

Olbrich Land Use Plan - Presentation, by request to the Eastmorland Neighborhood - 2/10/09

Meeting began @ 6:30 with regular business and our presentation began promptly @ 7:15. The meeting was attended by ~ 8 - 10 neighbors of which 2 or more had been at previous meetings. In addition, Connie Beam OBS staff, Dick Wagner, Dan Madson – OBS Board, and Parks Planning staff, Tom Maglio and Bill Bauer presented

A softball ref. living in ENA was concerned over losing '4' softball fields, and commented that relocating use to Reindahl would be too far. He felt that 2 fields are inadequate for amount of 'downtown' players that walk or bike to games thus lack of need to include space for parking. He also felt that current plan was lacking 'warm-up' space. One other neighbor was concerned over the lack of green space for kids to play field games while parents are playing ball or specifically the threat of being fenced out of proposed garden space prematurely.

A neighbor voiced misconceptions that the reason to relocate gardens was due to amount of chemicals used and excessive vulnerable shoreline along Starkweather. Connie Beam responded that chemicals were not an issue in garden maintenance and Tom M, Dick W., and myself reiterated the public input process and the Garver re-use and land bank concept and previous input from Olbrich meetings had generated the relocation concept for the gardens expansion. One neighbor specifically donates to the Gardens and agreed that donors need to be assured that expansion will continue, she only thought it was going to continue across the tracks, not the creek.

The issue of missing the softball players in notification of the first meeting came up as an issue of lack of support to maintain existing '4' field complex. Additionally, the neighborhood president was not notified personally of the meetings and concern whether or how surrounding neighbors were notified. A couple said they had not seen previous plans and those in attendance at previous meetings claimed that the existing plan did not vary throughout the process. Tom Maglio assured them that he had done all of the variations on the plan revisions and assured them that there were many modifications and compromises to address the public input received.

One neighbor had seen the SASYNA plan and the group was totally opposed to a dog park w/in or near softball and 'laughed' at the idea of parking along Atwood Ave. Staff reiterated that a dog park is a different meeting agenda / process and TE or Eng. would dictate Atwood ROW re-use. Additionally, the group was disgruntled w/ SASYNA attempt to create plan w/o their input and present w/o an invitation to their meeting. Staff added that these presentations were intended to be 'public' and provide input and encouraged those unfamiliar with the SASYNA 'alternate' to attend.

Olbrich Land Use Plan - Presentation, by request to the SASYNA, 2/12/09

The meeting scheduled for 7:00, began @ 7:20 following the arrival of Betty Chewning and select group of neighbors. The attendance by a total 19 SASYNA residents and other city staff, Kevin Briski, Larry Nelson, Bill Bauer, Steve Doniger Roberta Sladky, Dan Madson – OBS Board and Alder Marsha Rummel. In addition, 4 residents of Eastmorland were in attendance to learn of the 'alternate' plan being presented that was void of collaboration from their neighborhood. Additionally, 8 attendees were not recognized as being at previous meetings. SASYNA did not take roll or ask attendees to sign-in so as to generate a comparable list to attendees from 6 previous meetings.

The first question of the evening was "how much is all this going to cost". (*Whereas this is only a 'land use plan', there is no acquisition / development costs were to be discussed in this exercise*).

One attendee commented that the gardens are too big for all people to get around on the Tram; staff provided information that the intent of the Tram is to transport people w/ disabilities, not *all* visitors).

The reduction of 2 existing ball diamonds continued to be a concern of a couple softball enthusiasts / neighbors that enjoy the city network of ped / bike trails to get to a games. A couple of women softball players noted that these ball fields as the best opportunity for them. Other comments re: the amount of Regional, State and National tournaments that want to play games here in Madison. Comments from the Eastmorland group included, 'ball diamonds' are unique features in a neighborhood of small playlots and standard neighborhood park facilities.

A new attendee and previous respondents commented on 'Connectivity' to facilities within 'Olbrich Park' and surrounding neighborhoods and O.B. Sherry Park, and encouraged 'creative thinking' during Master Planning process. Encouraged staff to work with Engineering and TE when considering connectivity and urged "not as simple as 'safe crossings'." A few special concerns were voiced from both Eastmorland and SASYNA re: connectivity to lakeshore across Atwood Ave. Railroad creates barrier to access the gardens from all surrounding neighborhoods and encourage staff to find ways to access each other's neighborhood in the master planning process.

Discussion ensued re: access road off Fair Oaks. A comment noted that the current alignment is well buffered by existing vegetation. Access road could be best accommodated along back of Kessenich's in the master plan design, but could negatively affect existing stand of mature shade trees that now provide for contemplative activities.

4 dog park enthusiasts were concerned that no alternate location was provided as a placeholder for dog exercise land use on the map. The few softball users felt that low, marshy conditions and the high user / activity level within the ball field complex made this an inappropriate site for a dog park as presented on the 'alternate'.

A boating neighbor raised concerns re: boat launching into Starkweather Creek for sailboats or boats larger than canoes or kayaks as the bridge height and depth of channel offers barriers to water / lake access.

Consensus prevailed that gardens visitors and volunteers are growing with the neighborhood in-fill development and the community / region. Needs, programs, and opportunities need to expand to meet demands of visitor and volunteer base from the neighborhood and community at large. Other comments from neighbors included the love of the gardens for passive recreation and the opportunity to volunteer, and look forward to improvements that include 'Sustainable' initiatives in garden improvements, including minimizing pavement and other master planning issues. Offered other ideas for master planning that included 'satellite' garden space; including along the bike path, around the Garver bldg., etc..

A new attendee criticized the Garver Re-Use and felt the city was inept for considering this alternative rather than demolition and that better use of the area would be for garden expansion or to relocate ball field complex to North Platte.

One respondent voiced that the 'neighborhood park' area near Lindbergh / Garrison should remain as a viable park space that does not lose existing amenities.

Discussion ensued with a few attendees that included options to maintain proposed garden expansion to the north, creative connectivity regardless of railroad opposition and opposed to excessive natural plantings in the North Platte as 'waste of space' with preference to formal gardens, e.g. roses, etc.. Also general discussion included that many sites, Royster, Voigt, etc. can accommodate tournament quality ball fields, whereas, limited opportunities exist to relocate a botanical garden that has established itself for more than 50 years.

The Eastmorland residents re-iterated concern over garden expansion infringing too much on recreational space used by their neighborhood and the need for enough space to remain to play a ball game.

SASYNA / EINPC rep proposed options; potential of delaying approval, but without approval the project can't proceed with the master planning process of which most concerns revolve around. Additionally, this exercise does not include capital funding and only when the master planning process is complete, can funding be appropriated.

Select neighbors thanked Betty Chewing profusely for offering her alternative design to that presented by Park Staff. Betty added that Lou Host-Jablonski, Michael Barrett and Sue Thering assisted with the graphics.