

MEETING NOTES



DATE: January 13, 2021, 10a-12p | Zoom

RE: Steering Committee Meeting #2: Community Advisory Committee Minutes

PROJECT: Riverside Park: *Adventure in the Making!*

ATTENDEES: Bob Getts (Soap Box Derby), Dave Benson (Marian University EcoLab), Dean Peterson (Marian University Cyclocross), Kevin Hardie (FOWR), Rev. Shaune Shelby (Ebenezer Baptist Church), Rhonda Bayless (Center for Wellness of Urban Women), Ron Rice (Near NW Community Builder), Rosezalynn Sanford (CICF Ambassador – Riverside), Emily Krueger (16 Tech), Teddrick Hardy (CICF Ambassador – Haughville), Stephanie Schuck (Marian University EcoLab), Michelle Watts (Riverside Regional Park Foundation), Rusty Hughes (Riverside H.S.)

1. Welcome + Check-in

- a. Julee welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for attending meeting. The committee's feedback is crucial for finalizing the Riverside plan. Encouraged folks to share honest thoughts about the plan.
- b. *Feedback:* How have you connected with the park since our last meeting? Did you attend the Open House event or have visited since? What were your impressions? Or did you "visit" through the website?
 - Kevin H.: Attended open house where he had a booth. Great interactions and was able to sign people up for the virtual clean-ups. He has been back several times since, including the Marina open house. He has had positive dialogue with Citizens Energy group about rock ramp and V3 about canoe launch considerations.
 - Dean P: Attended open house and thought it was cool to see what could happen. He was just at park last week. Dean likes the idea of bike path connections using the existing paved cart paths. The wooded area could be a single-track mountain bike area and could utilize the connection to EcoLab and Lake Sullivan/Cycloplex connection. He could have Marian students help with clean-ups.
 - Dave B.: Excited about the whole project and the ways EcoLab could help. Could have students involved in restoration. He is excited about the connection from White River to Ecolab and the trails.
 - Bob G.: This is his first meeting and is glad to be a part of the committee. He is mainly focused on Soap Box Derby (SBD) with the addition of facilities and engaging more kids in the community.
 - Rhonda B: Hosted a walk in September utilizing the parks trails and received good feedback. She heard a lot of people reminiscing about when park was there and received an overall positive community impression. She is interested in how members can utilize park and connect to the Near Northwest neighborhood.
 - Teddrick H: Excited about bringing surrounding community into park and the opportunity to expose people to the park who may not be aware of it. The park will bring communities together. He is exciting to learn about park access and how the park can serve the neighborhood.
 - Stephanie S: Excited about any ecological/habitat restoration plans, invasive species management and getting students involved by being partners and collaborating on the project.
 - Emily K: 16 Tech is undergoing a lot of development over the last year, including a new community center that will be opening. There will be a new bridge trail connection and

excited about possibilities the connection could add to the park. She mentioned 16 Tech companies showing interest in what is happening in the surrounding area.

- Michelle W: First meeting and is excited about partnership and collaborating with the committee. She wants to make sure Riverside community is well represented.
- Rusty H: Several staff from Riverside High School attended Open House. As athletic director, he is excited about possible uses of the park. He feels science classes could also benefit. He can get student volunteers if needed.
- Ron R: Had booth at the “fabulous” open house. He thought the open house was great, loved the dancers. He is part of a diabetes initiative that chose Riverside for workout location. They enjoyed the art and used the SBD hill for lunges. Two weeks ago, Ron met with the Archery Trade Association at the park and they are interested in a 3D archery range at Riverside. He has also been talking to Mark Miles and IMS about involvement with Outdoor Youth Exploration Academy.
- Linda B: Thanked everyone for being part of the process. The Riverside Plan has more life because of everyone keeping it alive. She is excited to see it evolve. She has a friends group meeting for a walk there in a few weeks.
- Rosezalynn S: Priority is to make sure the neighborhood has input and is interested in collaboration with White River improvements

2. Timeline + Updates

- Open House was in September. There was a great turn out.
- Surveys were collected and feedback was analyzed.
- We are now in Phase II of the project which consists of Opportunities and Constraints analysis and concept development. With the feedback given today the design team can better refine concept.

3. Open House event re-cap + Survey feedback

- a. The open house was different than a typical public meeting. Due to COVID restrains, it was decided to instead have a celebration of “re-opening” the park. About 500 people attended. Attendees were given information about the park, tours were given, and surveys were filled out on site, online, or were mailed in from neighbors. The survey was open for 8 weeks and over 304 surveys were turned in with about 92 of them being hard copies.
- b. Demographics:
 - i. The average age was 30-39 years old. With equal male and female.
 - ii. The average income was below \$50,000 a year.
 - iii. Approximately 1/4 of respondents lived within 5 blocks of the park; 1/3 live between 1-5 miles away; 1/3 live over 5 miles from the park. The farthest came from Plainfield and Beech Grove
 - iv. Approximately 60% of participants were White; 35% were Black. Majority of participants were not of Hispanic or Latino origin. There was outreach to the Latinx community but there was not a large response.
 - v. Largest response in Programs:
 1. Adult Fitness
 2. Outdoor Youth Camp
 3. After School Programs
 - vi. Largest response in Activities:
 1. Walking, jogging, running, hiking on trails.
 2. Gathering with family and friends
 3. Boating, canoeing, kayaking, and watersports
 - vii. Amenities
 1. Restrooms/Comfort stations
 2. Natural Areas
 3. Multipurpose trails
 - viii. Many are hoping to keep natural beauty and preserve what is already there.

