



## Euclid Square Park Community Meeting #1

Location: Oak Park Conservatory

Date: April 14, 2009

Time: 7pm

### Minutes of Meeting

Mr. Mike Grandy of the Park District made the introductions to the meeting.

Mr. Grandy welcomed the attendees and introduced Park District Commissioners, members of the Park District Citizen Committee and staff that were present. He stated that the Euclid Square Park Site planning process was the 11<sup>th</sup> park planning process undertaken by the Park District. There have been two focus groups held already where the design team received initial input on the current conditions of the park and neighborhood from Village Staff, Park District Staff and officials and members of local community organizations. Mr. Grandy then confirmed the schedule for the process as follows:

Community Meeting #1            Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Community Meeting #2           Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Community Meeting #3           Tuesday June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009

A 4<sup>th</sup> meeting would be held if necessary.

There would also be a Questionnaire posted on the Park District website and residents could contact the Park District through telephone, Emails and Mail.

Website            : <http://www.oakparkparks.com/>

Contact: Diane Stanke Email [dianes@oakparkparks.com](mailto:dianes@oakparkparks.com)

\$380,000 has been set aside for park improvements in the future.



He then introduced the design team and then handed the meeting over to John Mac Manus of Altamanu, Inc. who made a PowerPoint presentation and requested comments from the attendees. It should be noted that there were three residents in attendance. Mr. Mac Manus welcomed the attendees and there was a discussion as to why few residents attended. The feeling of the residents was that currently there were no grave issues affecting the park.

Mr. Mac Manus explained that the design team's role was to look at this park with the residents and see if the park and its elements are functioning well, if they are safe, do the elements work well together, are they in the right location, should they stay exactly where they are etc. and then to come up with a view of how this park should look 20 years from now.

Mr. Mac Manus began by encouraging a discussion of the neighborhood around the park in general, the relationship to Roosevelt Road and parking and traffic issues.

#### Public Comment on Traffic:

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What is the intersection at Oak Park and Fillmore like?

There are plenty of accidents that go on around there.

They switched it to a right turn only because people were trying to make it across Oak Park Avenue and they weren't making it.

It has been a real joy having the park so close, I live kitty corner from the play lot. You get a lot of foot traffic around the park.

That intersection is pretty busy; you get a lot of spill over traffic from Roosevelt coming parallel to Roosevelt, also going fairly fast i.e. along Fillmore.

The bushes are a little high near the tennis courts and make it a little difficult to see oncoming traffic at Wesley and Fillmore

The street is full of cars when there are games. They park right up by my house. But it is not bad.

In order for the residents to see the park in a different context John talked about the suggestion made by a member of the Roosevelt Rd Chamber of Commerce at a focus group meeting to open up the park to Roosevelt Road by removing the drive-through bank. It was agreed that it would completely change the character of the park and that the bank was a good buffer from Roosevelt Road.

#### Previous Park Designs

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The meeting then examined previous park designs for Euclid Square Park including the original design with a central entrance on Fillmore. This was replaced with tennis courts.

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### Current Condition of Trees

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Josephine Bellalta of Altamanu Inc. then made a presentation on the current condition of the trees. She stated that she had examined the trees with an arborist and with the Greening Advisory Committee. Unfortunately the news was not very good but then the park had not been examined in detail for a very long time.

The three major species in the park are evergreen Pines (southern end), Ash and Crabapples (flowering trees).

Many of the pines are in poor condition and some are already dead. Most of them are infested with borers and need treatment and will need replacement over time. They also have signs of *Diplodia* with dead, brown needles at the tips of the branches. Surveys indicate that no species of pine (*Pinus*) is immune to this disease, although some species are more severely affected than others. Austrian pine (*Pinus nigra*) is one of the most severely damaged species in Oak Park. Tip blight infection year after year can weaken and even kill large Austrian pine trees. It can be expected that some of these trees will have to be removed.

The Ash trees in the park have borers but we do not think at this time that they have Emerald Ash borers. They are exhibiting stunted growth in the last few years and overproducing seeds, which are both signals of distress. They also have a form of fungus with bark coming off in sections. Being weakened these trees will have less defense against the Emerald Ash borer which has been found in Oak Park. There is no cure once these trees get attacked and the Village and Park District policy is to remove them immediately on detection.

The crabs for the most part are old and tend to have lost some of their major stems. Many of these are coming to the end of their cycle and will need replacement.

Overall this park needs an upgrade in the trees and, no matter what occurs, quite a few of them will be lost in the future from disease and decay.

Then John led the group around the park with photographs in PowerPoint and encouraged comment.

### Public Comments on the Play Center:

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It's a nice little play area; this one is smaller so it attracts fewer people.

I like that you can always find a place in the shade to sit. (Large Honey Locusts)

My daughter thinks there are not enough swings.

I like the age range for this playground. It is a nice spot between the two play centers at Carroll Park.



Mike Grandy states that the Park District replaces the play equipment every 12-15 years and this one is 11 years old. This one will stay in good shape for another 5 years or so. We should build redesigning this into the phasing process.

