



**Scoville Park
Focus Group Meeting # 5
Events & Programs Focus Group
Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake Street,
March 3, 2010, 7:00pm**

Participants:

Mark Gartland, Park District Commissioner
Bobbi Nance, Recreation Manager, PDOP
Ben Ahring, Park District Citizen Committee
Nancy Fregin, American Society of Artists
Mark Jirik, Altamanu, Inc.
John Mac Manus, Altamanu, Inc.
Josephine Bellalta, Altamanu, Inc.

Introduction

Diane Stanke of the park district thanked all attendees for coming and for their willingness to provide insight into Scoville Park. She delivered a brief overview of the parks' master planning process and spoke of several parks now completed and others currently in construction. Diane noted that Scoville is the seventeenth park of eighteen in the park district's master planning process. As part of the park planning process the focus groups meetings today and one tomorrow are primarily to aid Altamanu, the park planners, in understanding the complexities of Scoville Park and its context. The focus group meetings will be followed by community meetings that will also be held at the library. The first of these meetings will be held on Wednesday March 24th at 7pm. Altamanu Inc. was selected through an open and detailed public process. Diane encouraged the attendees to give freely of their ideas and opinions and then handed the presentation over to John Mac Manus of Altamanu.

John Mac Manus began with a brief history of Scoville Park and its relation to noted landscape architect, Jens Jensen. John also discussed how the park functions today, the original Jensen plan and the changes made over time. He then opened the meeting for comment.

General Comments

The meadow is one of the most popular spaces we have.
The SW corner is a concern.

We can't see into the space.

The "Reading Room" (SW corner) is a concern.

It should be removed

I really like the fountain and the association with Frank Lloyd Wright and the history connected to the park.

It would be nice to plant Jensen-styled plant massing in certain areas.

What drainage issues do we have in the park?

It's generally pretty good; there's a little standing water in the southwest corner and some wetness along the desire lines.

Comfort Station

Is the comfort station included in the scope of the project? I think it could be improved.

It has boarded up windows because they kept getting broken. That could probably be made nicer.

Many people have talked about modernizing it and maybe adding more restrooms.

Mark Gartland asked Altamanu to examine the building interior to determine how it is used today and how it might function in the future i.e. Whether or not there's room for more storage/restrooms, whether or not it currently serves as a space for storage, etc.

Festivals and Events

I don't think we should have a festival in this park every other weekend. This is the only open area of grass in the area that isn't an athletic field. And our athletic fields are constantly used and beaten up.

Are there any complaints about noise?

I get some complaints from the neighbors but the trees on the edges of the park seem to keep in some of the sound.

Annually we have about 3-4 festivals that are community run. Sometimes there will be rallies by the monument but technically they need to get a permit. Any group over 12 needs a permit to use the park.

We permit our own concerts and also permit the tennis courts. There are also the rogue tennis instructors that will teach on our courts without permits and are making money from their activities.

There's Day in Our Village, and then the American Society of Artists has a 2 day fair with vendors selling; the Jewish United Fund hosts a walk, and there's another smaller crafts festival.

We have concerts six to eight Sundays in a row from mid-June to mid-August. The Battle of the Bands happens the Saturday before the Day in Our Village.

Sometimes the library will throw events like spoken word festivals.

The business association has had films in the park. They're maybe doing it this year.

The central entrance along Lake St. offers another entry into the park which is very helpful.

When we (American Society of Artists) set up our displays we always leave that entry open.

The American Society of Artists festival typically lays out on the eastern and middle parts of the park in three loops along the paths and on the hill.

Our show is in August and takes place on a Friday and a Saturday. This year will be the 36th year for the show.

The sidewalks help the elderly move around the festival. Some of them can still walk across the lawn but others need help.

The artists really have an appreciation for the park. I think most users think the park is easy to use.

One vendor requested lights so she could stay later but I explained to her that was probably not possible.

I'd like to keep all of the entries into the park.

I wouldn't like a fence all around the park because it would be more difficult to get and in and out, especially during festivals.

I like how it is now; you don't have to walk around the block to enter the park.

Stage

I would like a stage that is more permanent or at least something that is safer. There are always concerns about people and kids playing on the stage.

The Business association asked for more utilities.

The existing power source is not always reliable. The Day in Our Village sound guy brings his own generator.

There should be outlets on all the light fixtures throughout the park to hang lights and for use by vendors.

Plaza East of Library

The plaza adjacent to the library is really important to people organizing events in the park.

There are no sales allowed in the park so vendors have to use the plaza to sell food.

If that plaza was expanded would the property line have to be delineated?

I think there needs to be something that integrates the library into the park in a better way.

Paths

Could the paths be pushed further outwards to increase the size of the green space?

If the meadow was expanded it would get used.

The paths have been straightened out from what they once were.

Monument

A plaza would be nice; we don't mind working with the space though.