



**Rehm Park and Oak Park Conservatory Site Plan
Focus Group Meetings**

Meetings Held: Park District of Oak Park
Oak Park Conservatory
615 Garfield Street

Date: July 14, 2008

**Focus Group Meeting #1, 1:00 p.m.
Buildings and Grounds, Safety & Security**

Attendees:	Neil Adams	PDOP
	Nancy Holmes	PDCC
	Bob Egan	PDCC
	Bob Sjostrom	Universal Access Commission
	Ron Calloway	PDOP
	Doug Kaarre	VOP
	John Seaton	Former Conservatory Manager

Comments made by attendees at the meeting:

OAK PARK CONSERVATORY

Like the interior of the buildings, the exterior arrangement and appearance needs planning and improvements

Is it possible to relocate main entrance to the east side of Conservatory rather than the north onto Garfield Street

One way street system on Garfield Street would permit for parking and safety in the front of Conservatory

Evergreen foundation planting (yew hedge) in the front of conservatory - historical aspect – based on photo 1927

If street trees were planted on north side (front of conservatory) would take away light from the greenhouse – not good idea to plant them close to greenhouse

Visually improve the front of the building

Consider the use of precast concrete unit or brick pavers to link the paving in front of the Conservatory and Rehm Park

Noise – some kind of barrier and/or plantings along Garfield Road would help reduce noise and possible the plantings could visually identify Conservatory from distance

Water feature suggested in the front of emergency exit (the original front entrance to Conservatory) to prevent people from entering through this door. This entrance needs to be recognized as a historical entrance but not used as an actual entrance; turf was suggested as a material between stairs and sidewalk to visually break the entrance from the sidewalk

Signage, trees, banners suggested as a physical/visual linkage between both park sites (Rehm and Conservatory)

Potential for a “rain garden” on east side of Conservatory – educational and inspirational for visitors to replicate on their own property

Consider fencing the east side of the Conservatory for gardens and education – if fenced, consider similar fencing existing in Rehm Park playground

Patio and pergola connecting three doors in rear southwest garden of Conservatory

Container garden – raised planters on wheels; ADA accessible; paving a major portion of the open space to use more effectively as outdoor space for events

Teaching area in the garden – gazebo

Informational signage or kiosks in the front – the same by Conservatory and Rehm Park

Relocating Firehouse would present opportunity to better connect Conservatory and Rehm Park

Provide a bridge between the two park sites

Closing the alley, purchasing adjacent properties and expanding conservatory presents opportunity of developing more public garden and storage/ service area; Electric pole might be a problem - the village needs to have an access to that pole. One of the alternative master plan concepts should include expansion south

REHM PARK

More bicycle racks locations

Entrance to Rehm Pool matching Conservatory in scale and materials

Consider shelter in potential waiting area west of the pool

Consider 2 sand volleyball courts located on the east side of the pool; fenced- double gates provided from pool side and Gunderson Ave. side

There is need to offer some attraction for kids 11 yr. old and older

No picnic area

Irrigation and improved drainage of meadow area needs to be provided

Adequate distances between trees provided for mowing/maintenance, shrubs need to be provided for easier maintenance

Color or pattern paving on the corner of Firehouse to accent corner for safety and visual linkage with Conservatory

Consider using natural elements like granite boulders to control traffic at the cul-de-sac on Scoville Road

Lighting – energy efficient lights

Turn on lights by police in case of emergency

More benches

Picnic tables might be taken into consideration, but spread out through the park

Need to screen drive storage area behind fire station

Focus Group Meeting #2, 2:30 p.m.
Staff

Attendees:	Jenny Berni	PDOP
	Bret Fahnstrom	PDOP
	John Borland	PDOP
	Mark Omi	PDOP
	Nancy Holmes	PDCC
	Henrietta Yardley	PDOP

Comments made by attendees at the meeting:

OAK PARK CONSERVATORY

Outdoor garden area needs to be more attractive for private events and rentals
 Existing fence needs to be replaced – move west towards sidewalk – allow for visibility into the garden area
 Relocate existing west garden gate to south between two lindens, provides better service access for events
 Outdoor eating/ resting area for employees south of the building work room – consider permeable pavers in this area
 Water feature is desirable in the garden to help mask noise from the Eisenhower
 Raised beds, planters – ADA accessible – bigger patio for rental events
 Sidewalk in the front of Conservatory at least 7' wide
 The existing ground level lighting fixtures are exposed too much – consider hiding them with plantings
 Provide flower boxes and trellis on the north side of Garfield St. by the railing – visual connection with Rehm Park – could also provide visual effect and recognition from the Eisenhower
 Existing east side door as an emergency exit
 Consider picnic area on the east side

