



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: October 3, 2012

Agenda Item #VA

Agency: City of Belmont, Parks and Recreation Commission

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Agenda Title: Davey Glen Park Revised Design

Agenda Action: Motion to Approve

Recommendation

The Parks and Recreation Department recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission make a motion to approve the revised design of Davey Glen Park.

Background

The 1992 Park and Open Space Master Plan identified the need for local parks within Central neighborhood and clearly called for the creation of a park at the Davey Glen site. The Master Plan states:

“Davey Glen Property

1. Work with the developer to achieve parkland dedication instead of Quimby Act fees.
2. Develop neighborhood park as part of future development proposal.
3. Develop passive interpretive trail or exhibits to take advantage of natural character and archeological features.”

In 2000, the City of Belmont reaffirmed the Master Plan by acquiring a one acre parcel for a park instead of park in-lieu fees during a townhouse development project on Davey Glen Road. In April 2006, the City Council ranked the Davey Glen Park development project as one of their highest priorities. The Parks and Recreation Commission held a special on-site meeting on November 3, 2007 to receive feedback from the community on the proposed development of a park. The meeting was attended by approximately 35 people who voiced their thoughts and concerns about the proposed park site.

In February 2008, the Park and Recreation Commission voted to recommend to City Council that staff contract with a landscape architect to provide design services and to assist in the continued community outreach process. On March 11, 2008, City Council considered a resolution approving the contract with the landscape architect but asked that staff conduct a survey of nearby residents to evaluate the interest in development of a park and the type of park that may be appropriate.

In summer 2008, Parks and Recreation staff created and mailed a survey to 850 local area residents and 401 surveys were returned (47%). The results indicated that there is a fairly even split among the neighborhood concerning the proposed park at the Davey Glen site with about a third voting for an active park, a third voting for a passive park, and a third voting for no park. However, the results also suggested that about two-thirds of the local residents want the site developed as a park- either a passive

or active. For this reason, along with previous planning, the Parks and Recreation Department recommended that the City proceed with design and construction of a park at the site.

At the November 5, 2008 the City Council approved Resolution 10071 authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Professional Services Agreement for Landscape Architect services and the Department subsequently selected a landscape architect for the project.

In June 2009, the Parks and Recreation Department applied for a first round grant from the State of California Proposition 84 for Davey Glen Park. In spring 2010, the City received notification that the grant was unsuccessful.

On July 18, 2009, the Parks and Recreation Commission conducted an on-site meeting to present the preliminary designs for Davey Glen Park. A sign in sheet was circulated and 62 residents confirmed their attendance. The public raised a variety of issues, concerns, and comments. The preliminary design was brought to the Commission in September and October 2009.

In March 2010, the Commission voted to create an Ad Hoc Davey Glen Committee to work on the design for the new park at Davey Glen. The Ad Hoc Committee held five meetings (3/17/10, 4/13/10, 6/4/10, 6/8/10, 6/29/10) to discuss the project and developed a preliminary drawing that was presented to the Commission in July 2010, and the Commission recommended that the services of the Landscape Architect be restarted to further the Committee's design. From July to December 2010, the Committee has held seven meetings (7/21/10, 9/21/10, 9/28/10, 10/19/10, 11/3/10, 11/16/10, 11/30/10) in preparation for the December 2010 presentation to the Commission.

At the December 2010 meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee presented the preliminary conceptual design to the Commission and received generally positive feedback. The Commission discussed compliance with the American with Disabilities Act, the entrance to the park and the proposed play structure. Since that meeting the Ad Hoc Committee has held four meeting (12/16/10, 1/20/11, 2/10/11, and 2/22/11) to finalize the conceptual design and prepare a cost estimate for presentation to the Commission.

At the March 2011 meeting, staff described the schematic design in detail to the Commission. The Commission commented positively on the design but expressed concern about the cost. The Commission directed staff to obtain feedback from the Planning Commission and return to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

On April 5, 2011 staff presented the schematic design to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission had favorable comments concerning the schematic design including compliments for the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. They also expressed an interest in Area D stating that that would provide a positive experience beyond the playground.

In June 2011, the Parks and Recreation Department applied for a grant from the State of California Proposition 84 for Davey Glen Park.

