



## Ralston Park Improvement Plan Ad Hoc Committee Meeting MINUTES – February 28, 2019

- 1) **Call to Order** – Committee Member Kennedy called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. at the Santiam Travel Station with members Bolen, Williams and Whitlatch absent.
- 2) **Approval of Minutes:** *January 31, 2019 minutes were approved as presented.*
- 3) **Ralston Park Conceptual Design** – *by Stangland & Associates, Inc. [Complete PowerPoint Presentation can be found in Archives]*

Consultant Misar provided a recap of the last meeting to include a breakdown of the meeting schedule, site review, and historical context before reviewing the committee's notes on existing assets (centrally located, canal, gazebo & rose garden) and problems (safety issues, gas station, poor lighting, visual blockage, topography, ununified, and paths that lead to nowhere).

Stangland and Misar called attention to the Key points of the existing park:

- a. Lacks common characterises and is ununified
  - b. Over half of the park is underutilized or not used at all (Gas Station and SE Corner)
  - c. Does not have a strong connection to nor access from the surrounding neighborhoods
  - d. Lacks amenities and activities for all
  - e. No heart or centralized area for people to congregate
- 4) **Site Analysis/Diagrammatic Analysis** – The committee provided the following feedback after viewing several diagrammatics:

**Gazebo.** In response to possibly relocating the gazebo, Marks stated that it was made possible by the local Optimists. Some community members have a connection to the gazebo as they have held special events in it (marriages, etc). Moving it is doable but we need to involve the community and the Optimists in that process. Marks stated he'd be cautious of moving it without seeing a design.

**Gas Station.** There was Committee consensus to tear down the gas station. Stangland added that it currently sits two feet higher than the surrounding landscape. If you take the grade down it would certainly open the park up.

**Restrooms.** There was a brief discussion regarding relocating the restrooms away from the heart of the park. It would open the park up and keep the area more visible. Staff would need to provide feedback regarding any possible issues of moving the restrooms at the next meeting.

**Canal/Bridge.** A brief discussion occurred on the type of bridge and canal access the committee envisioned. Marks stated that we need to determine regulatory limits before designing it. We probably do not want to encourage people to the water but 18" above the water; a boardwalk approach would be attractive down to but not in the water. Kennedy added that staff would need to confirm if Albany owns or has an easement as they would ultimately okay the design.

The committee embraced Cowart's idea of a wide bridge rather than a narrow crossing bridge. This would add extra space to the park. Marks added that it could be an iconic bridge unique to Lebanon where people want to have photos taken, etc.

Untiet added that she liked the idea of having shrubbery to provide a division between the walking path and canal.

**Holiday/Event Lighting.** A unified lighting scheme was previously discussed. Stangleland added that the simplest would be white lighting throughout the park. A possible design would be to include pole lighting, along with other decorations, to circle and unify the park. Marks stated that the City needs a lighting plan to be followed each year. The City of Canby was used as a credible example of a uniformed lighting plan.

**Veteran Memorial Area.** After a brief discussion on a possible flag area that could serve dual purposes, Marks stated that he envisioned a nice statue or artwork rather than flags.

**Interactive Art/Activities.** As a central park, the committee preferred dual-purpose art areas rather than playground equipment areas. Something indestructible for kids to crawl on. Untiet likes the idea of kinetic art.

Marks noted that in response to the Strategic Action Plan, the Lebanon Arts Commission is looking into an iconic bronze piece emblematic of the Lebanon community. As Lebanon's central park, this would be a wonderful addition that could be incorporated into the plan. Cowart added that it could be an interactive piece.

**Incorporating Tax Lot 1400.** Bower liked having Maple Street a one way (or closing Maple off) and having a cobblestone path to connect that piece to the park. Committee reached consensus to not have a through street (assessible only to homeowners).

**Food Carts:** Bower states that she's not in favor of food trucks in that area due to safety concerns. Cowart feels they should be located at the edge of the park. Untiet suggested pulling the curb back on the Grove and Oak Street sides with angled cart parking. Activities on this side of the park would help draw people over to the underutilized side of the park.

Untiet would like to see small family gathering areas incorporated along with trash and recycling areas.

**Water Feature/Seating:** The committee discussed dual purpose coliseum-style seating with a water feature incorporated into it. There could possibly be temporary art displayed within the water feature/fountains.

**Covered Structures.** The committee discussed the need for extra covered structures due to inclement weather but was apprehensive since it would serve as another hangout space for unsavory people. Stangeland suggested a very tall airy structure so people can't hideout.

Misar called attention to their preliminary design work used to analyze movement throughout the space, place creation, canal crossing, and views into and out of the park. Various preliminary design concepts depicted placing the gazebo, bridge, and restrooms in different areas of the park.

Misar showed several variations of bridge, plaza, pathways, and Christmas lighting concepts for the committee to explore design ideas and give feedback.

Marks felt that the entrance/flag plaza area is a very welcoming look into the Park with some very interesting décor as the future Christmas tree will be there with a plaza.

Misar stated that they would continue to develop the schemes and incorporate some of the information received today. At the next meeting, they will come back with images similar to the last design concept shown. The concept depicted the food cart area on Maple Street, restrooms to the outer edge of Maple Street, a splash pad next to the restrooms, the gazebo relocated to the center of the park and the entrance/flag plaza where the gas station is now.

Stangeland explained that by placing the restrooms at the edge of the park there are more eyes on it; locating it next to the splash pad is so that the kids have easy access to one from the other; and it's close to main sewer and water lines.

Marks states that he doesn't really want the restrooms to be the focal point as people drive by. He'd prefer to have an attractive Gazebo or something like that as the focal point.

After a brief discussion for possible solutions, the committee felt that the splashpad and restrooms might be better suited at the Grove and Oak side of the park, where the kids would be on the other side of the canal away from Highway 20, allowing more room to gather for large events.

Misar asked for any last thoughts from the committee members.

Untiet stated that as we look at possible designs, it would be helpful to as a group identify the key factors to help lead our decision.

All agreed that it is important to design for the future in mind. Misar added that they have already doubled that space by simply removing the gas station and relocating the gazebo and restrooms.

- 5) **Next Meeting** – March 7 at 3:00 p.m.
- 6) **Public Comments** – None
- 7) **Adjournment** – Kennedy adjourned the meeting at 5:05 p.m.