

**PARKS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE
THE PAGE PARK PROJECT**

The Village of Friendship Heights owns three parks: Humphrey, Willoughby, and Page. The first two were designed by professional landscapers and meet high standards of appearance and utility. Apart from the mulch-covered walkway and associated plantings, Page Park was not professionally designed. It should be built to a comprehensive design from a professional landscaper.

THE PARK

William Tyler Page Park is bordered: to the west along a line parallel to and ten feet from 4701 Willard Apartments; to the north a steep, wooded ravine constituting a conservation area (Little Falls Branch); to the east the building 4615 North Park Avenue; and to the south North Park Avenue. The ground rises gradually on the eastern end and steeply on the western end to a plateau roughly halfway into the Park. The Park is roughly 150 feet long, measured along the sidewalk on North Park Avenue, and roughly 117 feet wide, measured from that sidewalk to the wood line, passing just east of the stone circle. The record plat for Page Park is available in the Montgomery County Index of Record Plats under “4621 North Park Avenue Friendship Heights” and “4623 North Park Avenue Friendship Heights,” reflecting a size of two house lots.

Lawn is the prominent feature of Page Park. A nearly uninterrupted lawn extends from North Park Avenue to the plateau in the center of the Park. Most of the remaining area is also lawn, stretching to the conservation area. The next most prominent feature is a path covered with bark mulch. A short distance into the park, this path forks in two directions. One direction leads to the nature path behind 4615 North Park Avenue. The other direction runs past the circular wall and ends at the stone seating area. In the center of the Park is a low, circular wall that encloses three crape myrtle trees. A small area near the 4701 Willard Apartments is covered in bark mulch and not accessible by path. At the back of the Park overlooking the ravine is a stone seating area. There are three newly planted locust trees near the entrance to the Park and two newly planted oak trees near the Willard Apartments.

IMPROVING THE PARK

This project to improve Page Park includes these steps: design competition among landscapers, eliciting residents’ opinions about the designs, selection of the winning design, preparation of a master plan with precise specifications and projected costs, work on the Park, and final acceptance of the completed project.

Design Competition

The Village of Friendship Heights satisfies the requirement for competitive bidding by holding a competition among landscapers. Each competitor submits a design

according to guidelines set by the Council. (See Annex A, Guidance to Landscapers.) These competitors are local firms with wide experience and good reputations. The Village pays each competitor a non-refundable retainer of \$8,000 to produce a comprehensive design. The competition lasts eight weeks from the start date to the date on which submissions are made. The designs include plans drawn to scale, depictions of the finished park, and rough estimates of cost to complete the required work. They may be framed as baselines plus features that might be added at additional cost. The designs are submitted in ten hardcopies and two electronic copies. After submission, they become the intellectual property of the Village.

Residents' Opinions

The Village displays the competing designs on its website. It may also hold open meetings to acquaint residents with these designs. It elicits opinion from residents. The Village assembles these opinions and makes the results known.

Selection

The competing landscapers present their designs at an open session of the Council and respond to questions. The Council selects the design that best achieves the vision for Page Park at an acceptable cost, taking into account opinions expressed by residents. The Council may select a design on condition that modifications be made. If the Council rejects all designs, even with modifications, the project is terminated.

Master Plan

Working with a Village representative, the winning landscaper prepares a master plan that includes detailed specifications for all features of the new park and a schedule for their completion. The master plan sets forth phases of work and associated costs.

Work on the Park

The Council drafts a contract conforming to the master plan. After this contract is signed, the landscaper accomplishes each phase of the project. While this work is ongoing, a representative of Village stays in close contact with the landscaper to resolve issues as they may arise.

Final Acceptance

When the landscaper judges that the work is complete, representatives of the Village conduct a final inspection on site in company of the landscaper. After all outstanding issues are resolved, the Village accepts the work and pays the last installment due to the landscaper under the contract.

ANNEX A GUIDANCE TO LANDSCAPERS

The following guidelines articulate a vision for Page Park and set parameters for various features. Within these guidelines, landscapers are free to develop their designs in imaginative and visionary ways. The Council anticipates that building the Park might cost approximately \$200,000, but sets no upper limit on cost in order that designers may fully develop their best ideas. During selection, the Council will seek the best balance of desirability and cost. Rather than presenting all-or-nothing choices, landscapers may present baseline designs with more expensive additions.

Vision

Page Park will have a natural, bucolic appearance in contrast to the surrounding high-rise buildings. It will offer residents contact with nature, a place to relax, and space for children to play. It will be pleasant for a stroll and inviting for a stay. It will meet the legal requirements for accessibility to people with limited mobility. It will have an attractive appearance when viewed from North Park Avenue. New and existing features will combine to form a coherent whole. Its man-made structures will be highly durable and easily maintained.

Natural Features

Lawn will not cover more than thirty percent of the area available for development. It will be accessible for mowing.

Flowering plants will add color and contrast.

Bushes will be employed as accents and hedges.

Trees will be at least two-inch caliper when planted. When they reach full growth, they will create a woodland atmosphere and shield visitors from the sun. These existing trees will be retained: three locust trees in the southeast corner, copper beech near the center, crabapple near the southeast entrance, and the mature walnut on the northern edge of the Park. Existing mature trees at northern edge of the Park bordering the ravine will be retained.

Man-made Features

Walkways will unify the Park and encourage strolling. They may not follow the trace of the existing bark mulch path, but they will access the existing stone seating area at the back of the Park and the nature trail behind the Park. Walkways will be made of all-weather material and be easily maintained. They will be appropriately underlaid and

edged for maximum duration. They may resemble the existing stretch of paved walkway now leading into Page Park from North Park Avenue.

Benches and tables will be located on hardstand adjacent to walkways. They will be of durable, easily maintained materials. Existing benches on the western edge of the Park and existing picnic tables in the back of the Park may be reused and relocated.

New structures may be intrinsic to the design or offered as additions. They may include arches, arbors, pergolas, gazebos, and other garden structures. They may also include retaining walls to expand usable space and add interest to the landscape. Retaining walls will be appropriately backfilled and faced with highly durable material presenting a natural appearance. These walls will be configured as practical to minimize the possibility of accidental falls.

Stone seating area at the back of the Park overlooking the ravine will be retained.

Circular wall currently located in the center of the Park and the encircled trees may be retained as they currently exist or reconfigured.

Lighting will be permanently installed and solar powered. It will be designed to function from sunset to 10:00 PM.

Water will be drawn from the existing source solely to irrigate the Park.

Signage will include a bronze plaque mounted on a stone column located adjacent to the main entrance on North Park Avenue that reads: "William Tyler Page Park" A second plaque may indicate the landscaping firm and the year in which the Page Park Project was completed.