

MEETING DATE: 3/30/2016

ISSUE DATE: 4/4/2016

REFERENCE: George E. Keith Park, Brockton, MA
B+T Project No. 2700.00

PRESENT: Rob May, Director of Planning and Economic Development, City of Brockton (RM)
Shane O'Brien, Staff Planner
Tanja Dulgado, Resident
Jim Benson, Resident
Sherylee Hopwood, Resident
Gene Lawton, Resident
Cindy Miq Gray, Resident
Richard Caldwell, Resident
Shaynah Barnes, Resident
Robert Weidknecht, Landscape Architect, Beals and Thomas (REW)
Andrew Louw, Landscape Designer, Beals and Thomas (AML)

PREPARED BY: Andrew Louw, Landscape Designer, Beals and Thomas

COPIES TO: Rob May, Shane O'Brien

PURPOSE:

To solicit public input into the programming and design of George E. Keith Park in Brockton, MA

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Introductions

Rob May introduced Robert Weidknecht and Andrew Louw from Beals and Thomas, stated the purpose of the public meeting, and gave an overview of history or the project to date and the process moving forward. Residents of the historic Campello district and members of the Keith Park Neighborhood Association (KPNA) introduced themselves.

2. Overview of Design Process and Preliminary Site Analysis

REW gave an overview of the design process beginning with the initial public programming brainstorming meeting (this meeting), sharing an initial schematic design(s) (April meeting), and then moving the preferred design into design development to produce construction/bidding level drawings by the end of June.

REW presented the existing conditions of the park and gave an overview of some preliminary opportunities and constraints. Specifically, he addressed the condition of the existing sidewalk (some of which was recently replaced), the condition of the existing bluestone walk and non-functioning granite fountain, issues associated with the deteriorating walkways, the condition of the main lawn area (which is also broken up by some poorly located trees and the flag pole), issues associated with the existing cobblestone walls and fences, and the effectiveness of the existing Park entrance locations and circulation through the Park.

3. Park Programming Brainstorming Session

Residents and KPNA members shared the history of the Park and discussed how the space is currently used. The most common everyday uses in the park include dog-walking and other active and passive recreation activities including pick-up sports, walking, and sitting. The park is an important motive space and some residents expressed how some people currently jump the wall and use the park as a cut through to get to the Brockton Commuter Rail station.

The park also hosts multiple annual events including the flag raising, a flag day picnic, movie nights, an Easter Egg hunt, and a lantern walk amongst others. The KPNA hosted a festival in 2015 which attracted over 400 people. Movie nights typically attract between 50 and 75 people.

The discussion moved into broader future programming and discussion of both general and specific program desires and design criteria. To give the discussion structure, talking points are categorized and summarized below.

General Programming Needs

- Design park elements to maximize the safety and security of park users and neighborhood residents
- Assess existing entrances and circulation with respect to planned and future adjacent development to improve pedestrian circulation through and around the park
- Create a “grand” primary Park entrance to help create a sense of place and foster an identity for the Park
- Maintain/restore/relocate/interpret historic park elements including the fountain, bluestone paving, and cobble walls
- Provide performance and viewing space for concerts, movies, theatre, and story-telling events

- Ensure design elements including site amenities and plantings require minimal maintenance
- Provide adequate low-maintenance, seating opportunities (there are currently 8 benches in the park and the group seemed to feel this was adequate)
- Replace outdoor LED light fixtures in appropriate locations to ensure nighttime safety for users passing through the park
- Provide Centrally located outdoor power box for power during events and possible Holiday/Christmas lighting
- Maintain large, flexible lawn area for events and general use
- Provide attractive perennial planting areas and shade trees to create an attractive and comfortable microclimate for park users

Design-Specific Talking Points

- Ensure park walkways and sidewalks comply with federal and state accessibility laws
- Provide adequate trash/recycling facilities (one receptacle at each entrance and at least one in the center of the Park)
- Add or allow space for a durable, low-maintenance, fixed-in-place public restroom
- Consider adding dedicated park parallel parking spaces on the south edge of Garfield Street
- Relocate flag pole to maximize the utility of flexible lawn area
- Assess the condition of mature existing trees on site
- Provide fixed-in-place chess tables and chairs
- Provide a small amount of fixed-in-place bicycle parking
- Provide defined seasonal planting areas for the garden club and small memorial garden around flagpole

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Disseminate meeting notes and draft program to staff and public for information sharing and additional feedback
2. Begin creating schematic park designs based on documented program desires

These minutes are accepted as accurate and complete unless corrections and/or additions are received within one week of issue.