- ix. Art in the park was an opportunity for public art in the space. Artwork ranged from traditional to more non-traditional. The majority of survey participants want to see more.
- x. Because of COVID, artwork will remain up through spring so get the word out and go see the artwork.
- c. The Design team went back to Master Plan elements list and added to it with new ideas tested from survey. The survey was then analyzed and an Opportunities and Constraints analysis was performed to identify where elements might happen in the park and the general size they would need.

4. Program and Opportunities + Constraints

- a. Opportunities and Constraints takes the proposed program elements and organizes them to see where they can all fit within the project limits. This includes seeing what elements could be paired together and could share an infrastructure.
- b. Riverside Opportunities and Constraints model includes zones, where similar elements are grouped. These include:
 - i. River Zone – located at the southeast corner of park. There is close proximity to the river, watersports and river access at this location. There is connectivity to the rest of the river.
 - ii. Racing Zone – located at 30th and Cold Spring Road. Soap Box Derby elements will stay and outdoor fitness elements will be added as well as a tree top walk.
 - iii. Winter Zone – located north of Racing Zone. This area will include sledding, skating ribbon, event area, toboggan run, biergarten, and will be multi-seasonal.
 - iv. Wetland Education Zone – located at Crooked Creek and Lake Sullivan area. The Major Taylor Velodrome and mountain bike trails will remain and an added bike pump track and skate park extension is identified for this area.
 - v. Central Nature Zone – includes the old clubhouse which could be converted to a nature center. This area connects to the large open passive recreation area and also includes an archery area.

5. Concept Development

- a. Concept was presented as cohesive plan and then reviewed by Zone; Each member then was asked for feedback.
 - b. Because of physical characteristics and restraints of the park, the elements are mostly arranged around the perimeter because of the large floodplain. The plan is not finalized but is a working idea that has taken into account the functionality, practicality, political aspects, and maintenance with the help of the Indy Parks team.
 - c. The Zones
 - i. River Zone – This area is located at the finish line to Soap Box Derby and includes a large event space. There will be river access, a parking lot expansion that will total 250 spaces, restrooms, small stage, picnic groves, and an event lawn. A shelter and picnic plaza will be located at the location of the old historic pavilion and casino. The team hopes to incorporate the history of the pavilion. Current paved cart paths will remain (shown as dashed lines on concept) and additional connection paths will be added (solid line on concept). An overlook at White River Parkway and 30th street is proposed and would include a plaza.
 - ii. Racing Zone – This zone will include a new building for the Soap Box Derby that will have an indoor practice area and storage. A pagoda similar to the style of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway will create a public presence feature. A parking lot is proposed and entry plaza at the building. An RC track, a small dirt track for remote control cars, is identified for this area. One could choose a more park-like trail along Cold Spring Road or a trail leading to the SBD structures. Also added is a fitness trail with stations around a measurable track and a dog park. A treetop walk includes an overlook over the historic bear pit, which could be an opportunity for an interpretive site. There is also a break off from treetop walk into more of an adventurous suspension bridge walk.
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- iii. Winter Zone – this zone includes a year-round skate ribbon and toboggan run. The current sledding hill will remain with added sledding located at the previous 18th hole. This area has great views; a proposed overlook terrace will be located at the top of the hill. A pavilion with fire pits and a biergarten would also be located at this area. A stage would be located off the biergarten and could be aimed toward biergarten or the event lawn and skate ribbon.
- iv. Wetland Education Zone – This zone includes Crooked Creek and Lake Sullivan. The wetland creates a delta for education opportunities. A trail system with observation deck could include interpretive signage. For safety purposes it is suggested to minimize road crossings and due to illegal dumping and activities, restricting vehicle access to the area near I-65. A boardwalk is proposed over the pond and a trail link to the nature center. A bike pump track and skate park extension will fit well with the proximity to the Velodrome.
- v. Central Nature Zone – The old clubhouse will be expanded to become the new nature center and will include expanding the parking lot. An archery range is proposed and can be developed quickly in phases. The existing drive can be used and as the archery range grows the drive can curve further south to accommodate and eventually additional parking can be added. Nature play and education areas are location in this zone, as well as educational demonstration garden. Picnic groves and shelters are suggested. Mounds which used to be part of the railroad through the park will be used to help celebrate the past and provide high observation gathering spaces. These spaces could be used for locations for art or bird blinds could be added.

d. Feedback:

