



Euclid Square Park Site Plan

Focus Group Meeting # 1

Participants: Buildings and Grounds, Safety and Security, PDOP Staff

Neil Adams, PM, PDOP(Park District of Oak Park)
Josephine Bellalta, Altamanu, Inc.
John Borland, Buildings and Grounds, PDOP
Tracy Brooker, Park District Citizen Committee
Ron Calloway, Risk Management, PDOP
Nancy Holmes, Memorial Trees, PDOP
John Mac Manus, Altamanu, Inc.
Bill McKenna, Village Engineer, VOP (Village of Oak Park)
Bob Foster, OP Resident and WSSRA
Jim Semelka, Forestry Supervisor, VOP
Henrietta Yardley, Greening Task Force, PDOP

**Location: Meeting held at Oak Park Conservatory
Garfield Blvd., Oak Park IL, 60304**

Date and Time: March 23, 2009, 1:00 pm

Introduction

Executive Director, Gary Balling described the project process to the meeting attendees. His comments included:

The park is approximately 3 acres in size,
Is one of the more active parks in the system
Will be exciting to see what design team and community comes up with and whether there will be substantial changes or not.

Gary talked about the process of selection; how Altamanu was selected to work on this park. He requested that the group be creative and bring out ideas and talk about strengths and weaknesses of the park.

John Mac Manus of Altamanu introduced the project in general and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Park setting and context:

Euclid is close to Roosevelt Road, a regional roadway and border with Berwyn. Is the park used by non neighborhood or non Oak Park residents? Responses from the attendees were as follows:

Not that much outside use

The drive through bank is a slight buffer between park and Roosevelt Road, it tends to prevent outside use

Pickup games on Saturday and Sundays at Maple Park but don't see as much here at Euclid

See small kids playing soccer and baseball

Layout—ball field seems too small for the Mustang league games and bronco league practice.

The park has hills. Field is archaic in terms of playing ball.

Intentionally designed with berms—there is no way to have full-scale games in this space

Any issues with Roosevelt road?

Sewer replacement is on-going, reconstruction or at least resurfacing will take place in the next few years, if more work is financially possible there will be a big streetscape project.

Residents do not wish to open up the park to Roosevelt, they like the privacy

Roosevelt Rd business community would like to use park for festivals

Some traffic comes up from Roosevelt but not much

Traffic and Parking

Parking—bad when baseball games, but even then not that bad. Fitzgerald's parking does not even spill over that much.

There are sightline issues at Wesley at tennis court's fence; it is too close to intersection and the shrubs have to be cut back

Annoying stop sign at Oak Park Ave. and Fillmore.

There is a signal at Harvard.

Village Parking and Traffic might relax restrictions at Oak Park Ave. and Fillmore.

Bad intersection— Oak Park Ave. and Fillmore.

Many people blow right through the stop signs

It would be great to have speed bumps but Village doesn't like them

General about Park

Euclid is definitely a neighborhood park.

Seems to be used a lot.

3 venues, tennis, playground, ball, some quiet time spaces.

Like the berms, people read and watch games

It is a classic neighborhood park but small

Unsightliness is also an issue, the fencing is looking shabby.

The Village will remove trees in R.O.W. as needed, but will not plant if they look like they belong to the park space.

Playcenter

Play equipment can last about 10-12 years. Gross motor stuff seems to be there. (8 and under)—could be in the ground another 7-10 years. (play equipment has been here about 8-9 years possibly)? [Been in the ground 11 years actually]

Popular playground.

Got shade

Drainage can be bad

Close to intersection

Not really ADA

Accessibility to playground should be looked at.

Trip hazard with plastic edging

Drainage

There are drainage issues in the SW and center of the field

Clay from the ball field moves south across walks. Central section is wet and sod is replaced. Yes drainage is poor.

Infield is higher than rest of park. Everything on ball field ends up south and west. Also the circular sidewalk locks in the water—has nowhere to go.

Center of park is lowest zone in park

Clay clogs city structures in some parks (i.e. Lindbergh—would prefer no more wash out. Have 8-10" storms on the street. There is standing water in catch basins at SW end of the park

Berms

Baseball—we're hitting balls into area of hills and tot lot. It is problem (about 250 feet)

The south berms are a great buffer. Kids don't go over there much and the park is invisible from Roosevelt Road.

