

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE ADVISORY PANEL

MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** March 31, 2022

**Meeting #60**

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**Project:** CC Jackson Park

**Phase:** Schematic Design

**Location:** Central Park Heights

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**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Kate Brower from Recreation and Parks introduced the project team and provided a general overview. Tom McGilloway from Mahan Rykiel Associates introduced the park expansion and limits of the proposal including the future library and potential upgrades to the pool. Mayra Filippon with Mahan Rykiel provided a more detailed presentation including anchoring the project in the surrounding developments. Existing conditions include the recreation center and pool, playground, basketball court, play fields, a laundromat, and open space for the park expansion and future library. Community engagement was a critical part of the proposal. The plan proposes to treat corners as gateways, shade structures, flexible lawn, pavilion, and community gardens at existing hoop houses. The proposal 20 spaces for the park itself and eventually 30 spaces for future library and.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Panel thanked the project team and proceeded with clarifications, questions and comments.

**Clarifications:**

- Pleased to see the depth and breadth of outreach and diversity of outreach type. Would love to see the result of that. What did people say they wanted? *Main concerns were safety and parking, but wanted an area for community gatherings and cookouts.*

**Comments:**

- Seems that the planning of the park is largely driven by parking. Urge you to give priority to the residents rather than vehicles and the parking lot. Relatedly, is this a park that serves residents that drive or walk? As currently designed it feels like you need to drive to it. To avoid that, more attention needs to be focused at access points to create strong nodes that interact with the surrounding streets. Celebrate access to the park.

- Look at the project from an urban perspective to strategize on how to make this the best space for the residents of surrounding new development. Do this by providing a diagram analysis that looks beyond the boundary of the site to adjacent existing and proposed developments.
- Analyze and consider how the park connects to the community. Right now, Homer Avenue empties into the parking lot which isn't celebrating that connection to the community.
- A design language needs to be developed along the residential streets surrounding the park.
- The landscape can push the design of the library – for example how does the site address Park Heights Avenue, how should the library face the street and how can the landscape impact that? Additionally, the proposed event lawn doesn't speak to the library yet – it can be designed to be in dialogue with the future building.
- The new lawn is oriented against the grain of the neighborhood, filling in the gaps from the parking lot and library. Urge you to consider rotating the open space so that it will create a more welcoming approach from Homer Ave. Don't let minor details become the main drivers. As a result, the parking lot can be rotated to reduce its impact on the street and adjacent neighborhood.
- The program referenced art, culture, nature, and innovation – how are you integrating these into the park? Consider using the stormwater management as part of this programming. Weave in these natural elements into the overall community experience.
- Provide more porosity around the edges and at the laundromat, which is a wonderful opportunity to embrace those users. The laundromat provides a reason for people to come, how do you take advantage of that?
- It's important to recognize that the parcel doesn't have a lot of frontage on to Park Heights which makes it that much more important. Take a cue from older urban parks that front onto busy streets with layering, creating a linear element that's in one or two parts, one that addresses the street and one that provides activities that looks toward the park creating a boundary to that edge.
- How does the park address the rear, where it is directly against rear yards? Need to balance the idea of porosity with the need to mitigate noise. Consider using plant material, berms, land forms along those edges, as there's a kind of semi-privacy expected, but you also want to afford visual connectivity to the park.
- Don't forget the spaces between programmed spaces, which currently feel leftover.
- What does that flexible really mean for the lawn? Would like to see more deliberate attitude toward that space to better understand how it's used. If the use is ambiguous it won't be utilized.
- There is an opportunity to create a pedestrian boulevard/main street through the park, that with a hierarchy of paths throughout the park, creates an exciting opportunity that pedestrians won't get along Park Heights. Enforce the path as the main element, does it become an allee, maybe it's not as wavy and more of a connection of nodes. Needs a stronger identity.
- All of the ingredients are in place, just need to move to the next level to reinforce the moves.
- This needs to be a place of respite, identify where those zones are and respond to both the current conditions and future conditions.
- Take cues from other city parks to create special moments, especially at entry points and along edges.

**Next Steps:**

Continue addressing the comments above as the park develops.

**Attending:**

Tom McGilloway, Mayra Filippone, Katherine Ackerman – Mahan Rykiel

Gordon Krabbe – Pratt Library

Kate Brower – Rec and Parks

Kelly Baccala - DHCD

Carley Milligan - BBJ

Messrs. Anthony, Bradley and Ilieva - UDAAP Panel

Mikah Zaslow, Ren Southard, Tamara Woods, Caitlin Audette – Planning