



## Meeting Minutes - Approved CENTRAL PARK DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

---

Wednesday, July 15, 2009

8:00 AM

Room 313, Madison Municipal Bldg.  
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

---

### 1 CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Staff Present: Mark Olinger, Kevin Briski, Kay Rutledge, and Bill Bauer

**Present:** 10 -

Marsha A. Rummel; William W. Barker; Nancy T. Ragland; Joe Sensenbrenner; Bradley C. Mullins; Leslie C. Schroeder; M. Nan Cheney; Phyllis Wilhelm; Amy T. Overby and Susan M. Schmitz

**Excused:** 2 -

Joseph R. Clausius and Truly Remarkable Loon

### 2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES - June 17, 2009

**A motion was made by Sensenbrenner, seconded by Cheney, to Approve the Minutes with the following changes:**

**#8 - Two places where there's an approximation. First one should be an approximation also.**

**Ms. Wilhelm stated that on Page 3, she meant that it's possible if the railroad were moved, that it could be the larger plan.**

**The motion passed by voice vote.**

### 3 PUBLIC COMMENT

David Mollenhoff appeared and stated that he was the Chair of Marquette Neighborhood Association Plan Committee in 1970. He has been following the plans for Central Park for a long time. In the 1970s, the Marquette neighborhood was going downhill at that time. They implemented some good public policies, the area was down zoned and schools were saved. Regarding the Phase 2 area between Williamson & East Washington Avenue, they looked at the exact size of area between East Wilson & Railroad Street - 264 feet wide and 660 feet long. Orton Park is exactly the size of this. This could be a great park with 40 acres. 40 acres came from the Parks Department. The East Isthmus was deficient in park land (also came from Parks Department.). Big, open public space for people. No buildings. In 1999, he had lunch with Heather Mann, Urban Open Space. He told her about the plan they had thought about in 1970. About that time, the City formed the East Rail Corridor Committee. City of Madison/Metro wanted to build a big facility in the center of that proposed park. He is very

concerned about several aspects of the plan. #1 - still two RR tracks running through the park. Serious compromise. #2 - amount of land in compromised park (17 acres for commuter rail stop, farmers market). More and more people living downtown. Need for open space is growing. RR tracks must be moved. It would be dangerous to have a park without moving the tracks. It will be difficult to raise money with this type of compromise.

Mr. Olinger asked Mr. Mollenhoff if the context is different today than before. Mr. Mollenhoff stated that the context isn't the same at all. A lot more things could happen there if we could structure them differently. The opportunity is just as great today as in 1970. Don't make a premature compromise. We will lose the opportunity.

4 Chair's Update

Mr. Barker stated that he has had a lot of conversations since the last meeting. He read articles in the paper. He is honored to have been able to work with such a fine group of people. Much has changed since we started. The Committee has done an outstanding job responding to these changes. We have maintained a productive discussion. We're not stalled or floundering. Olbrich Gardens has evolved over time to what it is today. We should establish a reasonable place to start and the structures that will allow it to flourish.

5 Discussion and action concerning park footprint

Mr. Olinger presented a map showing the acreage of the park. He stated that the CRC controls 2.6 acres and .86 acres. The City controls .24 acres and .92 acres. He doesn't have the acreage for the land upon which the railroad presently runs. Mr. Barker stated he would like to add Sands' property and the Railroad right-of-way. We have to be careful about making decisions that don't limit us down the road.

Mr. Mullins stated that from a real estate perspective, the opportunity to expand is always an option, whether it's vertical, horizontal, etc. Get something down with future expansion as an option and a goal. Go with the footprint in the "3" plan with a statement in our report that expansion is a goal and should be always looked to when the timing is right and when there's a demand, the economics work, and the need and desire is there.

Mr. Barker stated that it's important to have the conditions in place.

Mr. Mullins stated that he has been on committees for 10 years looking at this site.

Mr. Sensenbrenner applauded Mr. Mullin's concept and suggested we do what we can.

Mr. Barker stated that everything has changed since we started. In 20 years the city will be a different place. He thinks it will be nicer. We need to figure out where to start. Since we started, the economy has taken a downturn.

Ms. Overby stated that she agrees with Mr. Mullins. The charge of this group during the last 18-24 months has been to devise a doable plan based on realism. We're at that point.

Ald. Rummel stated that the McCarthy Plan doesn't exist anymore. The plan has been truncated - need to acknowledge that. How do we move the rail? We don't have the answer to that. The "3" plan won't work if the ORC say we don't have access to Few Street. She wants to move forward.