- Dave B: Loves all the natural environment and native species habitats. Loves the trail and multiuse paths. He suggests a pedestrian connection to Marian, thinks it would be helpful to campus and Ecolab and could see students using the paths daily. Connection to Marion could be helpful and to Ecolab. He likes that the zipline idea was removed and treetop walk added. He encourages turf removal and converting to native plants. Marian students can be involved in habitat restoration. He loves the potential ecology and educational opportunities. Are you planning to manipulate water levels from current state in the deep water and shallow water marshes? Per Don Staley, probably yes, with the number of springs, they generate a landscape into shallow and deep-water marshes. Details need to be worked out. Crooked Creek wants to meander, and we need to think about how that work in that area.
 - Kevin: He feels this is a comprehensive plan. He likes using greenway as conduit to entry connection. The water access points are well thought out. Suggests river access caution signage for downstream dangers (rock ramp and damaged Emrichsville Dam, etc.).
 - Bob: Thinks plan is amazing. SBD has national races with racers from all over the country and the non-SBD amenities available for race week is exciting. What exactly is the plaza specifically? Sarah: The plaza is a hard surface that is accessible, could have seating or driven on if needed; multifunctional space. Bob: What is the Entry Overlook? Sarah: There is elevation change at this area, folks would come in at same elevation as crosswalk and has overlook to the landscape. Bob: What is the access at 30th Street to track? Sarah: Visitors would enter into parking lot off of Cold Spring Rd; there will be a paved internal road to the bottom of SBD that is restricted for SBD use only. Bob: Is there parking on 30th Street? Sarah: That has been removed and the entrance to the parking lot adjacent to the SBD building is located off of Cold Spring Road. Bob: What is a biergarten mean in a park setting? Sarah: It is a place to relax, maybe have concessions, shaded area with connection to stage.
 - Pastor Shelby: This is his first time viewing of the plan. He has a lot of questions about something happening to minority community rather than with it. He is concerned about to access for seniors in the neighborhood. Neighborhood has had issues with road access to local churches and businesses, and I-65 access because of cycling event and the restrictive traffic flow. On Cold Spring Road there is a concern regarding debris. He is not one for the biergarten. When you mix race and alcohol, there is often heightened policing. There should be historic preservation of Major Taylor and it needs to be prominent with better recognition
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and memorializing, there could more of a draw to the park. Bikes on paths is a sour thumb with some of the neighbors because sidewalks are not built and he does not like bikers taking up whole trail. There should be emphasis on early childhood experiences and nature connectivity that is minority friendly. Lack of experience in some of the activities could cause issue with neighbors. Archery is not a minority activity as well as the skate park and can feel uncomfortable. Concerned about some activities requiring equipment rental. We need to look at diversity of experience and economic connectivity.

- Stephanie – Agreed with what Dave said. As land manager for Ecolab, excited for restoration and natural area. She said it can be a daunting task to restore and maintain. As team begins to develop plan, she is interested in helping with native plant components. She loves the nature play areas. In her past experience with students unfamiliar with nature, it is an important piece to provide comfortable safe natural areas.
- Ron R.: Much of plan is what he expected to see based on his involvement with the master plan development. He is aware that some neighbors were hoping for outdoor skating rink, which is a new idea for them. He agrees with Pastor Shelby on the biergarten, believes there will be pushback. His archery pursuits involve minority owned archery group currently working at Riverside Park and is well received by community (kids, adults, and seniors) and has already worked with Outdoor Youth Exploration Academy on an 8-week long program at Flanner House. He feels bringing new concepts and disciplines to a community is a plus. More kids involved and exposed to more sports and leisure, the more opportunities for all. Agrees that we need to find way to assuage Pastor Shelby's traffic concerns.
- Michelle: From the Foundation's perspective they are on board with transformation. Major concerns are her perception that the dam reconstruction is restricting the south end and cutting off flow which would inhibit water activity. Need to expand conversation on the dam. Plan captures community feedback, but agrees we need to look at racial equity and access piece. Have we talk to kids about what they would want at the park?
- Rosezalynn: Ron, Michelle, and Pastor Shelby expressed her concerns as well. Wants to make sure we do not forget about the neighborhood. Concern about gentrification as well as traffic problems. Concerned about archery and toboggan or any other activities that would be fee-based. Perhaps community days to ensure the neighborhood can participate, but not the type of community days that were carried out in the past. Feels that the concept is geared more towards Marian than Riverside. Sarah: Because of the constraints with the floodplain, some activities that need drier land, i.e., dog park are located on Marian side. Also, the maintained landscape on Cold Spring Road is compliments the streetscape along Marian University.
- Rusty: Riverside High School would use the walkway on 30th Street everyday for school. The bridge at 30th street needs a make over and sidewalk foot traffic improvements. There is ecology and science class potential at park. He feels that other than the sledding hill, his students would need education for the other items. He said if need youth input, they have 400 kids you can ask.

6. Next Steps + Closing Thoughts

- a. The schedule was reviewed to discuss next steps. Follow up meetings, concept refinement will be done before moving into the final phase of the project. A third Steering Committee meeting will be held in the last phase of the project so that members can review how comments were incorporated and provide feedback before the plan is finalized.
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