



CITY OF WATERTOWN

Community Preservation Committee

Remote via Zoom

Mark Krackiewicz, Chair
Jason Cohen, Vice Chair
Jonathan Bockian
Bob DiRico
Dennis J. Duff
Allen Gallagher
Jamie O'Connell
Elodia Thomas
Matthew Walter

Draft Meeting Minutes: Wednesday, March 16, 2022, held remotely via Zoom at 7PM.

Committee Members Present: Mark Krackiewicz, Chair; Jason Cohen, Vice Chair; Jon Bockian; Bob DiRico; Dennis J. Duff; Allen Gallagher; Jamie O'Connell; and Elodia Thomas.

Others Present: Lanae Handy, Community Preservation Coordinator; Gregory St. Louis, Department of Public Works; Chris Golden, MDLA Landscape Architecture; Emily Izzo, District Councilor; Leo Martin, Conservation Commission; Patrick Fairbairn, Conservation Commission; Emily Horgan, Watertown Housing Authority; Joyce Kelly, Watertown Historical Commission; Nancy Kay; Susan Klaw; Stephen Corbett; Peter Del Tredici; Lauren Syer; and M. Pelletier.

1. Call to Order

Mark Krackiewicz called the meeting to order at 7PM and stated the meeting was being held remotely according to the Acts extending the Governor's Emergency Order and waiving certain provisions of Open Meeting Law. Mark then requested a roll call and Lanae Handy called the roll.

2. Irving Park Project Presentation

Gregory St. Louis introduced the project with some background about the history of improvements to the park and existing park conditions.

Chris Golden of MDLA Landscape architecture shared information about the two community meetings hosted by the project team, which ultimately generated three design options. Each of the three options had different themes and modes of traversing the park. MDLA obtained community feedback to generate one composite design scheme. Chris described the planned improvements that would include new plantings, granite curbing, benches, accessible pathways, bollard lighting, and fencing. Committee members asked about the fencing material and the paving material in the central gathering area. Chris noted materials would be high quality, durable, and low maintenance. However, he noted specific materials were to be determined. Elodia Thomas asked if the grass strip surrounding park could be replaced with groundcover. Additionally, Trees for Watertown mentioned engaging an arborist to evaluate existing trees and preparation of a plan for protecting the roots of existing trees in their support letter for the project. Chris said he would investigate suitable ground cover that the City would be comfortable maintaining.

Separate from CPC funding for the interior, Greg committed to installation of curbing around the sidewalk and repaving the sidewalks bordering the park. Within the park boundaries, he said there was flexibility to add buffer room for wheelchair accessibility around the seating areas and committed to minimizing damage to tree roots during construction.

Jon Bockian inquired about the street furniture and fencing presented. Chris noted that the samples in his presentation slide deck were simply an indication, and more detail would be available when the project was put out to bid. He remarked that the black metal fence would have a narrow picket and not be a heavy feature. When asked about irrigation for the site, Greg replied that contractors would provide a warranty for their plantings. He also noted use of a water truck and a hose connection would be available to DPW staff.

Although Chris said no specific plant material had been selected and he cited community feedback favored native and drought tolerant plantings that could survive without irrigation as well as plants that would promote ecology and provide visual appeal. Jamie O'Connell asked whether trash bins and bicycle racks could be added. He emphasized, based on resident feedback, trash bins and bike racks had not been included.

Dennis J. Duff liked the treatment of the Irving Street end. For safety reasons, he suggested capping the fencing with a top rail. Elodia would like to see photos of fencing and benches. Chris pledged to provide options for fencing and benches that the DPW would be willing to maintain. In addition, Greg said he would investigate providing a simple bike rack that wouldn't necessitate concrete padding.

Leo Martin liked the plan and would like to see plants that attract pollinators. He noted though most of the park would be shaded, non-shaded areas would turn brown in the summer. Leo asked if a rain garden was needed to collect and infiltrate water. Chris responded that he was not aware drainage was a concern. He highlighted paving would be reduced and the ground would be aerated, resulting in improved drainage.

Peter Del Tredici approved of the design and its simplicity. He made an argument that that non-native species provide pollinators with habitat and promoted planting species that are adapted to the site conditions (slope and lack of irrigation). Peter asked whether day lilies or shrubs could be planted in the grass strip. Greg reminded attendees that the strip was not part of the application. He also stated planting the strip would be dependent on other issues related to the roadway. Peter said there was an opportunity to signal the location is a park to prevent the current parking on the strip. Though he noted such plantings would require more soil volume in the strip.