Rehm Park:

Consider similar up lights at Conservatory along the pool building
 Look at a new entry area and gate for summer camps and groups provided by 'baby pool' on east side of pool (Gunderson Ave) - designate waiting area for kids
 Pool needs additional exit location – potentially on south side or east side of pool
 More bicycle rack areas, consider safer locations
 Traffic flow problem: drop-off problem - need to study traffic flow and drop-off area
 Consider moving garbage containers to the firehouse area
 Replace existing ADA ramp and new stairs to the pool building
 Consider traffic bump on the East Ave and Gunderson Ave. to slow down the traffic
 Replace 1 tennis court with shelter

**Focus Group Meeting #3, 6:30 p.m.
Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory (FOPCON)**

Attendees: Nancy Holmes PDCC
Jackie Paine FOPCON
Andrea Green FOPCON
Jeff Donarski PDCC
Pat Eichenold FOPCON
Sandy Lentz FOPCON
Hilda Birney FOPCON

Comments made by attendees at the meeting:

OAK PARK CONSERVATORY

Representatives from FOPCON provided document of Board's discussion – the following is a summary of comments:

Beautiful streetscape and entries which attract visitors and invite them into the grounds and conservatory show rooms

Private space suitable for large or small events, ceremonies and parties

Garden areas for enjoyment, learning and for educational programming

Expanded growing facilities and sales space for Herb Sale

Criteria for development include:

- Accessible and welcoming to the broader community including those who are disabled, young and old, and visitors with diverse cultural backgrounds
- Sustainable: low maintenance with provision for suitable care
- Structures which are durable and vandal-proof
- Environmentally beneficial components such as recycled, permeable to rain water, etc.
- Well-adapted plantings—native, low water needs, hardy, alternatives to turf grass, bird & butterfly attractants
- Appropriate staffing to secure and maintain
- Providing increased usable space wherever possible. Includes acquisition of more space such as alley and properties south of Conservatory, use of vertical dimension
- Spaces that are flexible to allow for a variety of activities
- Safe and secure

FOPCON Board generated wish list sorted by needs

- Garden, including photogenic plantings in front of conservatory building for curb appeal, photo opportunities for tourism, events and ceremonies
- Bridge—connections between parks
- Sculpture
- Water feature
- Herb Garden
- Creative fencing

- Mixed-use spaces: seating, interactive elements for kids such as a labyrinth, spaces for activities such as music and movies, reading
- Parking for cars and bicycles with permeable paving
- Vertical dimension: terraced garden, berm, vertical plantings, living wall, raised bed
- Lighting, both electric and solar for renewable energy and security
- Signage (way finding)—Increase visibility of Conservatory campus to the public
- Private space suitable for large or small events, ceremonies and parties
- Garden areas for enjoyment , learning and for educational programming
- Flexible space for education programming such as demonstration gardens, herb garden, food-related programs, outdoor facilities for composting and other garden classes
- Expanded growing facilities and sales space for Herb Sale
- Cold frames, growing spaces for containerized plants, etc.
- Space which is usable for temporary sales area for annual Herb Sale

Other wish list items include

- Donor opportunities
- Community gardens
- Name for entire complex
- Greenhouse
- Apiary
- Treehouse

Other comments made by attendees included

Photo location for tourists, historic entrance was suggested for this purpose

Integrating existing historic memorial sculptures to landscaping

Replicate the motif of historic entrance design in different locations

Provide banners to visually connect Conservatory and Rehm Park;

Herb sale season- need to understand better the traffic flow and function of areas during the herb sale

REHM PARK

Connection between Conservatory and Rehm Park on east south corner by the alley – paved cross walk

Garden areas in park

Continuity of design and materials between Rehm and Conservatory

Focus Group Meeting #4, 6:30 p.m.

Creative Play, Passive Space & Sports Areas

Attendees:	Nancy Holmes	PDCC
	Jeff Donarski	PDCC
	Tom Holmes	Memorial Trust

Bob Kane Oak Park Cycling Club
Tom Phillion Strikers
Mark Gartland PDOP Board

Comments made by attendees at the meeting:

OAK PARK CONSERVATORY

Consider entrance from East Ave.
Need to somehow address parking problem for both parks
Need to look at the context of both parks in relationship to the surrounding streets and residential
Need to look at expansion with two residences to the south and alley removal and/or relocation

REHM PARK

All three tennis courts are used regularly and should be retained
Consider southwest location for sand volleyball court
Remove/ relocate Firehouse as alternate master plan
Consider structured use of the open meadow area for soccer