Buffer is a plus—is there another way to create that effect?—area could be used better i.e. quasi picnicking.

Many of the trees are in poor condition but people like them

How does Safety and Security feel about south buffer from safety point of view?—depending on height of overhang, trees can obscure. It could be an area where nefarious activities can occur due to amount of foliage especially at dusk and night.

How much of a problem are the homeless? About 10 years ago was not a regular occurrence—rare

Homeless travel frequently down Roosevelt—maybe they come here?

Check with resident beat officer?

Some have used the area to bed down. 25-30 feet between fence and berm where they can do this.

Must marry visibility and security.

Keep berm smaller and hedge row neater

In the past some kids used the area to do drugs not much now.

Trees and Paths

J. Bellalta gave overview of trees and their condition [as per certified arborist, Harold Hoover site walk through] for informational purposes

PD crews like straight paths for ease of maintenance and snow plowing

Most members of the Greening Task Force (GTF) liked the berm with evergreens on it.

- It helps screen parking lot to the south.
- Creates shade.
- Trees look in bad shape, might need to be replaced.
- But GTF thought it was a nice/unique feature of the park.

What is GTF Policy for emerald ash borer? Once detected with ash borer, the tree must come out immediately. Same policy at VOP's.

Could be an issue with Ash in the park

No tree memorials requested for Euclid this past year.

Procedure to notify people if memorials are being moved or replaced is in place

Will there still be a path all the way around the park? Yes. Very important

With loss of ash—diversify tree species as much as possible.

Can we take soil samples to see what is wrong with ash?

Yes easy but trees grew well for a long time and only recently looked bad, so why would it be the soil?

Lighting

There is one dedicated light for the park, rest of lighting is VOP

What are the lumens? Is the Park very well lit? walks lit, but not center of park

Would PDOP allow light on trees themselves? No

Case by case of how it is done. Can be done with minimum impact on the tree (can light back of park—less intrusive)

Would PDOP use bollards or ground lighting?

- Not likely.
- They are a trip hazard, vandalism

Would set up precedent with lights on trees not good. In general not a good idea

Residents will be concerned with overflow lighting

Can use a cutoff

Tennis courts

Dogs are released into the tennis court. Solution: take out fence post and 2 sections of wire on the ends of the courts.

Is the tennis court used much?—

- high school,
- Fenwick, scheduling regularly.
- Late afternoon is the main use otherwise used by dogs and owners.

Master Plan for Rehm calls to remove 1 tennis court. Probably don't want to remove any more

Removed another tennis court each at Maple and Longfellow

Could flatten out hills in outfield and perhaps get better drainage.

Moving tennis south would make the park much more welcoming/user friendly with no fence right in neighbors faces

Tennis could be down by the southern fence and lights of the bank

Intrigued by moving tennis court south

What would we do with south tennis fence? Probably use fabric; maybe one with a print of a forest or other image.

But what would happen to the baseball?

Baseball would still be in the same orientation but further north

If you push tennis south, passive areas are opened up to the neighborhood.

Current condition of tennis courts?

- Resurfaced recently last fall.
- JB thought there are 4 lifts
- Is there a limit to the number of lifts? —not sure.
- Will also get a shorter life the more lifts
- Parts not so stable

General

West side brutal with no shade. Yes trees taken out a few years ago

Everyone hovers at first base (occasionally dangerous)

How about pavilion—provide shade?

Port a potty? Seasonal use at SE corner at triangle area between paths

There is now competition of active and passive roles in the park

Grade changes need to be well thought out.

If baseball moves around then will be hitting south. No we can still hit towards the NE but so what if we don't; it is only small kids and many fields hit south

So little space to play with

Make it nice, pretty shrubs

Park sign still will have annuals or flowering perennials

Would love to see ornamental grasses—nice look without the maintenance

GTF has an approved list of trees and perennials and shrubs

Add bike racks

Add water [drinking] fountains

Find somewhere better to put the port a potty