

CITY OF TWO RIVERS
CENTRAI PARK WEST 365 SPECIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 15, 2021
6:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

In the absence of committee chair Wendy Kozlowski-Brandt, the meeting was called to order by City Manager Greg Buckley at 6:00 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Committee Members Present: Councilmember Tracey Koach, Nathan Kronforst, Theresa Leiberg, Kathy Peterson, Jayne Rulseh and Scott Steckmesser. Committee members absent: Councilmember Jay Remiker and Wendy Kozlowski-Brandt.

City Manager Buckley noted the Councilmember Remiker was unable to attend due to a work commitment.

City Staff Present: Elizabeth Runge, City Planner/Community Development Director; Terri Vosters, Parks and Recreation Director; Greg Buckley, City Manager. Two Rivers Main Street Program Staff Present: Roger Russove, Executive Director.

Also present were: City Council member Darla LeClair, Nancy Nabak, Jessie Crowe, Chris Dekok, Mike Timm

Also present: Project design consultants Blake Theisen and Katie MacDonald of Parkitecture + Planning (via Zoom).

Mr. Buckley noted that handouts for the meeting included the agenda, a copy of the current concept plans and a recent communication from City Council member Adam Wachowski.

3. Update on Status of the Park Planning Process

Mr. Buckley reported on recent actions by the City Council regarding the park planning process, including endorsement of the conceptual plan, direction to provide for \$600,000 in City funding in the City's 2022 capital budget, and direction to proceed with contracting with Parkitecture for design work.

He also addressed the most recent action of the Council: a vote on August 23 to amend the City's 2021 Parks Capital Budge to provide \$45,000 in funding to bring project design to the 30 percent design stage. Buckley noted that this additional investment in design would allow for further review of project costs and would allow re-examination of design questions/concerns that remain.

4. Update on Plans for Fund-Raising Committee and Funding Campaign

The City Manager stated that he hoped to present nominations for a special fund-raising committee to the City Council on September 20 or 27. He stated that he will recommend that a couple of members from the design committee also serve on fund-raising; Wendy Kozlowski-Brandt has agreed to serve in such a dual capacity. Darla LeClair expressed interest in serving on the fund-raising committee.

Mr. Buckley also reported that the project has been awarded a \$300,000 grant from the West Foundation, and that private donations totaling \$7,500 have already been received.

5. Parkitecture Presentation and Discussion

a. Path Forward for Design Process.

Blake Theisen described the process for continuing design work, to move beyond the approved concept plan to final project plans and specifications. He noted that the design process can be completed timely for bidding next Winter for Spring 2022 construction, but that the City may choose to delay construction based on the status of fund-raising or the timing of grant opportunities; current cost issues for various construction materials could also impact the timing for project bidding and construction.

b. Design Issues Identified in Discussion to Date.

The consultants then reviewed various outstanding design issues/questions, using the 3-D renderings of the project for reference.

These issues included:

Size of the Bandstand. Several committee members suggested that the size of the bandstand could be reduced, saving money and park space, without negatively impacting the utility of the structure. The designers noted that the current bandstand floor area is 38 feet by 38 feet, or 1,444 SF. The proposed new floor area is 1,200 SF, with an 800 SF concrete paved area immediately in front of the stage.

There was discussion about the need for some kind of backdrop for bandstand. Blake advised against a solid wall, as it would adversely impact sight lines through the park, but suggested that some type of visual screen is feasible. There was also discussion and consensus on eliminating trees along the sidewalk that cuts across the southwest edge of the audience assembly area south of the bandstand.

There was consensus that City staff and Parkitecture will confer on bandstand design prior to the next committee meeting; representatives of users like Main Street and the Municipal Band will be consulted.

Concessions/Restroom Building. There were questions from Parks and Rec staff about the amount of floor space allowed for splash pad and building mechanicals. Blake reviewed the interior layout of the building.

Darla LeClair expressed concerns about the building design. Greg Buckley and Elizabeth Runge also questioned the need to locate this building at the very center of the park. There was consensus among the committee to keep the building in a central location, but to re-visit its exterior appearance.

Blake then reviewed three conceptual plans for this site. Copies of those concept plans are attached to these minutes.

Discontinuance of West Park Street. Greg Buckley suggested that the north-south sidewalk in front of the Community House, on the west side of the current street, be widened from 8 feet to 12 feet, to allow for a one-way flow of vehicles, when necessary for access by contractors doing work on the building, by caterers and others using the building, by emergency vehicles, etc. He suggested that this area would typically be blocked at each end with removal bollards or some other structures to prevent vehicle access.

Committee members affirmed that they continue to support closure of the street in front of the Community House, but by consensus endorsed the idea of widening the sidewalk/pedestrian way to serve this dual purpose. Mike Timm pointed out the need for access to areas along the north wall of the Community House, via West Park.

Size of the Splash Pad. Blake noted that the splash pads in urban settings like Central Park are typically 1,000 to 1,400 SF and the proposed design is 1,200 SF. He suggested that this area could be expanded slightly to the west. There was also discussion of the need to keep total daily water consumption below 50,000 gallons, and the ability to light the water jets at night.

Flagpole and Time Capsule. In reply to questions about the current flagpole, Blake noted that the pole would stay, but the non-functioning recessed lights in the plaza below would be replaced by an led light at the top of the pole. The monument and time capsule near Washington Street at the center of the park will remain where they are.

Park Topography. In response to concerns about changes in elevation across the existing park space, Blake noted that there needs to be an accurate topographic survey to develop the final grading plan. He expressed confidence that, based on elevations provided by the City's Engineering Department, the change in elevation from Washington Street to East Park Street can be accommodated as shown in the current concept plan.

Issues Addressed in Communication from Council Member Adam Wachowski.

Mr. Buckley asked that Committee members refer to the communication from Adam Wachowski, to see if there were issues identified that had not been addressed in the discussion to this point. The committee proceeded to review the communication point-by-point:

1. Splash pad should be moved to Washington Park. Committee members re-affirmed their preference for locating the splash pad at Central Park; it was noted that this does not rule out a second splash pad at Washington Park in the future.
2. Ice skating rink to remain downtown, but no need for border wall along Washington Street side of Central Park. Based on the committee's position on item 1 above, the seating wall remains an important design feature.
3. Bathroom/Concessions building. See previous discussion about this building. (NOTE: committee did not specifically discuss the cabin/shelter idea—this will be re-visited at a future meeting.)
4. Allow a downtown business to rent skates as a first option. Committee members expressed continued support for having skate rentals and concessions offered in the park, but noted that there has been no direction as to whether these services should be offered by the City or a private business/concessionaire.
5. PLEASE KEEP THE ROAD OPEN. See previous discussion regarding discontinuance of West Park Street.
6. Reduce the amount of trees; get project budget down to \$1.2 million. See previous discussion about eliminating some trees. Consensus: Final project budget is yet to be determined, but estimate at this time for full conceptual plan is \$1.8 million. Committee will look at all options for cost reductions or project phasing, but why eliminate project elements entirely at this time?

6. Set Dates for Upcoming Committee Meetings

It was agreed to set the next regular committee meeting for Thursday, October 21, and to request a special joint meeting with the City Council on Thursday, September 30. A major question that needs to be addressed before investing more money in design work is whether the Council will support the proposed closure of a portion of West Park Street.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the committee, Jayne Rulseh moved, supported by Theresa Leiberger, to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory E. Buckley
City Manager