

PARKS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE MINUTES, MARCH 2, 2022

Parks and Grounds Committee met on Zoom to present competing designs for the Page Park Project and elicit response from residents. This meeting was announced through flyers displayed in the buildings. These flyers called attention to electronic copy of the designs on the Village website and encouraged residents to email Village Manager Julian Mansfield, jmansfield@friendshipheightsmd.gov.

Bruce Pirnie, Chair P&G, gave a brief introduction to the Page Park Project. Julian Mansfield presented graphics for each design while Bruce Pirnie gave background on the designers, including their academic credentials, professional employment, and significant projects. Thereafter, the meeting was opened to comments from Committee members, Council members, and residents of the Village. A brief synopsis of their comments follows.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Alfred Muller: The Park should have a central focus, but there should also be more green area than shown in the designs. All of the designs build on work by Paula Durbin, especially the recently planted oak and locust trees. There have been some complaints about cost, but the cost estimates accord well with our experience. Humphrey Park, for example, cost around one million dollars although built much earlier. The Village has ample reserve funds that should be expended carefully in ways that make things better for the residents.

Paula Durbin: I see the Park from my apartment; I visit often. I was first elected to the Council based on my opposition to paving the Park for a playground. My position has not changed. The designs under consideration include paving the Park. Furthermore, they fail to disclose, *inter alia*, that trees are portrayed as they would appear at maturity, i.e., in some 25 years per Chair Pirnie.

Bruce Pirnie: Designers have to anticipate how trees will appear when they are mature. It wouldn't make sense to show them as saplings as though they wouldn't grow larger. The design submitted by Greensweep is clearly the best. When I first saw this design, I thought: "I won't let myself be seduced by glitzy graphics." But the more I studied this design, the better I liked it. It builds into the landscape rather than being placed upon it. It responds to the challenge of an awkward site in imaginative ways. The curved walkway on the southwestern corner adds interest to an otherwise empty space. The swath of flowering plants in the south center adds color and excitement. The pergola provides an elegant focal point. There is too much paved area, but this flaw is easily

repaired by eliminating the small patio in center-east and replacing the fountain or statue in center with a green space that features a signature tree or ornamental trees.

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS

Carolina Zumaran-Jones: This process is a good one. I prefer the Greensweep design. The plot is small and difficult, but this design protects the neighbors well. Of the three designs, the Greensweep design is clearly best, but it does feature too much concrete.

Michael Mezey: I prefer not to prejudge and will reserve judgement until I hear from the residents.

Melanie Rose White: I like the children's play area in the Greensweep design. I agree that there should be a non-natural focal point to the park. It should be easy to reduce the amount of hard surface.

RESIDENTS OF THE VILLAGE

Quite a few residents commented on the design and were heard by the Council members. Bruce Pirnie also encouraged them to email Julian Mansfield so that the Council could take more formal note of their comments. Most of the speakers favored the Greensweep design, but there were notable exceptions. Joe Bucherer, for example, favored the Tennleytown design because it offers more seating arrangements. Speakers tended to agree that the designs had too much hardscape, but again there were notable exceptions. Some residents pointed out that senior citizens needed stable, level surfaces and would not want to walk on grass. Blair Fishburne spoke in favor of Greensweep and said that the Tenleytown design crammed too much into a small space. Several speakers stressed the importance of a design that shields residents on the western side of the Park from noise. Chris Knauer, for example, pointed out that there are open balconies on the west side while there is simply a blank wall on the eastern side. There was general agreement that there should not be a fountain as in the Greensweep design and that Page Park should not attempt to rival Humphrey Park as a meeting place.