



MILLER PLAYFIELD IMPROVEMENTS

Meeting Notes

November 5, 2008

Attendees: Ted Holden, Senior Landscape Architect/Project Manger
Shwu-jen Hwang, Senior Landscape Architect
Karen O'Connor, Public Relations
Raft Hollingsworth, Athletic Field Coordinator
Dennis Cook, Manager Athletic Programming
25 Community Members

Introduction:

Ted Holden introduced Parks employees. He explained project and process for input. This will be the only public meeting. Parks would like to get input on design. Currently, Parks only has funds for planning and design in 2008 and has requested funding for construction in the 2009 Budget.

This project replaces the existing all weather sand/silt field surface at Miller Playfield with synthetic turf similar to the surface installed at Bobby Morris Playfield and Georgetown Playfield, and performs other related work. This project was requested by the community through the Community Capital Suggestion Process and is also part of a six-year plan to renovate ballfield lighting and fields throughout the parks system. Lighting for the field was replaces in 2004.

Replace the old playfield surface with a new, synthetic turf soccer field, plus new baseball and softball fields in the southeast and southwest corners. This renovation will meet Park recreational needs and neighborhood plans and input, City Codes, and Department standards. The playfield renovation will also be constructed within the authorized budget, and not later than January 2010.

Budget:

Source:

- Ballfields/Athletic Courts/Play Areas Cumulative Reserve Fund, Ordinance #122560
- \$2,200,000 Total Project Budget for Planning, Public Involvement Process, Design, Bidding and Construction.

Timeline:

Upcoming Steps In the Process:

- **Design:** Fall 2008/Spring 2009
- **Construction:** Summer 2009
- **Completion:** By Early Fall 2009

Next Steps:

- After the design process is complete, Parks will make a decision and proceed to implement it.

Meeting Questions and Input:

Add men and women's lacrosse lines. This suggestion was encouraged by those present.

Keep restrooms accessed from the field open. There is a strong need for bathrooms. They are essential for everyone. A new bathroom is needed there. The one's at Bobby Morris work well and with the field scheduled more it should be possible to keep bathrooms open. The restrooms are currently locked most of the time. Currently they are open sporadically during the day and are locked at 9:00 p.m. when the Community Center closes. The request was presented to install automatic locks that would allow use of the restrooms until the field closes at 10:00 p.m. Parks will look into this and pass along to Operations that the restrooms need to be accessible to the site throughout the day. This is why they were installed.

This would also begin to stop use of the park shrub beds and neighbor's property from use by people needing a bathroom. Prior to the community center being constructed, the site had a stand alone restroom. There were many problems and unacceptable behavior. The restroom was relocated to Pratt Park. When the community center was constructed, restrooms accessible to the park were included in the design. This project does not have funding to construct new stand alone restrooms.

Add additional pedestrian lighting to the northwest parking lot and also increase the light levels in the plaza near the bathrooms. Need better lighting at the parking lot. Since the new field lights were installed the plaza no longer benefits from spill light and needs augmenting. Additional pedestrian lighting to the NE parking area will encourage use by field users and discourage parking in the neighborhood.

There are two different types of "Field Turf" both products are lead free. Ted presented letters regarding safety of turf and explained the two types. Everyone agreed mono-filament was the preferred choice.

There was a concern about fence height along 21st Ave E and the possibility of lacrosse balls going over fence and hitting parked cars or the houses. The existing fence is 8' high behind the soccer goal area and drops to 4' beyond. There are also trees planted in the landscaped buffer between the field and the fence. Some trees have been removed and will be replaced with this project. Lacrosse goals are more internal to the field than soccer goals and the ball is usually directed in a 'down position' towards the goals. Parks prefers to reduce the amount of fencing surrounding the site to reduce the prison yard feel but still maintain a safe barrier. Parks shall keep the fence as is and if problems develop, will add higher fencing.

Concern that there will not be financing for construction because of possible City Council cuts in 2009. To keep funding for construction in the 2009 budget, Ted encourage people to let their elected officials know how important this project is to the neighborhood and sporting community of Seattle.

People would like more community use. Is there a way to schedule time for the community to have open field time. Dennis Cook said he would try and work out a way to post the current schedule for the field. Schedules could be posted at a possible kiosk on site or inside the community center. Ted said an information kiosk can be installed by the project for posting schedules and sharing information. A possible location is by the fountain pump building.

What is the excess rubber that collects on turf fields? It is the nature of the project – rubber granule from the field

There was a request to keep the field open later than 10 p.m. The hours of use have been determined with much community involvement. This project shall not extend the hours of operation. However, the request will be shared with parks management.

There was a request to re-surface as much of the perimeter of the site around the field as possible – for additional warm up space, basically maximizing space. Parks should also look at putting synthetic surface in the turf area by the community center or possible relocating the basketball court for additional field warm up areas. The project shall maintain the existing field footprint. The community actively participated in the landscape planting of the buffer surrounding the field. They also cherish the open turf area near the play area and community center. No additional synthetic field areas will be added to the site.

Problem with theft – could parks add north side fencing? A community member volunteered that recently, crime has actually gone down. No additional fencing will be installed north of the parking lot.

Police could schedule walk through to check on restrooms. The line of site to the bathrooms should be lit and they should be open. The need to augment sit lighting was reiterated.

Baseball attendees requested maximum flexibility with 60, 65, 70 feet multi base layout. Parks will look into the impact to the field of the addition of 70' base layouts to the field and most probably will honor this request. It may mean the 'skinned area is all one color like at Georgetown. Ted will explore this during the design.

The use of the field is for many different sports – this can get confusing. Parks wishes to maximize the use of the field. Adding men's and women's lacrosse will add some field markings, but it will be similar to what is at Queen Anne Bowl. Loyal Heights has both soccer and football inlaid lines and does not seem overwhelming. The addition of lacrosse at Miller should have minor impact.

The request was made to install more storage boxes at the site for the different uses. Groups could raise money for storage lock boxes for equipment- Raft can help facilitate. However, multiple storage boxes will begin to look cluttered. Users should look into sharing the boxes.

Need to move soccer goals and have a combination lock. Parks does move their soccer goals if a different use is scheduled on the field. The problem is that some teams provide their own additional goals and these are not moved after use. Parks will look into the possibility of multiple or combination locks on goals.

Signage should be in place to encourage use of NE parking lot. Sign proliferation can become unsightly. User groups should first encourage their people to use the site parking lot NE of the community center, not the one by the tennis courts. They could hand out fliers that indicate a route or give directions to this parking lot.

It would be good to have kiosk for schedule.

Concession possibilities – need to work with athletic organizations and the advisory council for Miller Community Center. The community center kitchen was specifically designed to include a 'window' to provide concessions to park and field users. This could be an opportunity for raising funds, but will need to be coordinated with the community center.

Neighborhood and athletic groups are looking forward to new field. Parks feels this will be a welcome and important addition to the system and be a better neighbor to the community by replacing the dusty brown field.