



## Errol Heights Park

### Community Advisory Committee

Wednesday, January 9, 6:30pm – 8:00pm

SMILE Station, 8210 SE 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Portland, OR

## MEETING SUMMARY

### MEETING OUTCOMES/GOALS

This was the seventh meeting of the Errol Heights Park's Community Advisory Committee. The focus of the meeting was to review feedback from the December Open House, review a final park design concept, and wrap up the CAC process.

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Brett Bolstad, Caryn Indigo Corwin, Joshua Freeman, Pamela Hodge, Karl Lee, Adrienne Moat, Gillian Murr, Erich Pacheco, Michael Riley, Jennon Rugg, Anne Hettick

**Absent:** Paul Ciri, Fon Zhang

**Staff present:** George Lozovoy, Christian Haaning

**Consultants:** Ryan Carlson (Mayer/Reed), Emily Kuo (Mayer/Reed), Josh Mahar (JLA), Allison Brown (JLA)

### Welcome and Introduction

Allison Brown, JLA, welcomed the group and asked them to explain what inspired them about working on the CAC for this project. Answers included:

- *I joined to make things more accessible. As my child has passed away, being a part of this process and moving through it has been really important to me.*
- *I am extremely grateful for funding, helped me focus more on greenspace for 'hood. It is making me think about a broader plan for greenspace in our neighborhood.*
- *I enjoyed the process.*
- *I enjoyed meeting my neighbors that I didn't know. Enjoyed the transparency.*
- *It is a special place and I feel good that we've all been part of making it even better. Glad we all came together to reach common ground.*
- *Love spending time just thinking about how to make this space better. Enjoyed all my interactions and being able to represent well my garden folks.*
- *Good learning opportunity for understanding how decisions are made and how tax dollars are spent. Also, learned a lot about the views and perspectives of people in my neighborhood.*
- *Appreciate being part of the process and meeting people.*
- *Appreciate balance between CAC meetings and public events. Lots of lenses and neat seeing so many people invested.*
- *Hearing what others said and think about is really good. Things I wouldn't think or ask. Glad to get a glimpse into how all this happen.*
- *Good learning experience, first time I've done something like this.*



From staff/consultant team

- *Ryan: So much effort put in by the group, so glad to have people care.*
- *Emily: And thanks for showing up!*
- *George: This is unique for me. Valuable to see everyone getting involved.*

Allison then reviewed the meeting agenda with the committee.

## Public Comment

Four members of the public provided comment at the meeting. The following is a summary of those comments:

- The park is exactly what I imagined it would be. It is fabulous!
- I have a 1-year-old and a 5-year-old and I'm just excited about this for my kids. They are always asking me when it will be finished.
- Paul Ciri from Friends of Errol Heights is not here, but his group is currently doing some maintenance in natural area, pulling weeds, etc. They are in the process of talking about how this group will function moving forward with new park. Meetings are on 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday at park, all are welcome.
- Very concerned about homelessness. Don't want this to become a \$12 million homeless camp.
  - George: At PP&R we see that when we develop a park, more people are there, fewer homelessness.
  - CAC member: We talked a lot about this issue in previous meetings. We did our best to make sure there were lines of sight, good signage, location of the loo. Etc. No more garage.
  - CAC member: There were previous discussions about CCTV use. They would like that discussion to continue. George responded that we use this in PP&R indoor buildings, but not really parks. It hasn't been feasible in the past.
  - CAC member: There is an unfortunate movement toward criminalizing homelessness. They cautioned the community that we shouldn't go down that path and realize that many of these people need help and our support.

## General Project Updates

George Lozovoy, Portland Parks & Recreation, provided a few updates regarding the park and surrounding projects.

### Tenino Court Closure

PP&R has applied to PBOT to get a permit to close this street to vehicles. PBOT cannot vacate the street and give it to PP&R, but City Council can pass an ordinance for Parks to control the street, so it can be closed to public at night along with the rest of the park.

PP&R and Consultants were able to exceed the 60% minimum for informing neighbors about the closure.

### **Tenino LID**

The LID project is moving forward to add sidewalks and pave streets in the area surrounding the park. This will probably have some impacts on trees because of addition of grading and retaining walls, particularly in the part of Tenino Drive near SE 45th. There is talk of salvaging the trees that are coming down from that process and using them as part of the play area.

### **Interpretation**

PP&R will coordinate with the City's Office of Government Relations before doing a more robust outreach and engagement with native communities for site interpretation. The project team will be asking for input from Office of Government Relations on a good process to use as part of the focus group engagement. Want to make sure it is done in the best way possible.

## **Summary of Feedback from Survey and Open House**

Ryan Carlson and Emily Kuo from Mayer|Reed provided a summary of the feedback from the open house and online survey. They first went through just the logistics about what we did to solicit feedback and what we got. Then they highlighted some of the most preferred images:

- Top images for natural area: nature trail, pollinator garden
- Top images for play area: hollow log, natural splash pad
- Top images for art: hidey trees, stone path
- Top images for activities: accessible sloped trails, bird habitat
- Park Themes: The themes won't be overt, but something that just ties it together.
  - Not a surprise that "wildlife family" and "the woods" were at the top.

