



CITY OF LA VISTA
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PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MAY 16, 2013

The City of La Vista Planning Commission held a meeting on Thursday, May 16, 2013, in the Harold "Andy" Anderson Council Chamber, 8116 Park View Boulevard. Chairman Krzywicki called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. with the following members present: Tom Miller, Hewitt, Krzywicki, Malmquist, Gahan, Andsager, Alexander and Lowell Miller. Members absent were: Circo and Nielsen. Also in attendance were Ann Birch, Community Development Director, Christopher Solberg, City Planner, John Kottmann, City Engineer, Dolores Silkworth and Hans Klein-Hewitt from RDG.

Legal notice of the public meeting and hearing were posted, distributed and published according to Nebraska law. Notice was simultaneously given to all members of the Planning Commission. All proceedings shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

1. Call to Order

- A. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Krzywicki at 7:01 p.m. Copies of the agenda and staff reports were made available to the public.

2. Old Business

None.

3. New Business

- A. **Public Hearing to consider the adoption of the Civic Center Park Master Plan as an amendment to the La Vista Parks and Recreation Master Plan.**
 - i. **Presentation:** Dolores Silkworth explained the presentation was the same one given at the joint planning session several weeks ago at the library, and so it is an overview of the project and phasing. Silkworth reviewed the public process which was used to generate this plan, which included very good public participation. She stated it is an ambitious plan and includes Central Park and the golf course property. It also addresses a few issues along 84th Street and how to present the park in a better face along 84th Street and the interaction with the park. It is a comprehensive plan in that it takes a very small body of water, in a fairly large watershed, and expands that water into something that is iconic and beautiful, and acts as an organizing feature for the park. The connections to the neighborhoods and adjacent areas have been strengthened in this plan in that a number of different access points into the park would be provided, including along 84th Street, both at the intersection and toward the municipal buildings to the north; visual access from 84th Street includes access underneath via an underpass to the swimming pool site; strong connections to a future redevelopment site to the south; and more connections along Park View Blvd. A number of different "rooms" or venues are organized around the primary feature of the lake. This plan does include a strong ecological component. The storm water that currently comes in

from the north and west is treated in bio-swales and wetlands. The lake itself has an edge that is a combination of soft edges and hard edges which have access points so that you can get up close and touch the water but you also have wetlands to help keep the water clean. The circulation pattern has a hierarchy of trails. The main trail is wide so that you can get emergency vehicles and maintenance vehicles on the trail and you can accommodate a family walking on the trail rather than single-file. There are other trails which are smaller and different in character. The major connection to the redevelopment site on the south has some type of water feature or pathway or staircase. There is a large amphitheater and stage with concessions and restrooms. The bio-swale treating the upstream storm water is also a nature education area. A pavilion to the north, a reflecting pool, new parking, primary access points, nature playground, a sculpture garden, boathouse, maintenance building, and an iconic bridge. All of this connects to Central Park.

Silkworth also explained the park implementation plan is broken into a number of phases which they have seen previously in the document. The first five phases are termed as "Planned Phases" because they are fundamental to the other phases coming on board. All of the future phases could happen in conjunction with almost any of the initial phases. There is not a prescribed order that these future phases have to happen and there is some flexibility in bundling some phases together, or changing the order of when some of them are done.

Silkworth explained the "Current Phase" is the term for the Thompson Creek restoration project. The first year of this project is well funded and all of the money necessary to accomplish it has been obligated. The primary reason is as a flood control structure however we have now added an ecological restoration. This has resulted in funding from DEQ and The Nebraska Environmental Trust geared toward the idea that not only are we going to accommodate flood flows but we are also going to restore native habitats and increase the biodiversity that happens along the creek. It will also include an outreach and education opportunity. This project goes from the outflow of the dam all the way through Central Park, and then from Edgewood Blvd. to 72nd Street. The project takes a stream that has been channelized and lengthening it, reincorporating a meander that is more historically akin to what it looked like before the subdivision was built. It is a riffle and pool, so that you have some deep water on the bends of the creek and then it flattens out into a riffle aeration area where the two curves meet. This project has been funded through a 319 grant from the NDEQ and the Nebraska Environmental Trust. An application has also been submitted to the Papio NRD for funding a small amount in the early phase and a significant amount in later phases, in partnership with the city.