Mr. Olinger stated that it's clear from discussions of the Task Force that we're not going to end up with 40 acres. If businesses such as Research Products, or others, decide to go somewhere else, would that be considered a potential park expansion? Still need the land adjacent to Brearly Park from Union Pacific. Need to acquire Sands' property. Then it becomes 12-13 acres. Olbrich has more land to expand into. Even if the rails move to the north, we still have the issue of crossing the tracks to get to the park. What happens long-term on the Metro site? The Task Force has gone on record to not wanting to take the Warren buildings or Research Products. But should we give ourselves a little room to grow as we go through the process? The East Rail Committee talked about the park being at more than one place. The East Washington Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan explicitly mentions giving density bonuses to businesses that provide more open space. This is the center piece of a series of open spaces as this area reinvents itself. Give us the ability to act more proactively as things occur. Context has changed dramatically from 39 years ago. We need to continue to think about the neighborhood to the north that doesn't exist yet. There needs to be some positive momentum shown in the East Washington area. He doesn't believe we're compromising.

Mr. Barker mentioned four evolutionary steps: 1) Land that is currently controlled, 2) Sands' property (transitional form because we don't own it), MG&E lot, 3) RR corridors. 4) Additional contiguous or noncontiguous properties, Research Products, etc. Don't negatively impact blue collar/white collar jobs.

Ms. Ragland stated that it feels like we have to go to the big plan if we want to go in stages.

A motion was made by Sensenbrenner, seconded by Cheney, that the basic McCarthy Plan be recommended as a future park opportunity, meaning vision, meaning long-range, meaning over time, which he acknowledges includes the Warren property, Research Products, as the long-range future footprint.

Ald. Rummel stated then we are accepting a political decision of the past. It assumes something that we already accepted.

Ms. Wilhelm stated that the assumption in the motion is that the McCarthy Plan is the plan that everyone has endorsed. If we get so locked into this one plan, that she isn't sure has been totally adopted, we're limiting ourselves on what could happen in the future.

Mr. Barker stated that Olbrich has an articulated mission and a set of standards that they try to meet. The McCarthy plan can't ever come true now - it's not helpful.

Ms. Schroeder stated that the McCarthy Plan is a vision for buying a bunch of properties. The Comprehensive Plan talks about the area being parks deficient. Neighborhood needs are community gardens, place to run their dogs, playgrounds for kids. Brass fountains aren't what people want. The neighborhood has created a special identity. We need to reassess what that neighborhood has that is special and build on that.

Ms. Ragland mentioned a geographical vision instead of the McCarthy Plan.

AYES - 3 (Ragland, Cheney, & Sensenbrenner), NOS - 7, motion failed.

Mr. Barker suggested a motion as an evolutionary footprint.

A motion was made by Mullins, seconded by Overby to recognize the footprint associated with the "3" plan with the stated objectives and goals of the footprint growing in the future with no bounds. Could be growth to Metro, could be growth to Research Products, but those are future things and we can't predict the future. Talking about a footprint and not where the skate park is going to be, brass fountains, etc.

Mr. Barker stated this allows us to take advantage of opportunities that arise. Mr. Mullins sees a potential for growth.

The motion was approved by voice vote.

## **6 Discussion and action concerning park elements and transition plan**

### **6a Presentation by Parks Superintendent Kevin Briski**

Mr. Briski, Parks Superintendent, appeared and distributed the first publication of the Madison Parks Department showing their mission and recognizing where their future is. He also distributed a draft "Central Park Phase I Transition Plan" - the footprint of what is currently available to us. It identifies what is there and how we can transition from what we currently have to the "3" plan. Green spaces - currently available to us. Yellow - Railroad. Red spaces - properties owned by Sands. He echoed Mr. Olinger's comments about acquisition. It's an important component to the overall plan and vision. He advocates acquisition as soon as possible. Across Ingersoll & across Brearly, the Blue space on the map - MGE. We can transition into development at various levels from ground to irrigated ground to ground that will irrigate properly. Elevation plan - systematic plan to make sure you're system is going to be green and healthy. Phase 1 - you can use property you have. He concurs with moving forward on the Skate Park. There is significant momentum with individuals involved in Yahara Park. Open space to gather, fly a kite, have a picnic, run, etc., is an

important part. Can do that pretty quickly. Would have to do some landscape provisions. He suggested community gardens on the Brearly site. There may be some landfill or Brownfield work. Would have to test that. The cost, not including Friends with the Skate Park, is \$500,000. That would include appropriate grass, irrigation, drainage, park benches, and picnic tables. Development of Festival/lawn on the property is an overall central piece to an overall conceptual master plan for that area. Connectivity is an important component. Connectivity with greenways, etc.

