We need to be purposeful in what type of input we really want and can use. Broad open-ended questions at this time may not be as helpful.

Christine: We will discuss this idea with Mayer Reed in August. If we conclude that we can do a survey to coincide with the Open House, we will let you know before we launch the survey. If possible, we will run the questions by you as our “test audience.” It is a great idea to expand the public input opportunities to others who may not be able to make it to the open house. But, we need to define what type of input would be helpful to the design process at this stage in planning and how to frame the questions in a survey.

Announcements:

- **Friday, August 10, 10:30 am**, tour of Errol Heights Park with Greg Archuleta, member of the [Native American Community Advisory Council](#) and Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde. CAC members, Gillian Murr and Adrienne Moat, will be joining Christine.
- **Saturday, August 18, 9 am to 12 noon**, Errol Heights Restoration Work Party sponsored by Johnson Creek Watershed Council and Friends of Errol Heights.
- **Tuesday, August 21, 7 pm**, PBOT and PP&R present Errol Heights Project Update at Brentwood Darlington Neighborhood Association meeting
- **Saturday, September 8, 10am – 1 pm**, Open House for Errol Heights Park Master Planning Project at Errol Heights, centered at the 52nd Avenue entrance
• Tentative for August/September: Project update with the Woodstock and Ardenwald Johnson Creek Watershed neighborhood associations
• Wednesday, October 10, 6:30 – 9:00 pm, 4th CAC meeting. Location TBD
• PP&R’s Errol Heights Park project website is slated to be updated soon. They are working on several projects these days... lots of grand openings! Thank you for your patience.
• If CAC members would like to learn more about the City’s decision to relocate and realign SE Tenino Court, please contact Elizabeth Mahon, PBOT at 503-823-0396. She knows I am passing her name and number onto CAC members for Errol Heights.

The meeting was closed at 9:15 pm.