John asks the public if the location of the play ground close to the corner and the traffic has ever concerned them.

No, I think it's far enough back from that spot, there's a fence, and it's nice that it's far away from the ball park too.

The playground is buffered right now from left field with the trees.

No one has ever had a problem with baseballs flying that far.

#### Public Comments on the Tennis Courts:

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Public uses the tennis courts after the schools are done, not really any conflict.

Commissioner Graves spoke about the Quick Start Program, a new initiative from USTA to make tennis easier for small children. It uses an AYSO approach by shrinking the court down, using smaller rackets and nets and big foam balls that are easier to hit and travel through the air slower. You can fit 24 kids on 4 courts and play doubles with your friends. The idea would be to organize teams for the parks (IE: Euclid, Maple) who would compete against each other.

Euclid is one of the bigger sites for tennis in the park district.

USTA will give you grants if you are developing 4 or more courts within the park. Therefore, we could potentially get a grant for Euclid.

Mike Grandy stated that the courts were resurfaced last year, the base underneath the asphalt however is getting pretty long in the tooth and has been sealed quite a few times. It is 30 years old.

April to November is the season for tennis.

The tennis courts are used as a dog park by some residents.

I don't care if dogs use the tennis courts as long as there is nobody playing tennis there.

Mike Grandy explains that the problem is that the acrylic coating is damaged by dog excrement. The resurfacing of the tennis court is \$ 4-6,000, and people running their dogs on the court exacerbate the erosion process.

I've seen dogs in the park in the winter but it doesn't bother anybody. It's completely fenced in and that makes me feel safe.

What if the courts had openings in the fence

If you don't entirely fence the tennis courts in you will have kids chasing after balls in the street and into the playground.

Maybe you should put up a sign at the tennis courts to deter people from using the tennis courts for their dogs and explain it costs tax payers money.



### Eastern Mounds and Drainage

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We use the mounds all the time for sledding, rolling, picnicking. Increasing the height of them would be wonderful for a sled hill.

Mike Grandy explains that there are 2 or 3 major drainage issues that plague us in this park. Most parks drain to the perimeter. This park drains to the interior.

One huge obstacle to using the inside of the park is that it's always in terrible shape..

Carah from Terra Engineering explains that we may have to raise the center of the park up to improve drainage.

We don't want any structures in the area of the outfield.

Are there species of trees that can be planted that will help with some of those drain issues that pull off some of the water.

John says many of the fast growing trees can help but they are weedy and are soft woods which make maintenance difficult for Mike.

But Walnut, Swamp White Oaks, and Bald Cypress like "wet feet"; we can certainly look into using those.

### Southern Mound & Ball Field

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A few homeless people like to camp out in those trees at the southern mound.

Not many though

We will speak with the local beat officer for his view.

Not really an issue.

I see it a couple times a week when I go past that way. It doesn't seem to be an overwhelming problem. They leave us alone.

Focus groups have suggested sculpting out an area for picnicking here (on the south) or something of that nature, any reaction to that?

I like that idea; it would also be a gathering spot for teams before and after games.

The ball field was rebuilt 8-10 years ago. The drainage is abysmal.

We would not like to draw a lot of attention to the south end from Roosevelt.

I believe the fence along the southern end belongs to the bank; we would have to check the survey in order to confirm that one way or the other.

The water drains to the center of the field and to the South West. It goes all over the paths. The catch basins get clogged with clay from the infield.

The south side has a whole area that is always muddy and wet.

Placement of the Port-a-Potties should be taken into account.

I think it's a good idea to discuss its location, since it will always be there during the baseball season and screen it somehow and not put it in the middle of the proposed picnic area.



That gets so much traffic in the summer and spring and the parking gets to be difficult down by the ball field. People will park the entire length of Euclid.

#### Path/Walkway Public Comment

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The path around the park gets used by children on tricycles or learning to ride their bikes. I always felt moving the path toward the street makes sense, so it doesn't crowd the open space.

Why are there sidewalks around the park in some places and not other places?

There is a lot of green space wasted between paths.

Some of the paths are in poor condition.

Josephine explains that 20' from the curb line is village property; the village will assume that is part of the park for the redesign. But they have been very good at working with the Park District and planting trees where needed in their right-of-way.

The paths at Euclid are in pretty rough shape, it would be so nice if the path was even bigger and if it could take you all the way around the park, using the sidewalk to the north.

Any issues of lighting in the park?

I never gave it any thought; it's pretty dark in there but it's a park at night.

Yes it is dark there at night; we've never had any problems with that. Teenagers hang out there (in the southern end) at night but that's everywhere in the parks.

As there were no further comments, John thanked the attendees and encouraged them to attend the next meeting.

Mr. Grandy encouraged the attendees to tell other residents and to please come back themselves as community participation is essential to the process. He then thanked all the attendees.

Minutes compiled by Julie Erkert Smith and checked by John Mac Manus of Altamanu Inc.