Silkworth further explained Champion Park is part of the Thompson Creek corridor. The city has a current master plan for Champion Park that has a number of facilities and upgrades. However with the re-meandering of the creek we will need to re-examine this plan and modify the vision. Some of the program components from Champion Park, such as the gathering area, the memorial gardens, presentation area and fountain may be moved to Civic Center Park where they will be part of a grander festival area for the city. Rather than doing those functions in a relatively narrow area along Park View Blvd., they would be brought into the heart of Civic Center Park in the area of the belvedere and pavilion.

In the other “Planned Phases”, one that was identified was stream amenities from Edgewood Blvd. to 72nd Street including building the trail, educational markers, site furniture such as benches. This project can happen at any time once the stream restoration has been completed. There is a phase two identified which is basic park facility replacements within Central Park due to a modification of the circulation pattern and a new access to Park View Blvd. A number of vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns were looked at in this area and the stream restoration impacts. This phase makes Central Park whole again. Phase three is taking the golf course property and regarding it, building the lake and putting in a looping trail around it. This is a basic package which changes it from a golf course to a public use area for our entire population. It includes some site lighting for a lighted trail around the lake. Phase four brings in the amenities, such as the iconic bridge, the natural playground, shelters for rental, the amphitheater with concessions and restrooms, and the rest of the trails within the park. The fifth phase is to upgrade some of the facilities in Central Park so that they would correlate better with Civic Center Park, including some entry markers or new park signs, shelter, and the electrical upgrades to move La Vista Daze to its new location.

Silkworth continued with an explanation of the “Future Phases” which were identified. The first one is the northwest entry and pavilion including the acquisition of the property. The pavilion would be a two-story, 3, 200 square foot building; the parking would be redirected; and walkways would be accessible. All of the primary entrances into the park would be handicap accessible. The formal pool and belvedere memorial comes off of the pavilion and provides a connection to the lake and the long view across the lake. This is an area which serves as a very prominent north icon for the lake and would have the memorial components that are identified in the Champion Park plan. The connection to the southern redevelopment would make sense to do when the redevelopment project is underway. In that area we are looking at how to transition down that hill and provide access as well as providing good, strong views to the north over the park. There is a nice view toward downtown Omaha for high-rise buildings in this area. The plan includes boardwalks to get the redevelopment circulation pattern into the park and activate the park.

The underpass under 84th Street is not a simple project but it would go a long way to making those western areas of La Vista more accessible for a bicycle, families and younger children. The 84th Street streetscape includes the idea that we would broaden out the area behind the curb which is the pedestrian zone. It does not change the traffic pattern within the street channel itself. It does add real estate to the outer area so that we can provide more separation between the pedestrians and the fast moving traffic, and provide some visual amenities to make it appear as a grander street. Phase F is a boat house and sculpture garden on the east side of the lake, including a structure to house boats. The sculpture could be a place to begin bringing art components into the park. The costs are broken down into more detail. The buildings and structures of the underpass and the pavilion are the largest costs. The plan does address the idea of art integration at various sites, including the belvedere, at the 84th and Park View Blvd. entrance, the overlook on 84th Street, the connection to the redevelopment area as well as the new entrance into the redeveloped commercial area.

Hewitt asked if the water areas would freeze during the winter for ice skating.

Silkworth explained there was discussion about ice skating but it did not make it into the master plan for program use. The cost for including a skating component would be a significant cost. It would need to be a surface to be flooded, frozen and shaved, and unless you do those three things, you would not be able to keep a consistent ice layer. The temporary ice facility that comes to Con Agra during the winter festival in downtown has limited success during the afternoon periods without being shaded. If this component were desired it would need to be different level of effort.

Gahan asked if the only source of the water the western storm sewer.

Silkworth explained there are a number of areas the water comes into the lake and identified the locations. The lake would also have a fresh water component during droughts. There are some seeps in one area which would be the area of the wetlands. Groundwater is feeding the area of the lake and it is mostly fed by itself.

Tom Miller asked if the grade at the south end of the golf course will still be there so at the amphitheater you would be looking down at the stage,

Silkworth stated yes, this is one of the reasons the amphitheater was placed in this location. It is nice from both a topographic standpoint and its relationship to the sun. Most of the performances may be afternoon or evening performances and it is nice to have the sun at your back when you are watching them and it is illuminating the stage.

Krzywicki noted that while the underpass is one of the higher ticket items under "Future Phases", with the money spent under "Planned Phases", it would be good to try to connect the park to the west as quickly as possible in order to get people in and out of there without having to cross 84th Street or drive there. This would allow access to more people in the community sooner.

Malmquist stated if it was done in conjunction with the trail installation, this connection would allow for circulation and better access.