Dennis asked for another meeting to review plant materials to ensure selection for optimal size and low maintenance (pruning) needs. He also asked whether the sidewalk being constructed could be moved to the curb and the green strip could be added to the park. Greg said this wasn't possible because of existing trees. Dennis also asked if the trees specified could be measured in diameter at breast height (dbh) as opposed to caliper measurement. Jason Cohen asked about the lack of budget for general conditions/mobilization. Greg predicted bids would come in competitively and not require mobilization. He also pointed out that DPW would provide connections for hoses and possibly electrical. Greg further noted bonding would be the cost of doing business and for this type of project.

Jon remarked there were many items to be determined and requested a meeting to obtain community input on the plantings, paving, benches, and fencing. The project team affirmed their willingness to provide 100% design review and present ideal plant choices, bench styles, and fencing, cautioning that all would be subject to availability and the need to replace with relatively equal or like options. The contractor would submit final options for approval. The committee requested a review of the final design plan as a condition of the award. When specifications of materials are ready, the CPC would like to meet again and invite community members to weigh in.

3. Committee Discussion - Irving Park Project

The committee discussion focused on potential funding conditions. Jamie suggested plant material guarantees. Bob DiRico pointed out plant material would be guaranteed for one-year, and it wouldn't be worth paying for more than one year.

The committee agreed to following funding conditions:

The City agrees to make the repaving of the sidewalk as a high priority.

The City agrees to present the final design, including materials specified to the CPC for review and approval.

The City agrees to perform maintenance of trees and shrubs with naturalistic pruning to avoid shearing.

Motion: Bob moved to recommend to the City Council appropriation of \$294,195 in CPA funds from the Open Space/Recreation reserve for the Irving Park project. Dennis seconded the motion.

Vote: Dennis J. Duff, Bob DiRico, Elodia Thomas, Jamie O'Connell, Jon Bockian, Jason Cohen, Mark Krackiewicz, and Allen Gallagher voted in favor.

Elodia and Dennis said the project would set a standard for parks. Park neighbor, Nancy Kay thanked the committee and appreciated being involved in the process.

4. Acceptance of 2022-2-17- Minutes

Mark asked whether there were suggested changes to the minutes. Elodia pointed out Will Twombly's name was misspelled on page two.

Motion: Jason moved to accept the 2022-2-17 with the requested correction. Jamie seconded the motion.

Vote: Elodia Thomas, Allen Gallagher, Jason Cohen, Bob DiRico, Jon Bockian, Dennis J. Duff, Mark Krackiewicz, and Jamie O'Connell voted in favor.

5. Committee Discussion

A. Draft Recommendation to City Council - City Hall Paintings

The committee discussed features of the draft recommendation of funding to the City Council. Lanae highlighted areas where there were questions. She asked whether the condition for requiring contractors to carry insurance coverage for damage to or loss of the historic property needed to carry a minimum dollar amount inserted. Mark proposed the phrasing the condition "an appropriate level of insurance."

Mark called for a vote to accept the funding recommendation.

Motion: Dennis moved to accept the funding recommendation to the City Council for City Hall Geographical Paintings project. Elodia seconded the motion.

Vote: Elodia Thomas, Allen Gallagher, Jason Cohen, Bob DiRico, Jon Bockian, Dennis J. Duff, Mark Krackiewicz, and Jamie O'Connell voted in favor.

Mark informed the CPC that Michael Lara asked to postpone the 103 Nichols Ave. project presentation. As the only item on the agenda, Mark cancelled the meeting. Regarding the project application, Elodia said there were numerous iterations of the 103 Nichols Avenue application materials and many inconsistencies in project information. She said the committee could not accept anything stated or proposed on face value given the site condition and zoning issues. Elodia called for a discussion at another meeting about expectations for project applications. Mark agreed that the committee needed to discuss that topic and would be proposing some additions to application procedures soon.

In concluding the meeting, Mark said the CPC had two great projects to recommend to the City Council.

6. Adjournment

Motion: Dennis moved to adjourn the meeting. Jason seconded the motion.

Vote: Jamie O'Connell, Elodia Thomas, Bob DiRico, Jon Bockian, Dennis J. Duff, Mark Krackiewicz, Jason Cohen, and Allen Gallagher voted in favor.

Adjournment: 8:27PM