Also in June 2011, the project returned to the Parks and Recreation Commission with three design and cost options for the five areas of the park:

- A. Entrance Area

- B. Grassy Play Area
- C. Play Structure
- D. Nature Trail
- E. Interpretive Signs

1. Option 1 included all five areas and is estimated to cost \$805,966. It was noted that this design is well liked but the costs are a challenge.
2. Option 2 is estimated at \$634,586 and included removing area D from the design. Area D is a nature trail which was identified in the Parks & Open Space Master Plan. It was noted that there may be some safety concerns with visibility and maintenance could be difficult.
3. Option 3 is estimated at \$486,490 and moved the play structure from Area C into Area B creating a smaller park that would not capture the nature of the site and not use the entire breadth of the park.

The Commission considered the options and voted 4 to 3 to send the entire design to City Council but recommended choosing Option 2 and moving forward with design and construction process on that option.

The project with Commission feedback was then presented to City Council on June 14, 2011. The City Council generally expressed support for the design of the park and encouraged staff to continue to seek alternative funding sources. City Council also requested that staff conduct additional outreach to the neighbors. In June 2011, the Parks and Recreation Department applied for a grant from the State of California Proposition 84 for Davey Glen Park.

In response to Council comments, on November 6, 2011 the Parks and Recreation Department and Commission held an open house from 1-3pm on the site of Davey Glen Park. 825 postcards were mailed to residents within 1,500 feet of the site including individual postcards for each apartment on Davey Glen Road. In addition, an email was sent to citizens that have commented on the project in the past. The goal of the open house was to have a discussion with the neighbors about the project. Commissioners and staff answered questions, talked about the design, and took comments. Staff distributed copies of the design for neighbors to take home. 18 residents signed the attendance sheet at the meeting and about five children also came. Their names and email addresses will be added to the distribution list for upcoming meetings. Staff also worked with the landscape architect to prepare a large format display of the park design that is posted on site. The purpose of the display is to increase awareness by the neighbors and provide a place to post upcoming meeting notices. The display was in place for the open house meeting.

In December 2011, staff brought the item back to the Commission to review the results of the open house. Commissioners reviewed the meeting and discussed traffic. In April 2012, the City received notification that the grant was unsuccessful. In May 2012, the project returned to the Commission with staff announcing that the grant application was unsuccessful and presenting the option of trying to secure additional funding or to create an ad hoc committee to develop strategies to reduce the scope of the project. The Commission voted to allow creation of an ad hoc committee to return to the June 2012 Commission with alternatives.

Staff met with the landscape architect and the ad hoc committee to discuss alternatives to reduce the

scope and cost of the Davey Glen project. The group discussed different play options however, none of the alternatives for Areas B or C appeared to satisfy the ad hoc committee. Because significant effort expended and the general acceptance of the current design, staff recommended that the full design be retained until additional funding could be secured to build the entire project as envisioned.

At the June 2012 meeting, the Commission recommended continuing with a redesign of the park and asked staff to work with a landscape architect and the ad hoc committee to develop a design for Area B of the park that included nature based play.

Analysis

Staff met twice with the landscape architect and the ad hoc committee and developed the following:

Area A, the entrance, would remain mostly unchanged with the ramps, plantings, and turnaround area and entrance unaltered in the current design. The only change is the removal of a concrete bulb out on Davey Glen Road for traffic safety reasons.

Area B was modified with the following goals:

- Retain the multi-use function of Area B including play, picnic, and relaxation
- Provide visual relief to the site by including a green surface
- Include a small picnic area into the design
- Provide a low maintenance surface to reduce operating costs

With these goals in mind, the Ad Hoc committee developed a recommendation to the Commission that includes a synthetic turf mounded play area. The space can be used for multi purposes and will be a center for creative play. Kids can climb up and down the landscape while parents can read or picnic in the space. The surface is synthetic turf with an organic infill for low maintenance and water costs. In addition, a picnic area was added to the site similar to Semeria Park to add another feature to the landscape. A model was prepared for the design that will be displayed in the Parks and Recreation office and brought to the meeting. The model was not ready by the staff report publication date but photos will be emailed to the Commissioners and the model will be available for public viewing once it is received.

If the Commission approves the design, it will go forward to the Planning Commission and City Council for conceptual approval. If successful through those processes, design and environmental compliance can be completed over the winter with possible construction as early as next summer.

Alternatives

1. Take no Action

Attachments

- A. None

Fiscal Impact

- No Impact/Not Applicable

Funding Source Confirmed: Planned Park Account

Source:

- Council
- Staff
- Citizen Initiated
- Other*

Purpose:

- Statutory/Contractual Requirement
- Council Vision/Priority
- Discretionary Action
- Plan Implementation*

Public Outreach:

- Posting of Agenda
- Other*

*Email sent to Davey Glen email list on September 27, 2012.