Mr. Barker mentioned the Few Street right-of-way for a small children's playground. Mr. Bauer stated that's a fairly good sized playground, and would cost about \$85,000.

Ald. Rummel thanked Mr. Briski for attending the meeting. She suggested that the Sands property could be used for a playground. Its risky putting community gardens on the Center for Resilient Cities (CRC) property on Brearly. Add community gardens onto MGE property to make them more permanent.

Mr. Barker stated this park needs a mission like Olbrich Gardens. It could be a test bed for urban resiliency standards including sustainable energy production, and sustainable urban food production. There's not a community garden in Madison that doesn't have a waiting list. Can't build enough community garden space. Local food is the way to go.

Ms. Cheney agrees with Ald. Rummel. Nobody wants their garden upset. Need more community gardens. Put the Skate Park up there and put the gardens in the back.

Mr. Barker suggested leaving the design to the Parks Department. The Task Force should just set some parameters.

Ms. Overby asked if anything could be done on the green strip shown on the draft transition plan. For example, bocce ball, lawn bowling, etc. Mr. Schroeder stated it's currently paved right now, with tracks underneath.

Mr. Barker stated this is a beginning point and a reasonable transition.

Ms. Ragland stated that part of the MOU Subcommittee was to have a separate Board. The Parks Department is more than willing to take an active ownership of this.

Mr. Briski stated the Parks Department is at the table. They want to be a part of this process. Want to be partners. Want to help facilitate the process. There are models across the country. Collaboration with business and commercial and creating a not-for-profit and establishing management.

Mr. Barker suggested a targeted advocacy group, modeled after the Olbrich Botanical Society.

Mr. Mullins asked if this phase 1 transition plan allows the alternative

transportation modes that would be developed under the Federal earmark money.

Mr. Barker stated that it includes bike paths, and acquisition of Sands' property.

Mr. Mullins asked if the plan encourage those components that would utilize the Federal earmark money. It should. Mr. Briski answered yes.

Ald. Rummel stated that she isn't ready to support that yet. She doesn't want to say that it's a community garden forever. We need to answer questions about bike path corridors. The land still needs to be tested.

Mr. Barker stated that we can assess and put in place a park that people can use immediately. Put in place an advocacy group.

Mr. Briski stated as we transition from now to "3"'s plan, we can still decide later where things go.

Ald. Rummel stated that we don't know enough about the quality of the plan.

Mr. Briski stated it's up for further public input.

Ald. Rummel stated that a bike path goes past this park. We need to look at all the opportunities of this green space.

Mr. Barker stated that we shouldn't focus on the details.

Mr. Briski stated that the plan is just showing where the green space is. It's up for further input.

Ms. Wilhelm stated there is consensus that we need to establish an advocacy group - private citizens working with Parks. There needs to be a placeholder in plans for community gardens. There is agreement that we know we need to use the earmarked Federal money; acquisition of Sands' property is one potential use for that.

Mr. Olinger said the use of earmarked funds for the acquisition of Sands' property is only possible if it's used for ped/bike improvements.

A motion was made by Overby, seconded by Wilhelm to recommend approval of plan that we are putting forth is designating property for a skate park, festival grounds, children's playground and community gardens and take advantage of earmarked funds, as permitted (ped/bike improvements) and to form a fundraising/advocacy group).

Ms. Cheney stated that she would like to be a member of MOU Subcommittee. Mr. Barker concurred.

Ald. Rummel stated that the motion should include a sustainable, urban park.

The motion was approved by voice vote.

A motion was made by Schroeder, seconded by Schmitz to recommend that the mission of the park be a test bed for sustainability and resiliency strategies in an urban setting. The motion was approved by voice vote.

**7 Update and Discussion on Proposed Railroad Crossing Closings**

Mr. Olinger stated that the hearing is in February. He proposed perhaps moving the Few Street crossing discussion up in the schedule so we can have a decision soon rather than later.

**8 MOU Subcommittee Report - No report**

**9 ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Schmitz, seconded by Sensenbrenner, to Adjourn. The motion passed by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:52 a.m.