They indicated that a lot of the feedback supported what has been heard already and the influences on the existing park design.

The survey confirmed that one of the biggest challenges is balancing protecting and maintaining the natural area and supporting new activities, which they noted was a constant tension that the team is working hard to balance.

Safety is an existing challenge but we are doing what we can.

Overall the outreach data suggests that there is a lot of approval with how the park design is satisfying community goals.

### **A CAC member asked how PP&R will decide how much money goes to each park element?**

That is something design team is working on right now. Some elements are just inherently expensive. Park staff also needs to review designs to understand the long-term maintenance issues. Things like quality of materials will determine longevity. The switchback trail and the staircase are likely going to be the biggest investment. Steel stairs that would connect lower and upper is quite a feat. They would likely

have to be pre-manufactured and placed there with heavy machinery. The economic conditions also affect things. Concrete and steel are quite expensive at the moment. Also the soil is very poor which makes of these elements expensive and challenging.

- The committee took a straw poll to see if the switchback trail or stair was more important. Everyone said the switchback trail.

**A CAC member asked that if the current budget is not sufficient, can the neighborhood be notified and they could try and raise money? Possibly grant funding, fundraising, corporate sponsors.**

If we get to that point, we reserve the right to hold another meeting to reconvene about how we might move forward in such a situation.

## **Final Plan Design**

Ryan presented the final plan design and talked about some of the detailed changes since the open house.

### **Basketball court**

- It is still there, but we tried to reduce the impact that basketball court has on the surrounding environmental zones. Half court that tucks into the hillside and keeps balls from going into beaver area or street. We don't want it to stand out, but just fit into the park's natural area. It is located on the south end of the existing substation site. The basketball court will be green.
- Christian from PP&R noted that BES owns the carwash and plans to remove and do some culvert work there in the near future.
- **CAC member asked if there had been outreach to Nike about supporting the basketball court financially?** George said that was a possibility and would look into it.

### **Stronger park edge**

- We added fencing along the southern end, and other places to make people feel like it is taken care of and really help define the park.

### **May add overlook by the pond, not quite defined yet**

#### **Accessibility Improvements**

- We are trying to improve accessibility throughout the site. Currently not super accessible but it is tough due to the sloped site.
- We redefined the west entry with a new "court" and more accessibility.
- The team is working to strike a balance between maintaining natural features (not removing trees) and providing accessible areas.
- We relocated some of the educational areas to a more accessible zone and added an accessible overlook to this area.



### **There was a question about the plan for addressing good trees versus invasive trees?**

- There are quite a few invasive species along Tenino Court that are poor hawthornes and locusts that will be removed and will open things up and make it really nice.
- The current plan is to take out eight trees, some of which are invasive.
- We are also considering restoring some of the area near the picnic section with more native plantings and taking out the snowberry and blackberry which are very bushy. This will help open up sightlines.
- Christian noted that pruning could be used to maintain sightlines as well.

### **Easy entry**

- PBOT is showing a more formalized cul-de-sac at the pedestrian entry on the NE side. This could be a place for a few gardeners to park and carry things to garden.
- Not sure about how that will work yet. PBOT was talking about 'No Parking' signs but may include 30 minute parking signs instead and some handicap parking.

### **No more covered shelter**

- This feature is not included in the final design.

## **Questions and Discussion**

### **Will there be changes to the community garden?**

Current garden stays the same and not touching the existing fence. There will be a long grass meadow and pollinator garden right next to it. Two large shrubs are coming out.

### **Is the final design is available online?**

It will be made available online soon.

### **What types of plants will be included in the orchard?**

We will work with the Park's Community Garden program to determine the trees. They have said they will maintain it. We may also partner with or reach out to the Learning Lab, Portland Fruit Tree project, and Home Orchard society.

## **Project Next Steps**

George gave a summary about the next steps for the project.

We are going to have two focus groups focused on Interpretation and Play. Those meetings will probably happen in March or April. PP&R will send an email to CAC about that when more is known. CAC members signed up to stay informed about these meetings.

There was a discussion about how the CAC wanted to stay involved with the project moving forward since there are no more scheduled meetings. There was general agreement that emails are best. George

agreed that we will send out updates when the project is at 50% design/development then also at 50% construction documents. Also, he will notify the group if any major issues come up. Once more is known, the project timeline will be updated.

George mentioned that the dedication is a whole process in and of itself. PP&R will be reaching back out around then to get CAC member involved. This will probably be close to four months before the park opening.

## **Final Thoughts**

Allison asked for any final thoughts and comments.

CAC member mentioned that Brentwood Darling Neighborhood Association meetings take place on the first Thursday and are a great way to continue to stay involved in the project. All are welcome.

CAC member mentioned that at the beginning of everything it was highly contentious and that they are very happy to live in a city that actually listened to people and it's great this is happening, everyone getting what they wanted.

CAC member mentioned that garden is looking for more support and gardeners so spread the word for those interested.

Allison closed the meeting.