Silkworth stated the underpass needs to be big enough and bright enough to avoid the feeling that you are going into the unknown. It either needs to be big enough and look beautiful and be filled with light, or it should not be done.

Gahan asked about the Thompson Creek project. It is noted only phase one is fully funded.

Silkworth explained it is anticipated the city will be successful in getting the second and third phase of the grant funded to build the creek however that does not include putting in trails, benches, putting in a lighting system along the creek. The funding sources are focused on the quality of the water and the habitat that is created. Their interest is not the use by people. The building of the trail will have to happen after the restoration of the creek is completed.

Gahan commented that the major construction will be phase three when the golf course closed, grading is started, the lake is created, etc., and asked how much that will impact the neighbors to the north.

Silkworth explained there will be heavy equipment that will be scraping and hauling and compacting earth and it will be a mess while it is under construction.

There was further discussion about this work being done in one construction season. Silkworth explained the first phase includes a lake with a trail around it and restored vegetation. After the first phase, any earth disturbance would be done in pockets.

There was further discussion about the grading operation for the lake.

- ii. **Public Hearing Opened:** Malmquist moved, seconded by Gahan, to open the public hearing. **Ayes:** Tom Miller, Hewitt, Krzywicki, Malmquist, Gahan, Andsager, Alexander and Lowell Miller. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Circo and Nielsen. **Motion Carried.** (8-0)

There was no one present to speak on this item.

- iii. **Public Hearing Closed:** Malmquist moved, seconded by Hewitt, to close the public hearing. **Ayes:** Tom Miller, Hewitt, Krzywicki, Malmquist, Gahan, Andsager, Alexander and Lowell Miller. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Circo and Nielsen. **Motion Carried.** (8-0)

Malmquist asked what the Park and Recreation Advisory Board's recommendation was from their meeting last night.

Solberg stated it was a recommendation for approval. Silkworth added that three members were present and the vote was unanimous. There were two members of the public in attendance and their questions centered on the depth of the lake (hoping to get 12 feet for a good fishery); whether fishing would be in the lake; comments on the pool on the west side of 84th Street; and whether there would be a splash pad in the park (no formal splash pad but we are looking for a number of opportunities for everyone to interact with the water).

Lowell Miller asked if the trails were only for pedestrians.

Silkworth stated that is the intent with the exception that park maintenance vehicles, emergency vehicles and ambulances might also use it. One area of the park is intended for the vehicles associated with La Vista Daze, and Central Park has some vehicle access points, but the rest of the park is imagined to be entirely for pedestrians.

Lowell Miller noticed that one of the plans had a bicycle trail noted.

Silkworth stated yes, bicycles would be allowed in the park and it is planned that the major through-route would connect and head west. The trail could be striped to separate the pedestrians from the bicyclists. This trail is planned to be 16 to 18 feet wide which is pretty generous.

Solberg explained how this trail system interconnects with the larger trail system.

Gahan asked if there is a recommendation for approval if the City Council would keep residents informed about the financing and timing of improvements.

Solberg stated yes.

Malmquist asked about the continuation of the funding from the Environmental Trust.

Silkworth explained that the grant application as submitted included all three years. Generally these funding sources follow through with funding once the project has started. Only the first year has been awarded so the city will be submitting the next grant request this September and doing the same next year.

- iv. **Recommendation:** Malmquist moved, seconded by Lowell Miller, to recommend to the City Council the adoption of the Civic Center Park Master Plan as an amendment to the Park and Recreation Master Plan as presented. **Ayes:** *Tom Miller, Hewitt, Krzywicki, Malmquist, Gahan, Andsager, Alexander and Lowell Miller.* **Nays:** *None.* **Abstain:** *None.* **Absent:** *Circo and Nielsen.* **Motion Carried. (8-0)**

4. Comments from the Floor

None.

5. Comments from the Planning Commission

Hewitt announced this would be her last Planning Commission meeting because she had been asked to serve on the Civil Service Commission and she cannot serve on both. Krzywicki thanked her for her years of service to the Planning Commission.

7. Adjournment

Hewitt moved, seconded Tom Miller, to adjourn. **Ayes:** *Tom Miller, Hewitt, Krzywicki, Malmquist, Gahan, Andsager, Alexander and Lowell Miller.* **Nays:** *None.* **Abstain:** *None.* **Absent:** *Circo and Nielsen.* **Motion Carried. (8-0)**

Secretary

Chairman

Approval Date