

Green2015 Community Meeting Facilitation Notes

Date: Tuesday, June 22, 2010

Location: Philadelphia Free Library Central Branch, 1900 Vine Street, 19103

GROUP #1 Amanda/Alan

Question #1: What role does green space play in your community or neighborhood?

If green space is missing in a neighborhood or community, what impact does that lack have on your neighborhood or community?

- Abandoned lot became informal dog park
 - Social gathering place
- Basketball; a place to meet up
- Learn about plants at Awbury; and educational role - better than a classroom
- Park access for everyone
- Beauty/aesthetic
- Air quality improvement - “lungs of city”
- Swimming, biking
- Brings attractiveness to community
- Gathering place in pocket parks
- Recreational opportunity
- Offers sense of community - meet new neighbors
- Where diversity happens
- Carroll Park - neighbors improved gardens for food
- Green space can be eyesore - blight - needs caretaking
- Suffers from lack of maintenance
- Farms are source of great food and education for the community
- River drive activities

Question #2: What role could open space play in your community? How would having *some/more* green space affect your neighborhood or community?

- More meeting places
- Improved safety for kids if there's more green space
- More physical activity
- More educational opportunities
- More recreational activities and more programs
- More trails would allow for more places to run, bike and connect
- Greening Reading Viaduct would be great addition to neighborhood – a unique place
- Focus on adult activities/family-oriented
- A place for tents/camping
- Could be places for: composting, kids to play, adults relax, shade, community gardens - all together in one green space – the complete package

- Outdoor gyms for adults
- Clean creeks for swimming

Question #3: Given what we've said so far, **what values, priorities, or principles should guide the Commissioner and his staff in the Department of Parks and Recreation in their decision-making regarding new or additional green spaces?**

- Respect
- Honoring community wishes
- Diversity in the "true sense"
- Importance of maintenance
- Community input and meetings important
- Connection between existing open space
- Connection to neighborhoods
- 10-minute access for all
- Community building can help with maintenance
- Adequate funding for maintenance of specific place
- Storm water management role of parks and green spaces
- Provide educational aspect for city dwellers
- Connections, particularly by bicycle
- Need educational signs about the history, plants, art that is present
- History of all communities and cultures
- Multiple goals – reaching for different users – allow safe use by all
 - dog walkers
 - bicyclists
 - "Stacking" of multi-uses
- Change mindset so everyone understands the impact of their bad ways (e.g. littering)
 - Need education, campaign, peer pressure about undesired behavior

Question #4: Given these examples, what "values-based principles" emerge from the work we've done so far? *(ranked in order with number of votes next to)*

- (6) Adequate resources
 - Financial and human commitment
 - Shared responsibilities
- (6) Multi-functional
 - Educational
 - Storm water
 - Community building
 - History/culture
 - Food access
 - Farming
- (4) Maintenance
- (3) Connections between open spaces/neighborhoods/by different modes of transportation

- (2) Respecting and honoring the community and their input in decision making
- (2) Proximity/access for community
- (1) Environmental function of green spaces
- Educational function

GROUP #2 Bridget/Erin

Question #1: What role does green space play in your community or neighborhood?

If green space is missing in a neighborhood or community, what impact does that lack have on your neighborhood or community?

- Intercultural
- Neighborhood parks break up the stark brick - an urban oasis
- Love parks and playgrounds because my kids can run, play, etc.
- Picnics/BBQ's
- Parks are beautiful; make cities great
- Community gardens - optimistic – food, flowers - someone paid attention to the space
- Everyone in our group lives within 5-10 minute walk - love the accessibility and ability to walk to a green space
- Some safety issues – regarding crowds
- Hard to find little parks within neighborhoods – lot of opportunities but not capitalizing on it
- Recognize that a lot of people don't live within walking distance to park - especially older people. Important to make parks accessible to various demographics
- Wish there were more distinction between walking paths and biking paths – it can be tough to share the space
- Dogs in park - both positive and negative. Important to encourage people to clean up - peer pressure works
- Lack of a system – Wissihickon is one; Pennypack another; doesn't seem to work together - no connections between
- Tragedy of the Delaware River - so unpleasant – can't get there and nothing to do
- How do I get “in” to Fairmount Park? No “entrance” or “start”
- Need Information! Regarding programs, transit
- Lack of defined amenities; To get to much of the park you need a car
- Ben Franklin Parkway - Empty is not good

Question #2: What role could open space play in your community? How would having some/more green space affect your neighborhood or community?

- Need parks to be more “designed” – just not leftover or linear spaces along infrastructure – and more with interior spaces like the squares Wm Penn designed

- Make areas inside the park accessible by transit - so much there: Memorial Hall, Tea House; hard to access
- Not enough successful public spaces that are busy/crowded within Fairmount Park
- Need more walking paths, trails, etc
- Vacant land presents an opportunity. Make a real commitment to make the vacant land a useable park space
- Community should be involved in the conversation about local parks
- A place with amenities and revenue generators will help park become crowded public spaces that people will enjoy and care about
- Economic opportunities: restaurants, not just vendors. Bring in what people want, what they know; Rentals: chairs, binoculars, bikes, scooters
- Zoning/Policy to help with economics stimulus and planning
- So many players - conflicting agendas. No common, agreed long-range plan. Why do some things just not work?
- A successful system requires good transit and handicapped accessible transit. The lack of makes it hard for kids, seniors and disabled to get to parks
- Park choices are: 1) right where you live 2) have to drive to get there. So, help me get there via: transit, bikes, paths, etc. Can't think about park planning without thinking about transit accessibility.

Question #3: Given what we've said so far, **what values, priorities, or principles should guide** the Commissioner and his staff in the Department of Parks and Recreation in their **decision-making regarding new or additional green spaces?** *(ranked in order with number of votes next to)*

- (4) Create economic opportunities – reflect what we want, know, and like
 - Variety of activities
 - Variety of vendors
- (4) Commit to an overall long term vision regarding vacant land
 - Make it a permanent improvement
 - Marry green space
- (3) Deliberate design of parks and public spaces
- (2) Accessibility for all
 - To park
 - Through park
 - Park relationship to transit
- (2) Relationship to equity and underserved neighborhoods
- Community driven future of parks and public space
 - Listen to community members, needs, respect history
- Structured and unstructured programming
 - Make it a mix – and improve public education and information
- Align city agency agendas

GROUP #3 Ben/Loretta

Question #1: What role does green space play in your community or neighborhood?

If green space is missing in a neighborhood or community, what impact does that lack have on your neighborhood or community?

- Not as big a role as it could
- To much privatization
- Increases home values
- Lifts peoples spirits
- Defines community - a gathering space
- Recreation – sports, dog walking
- Easy access
- Kids can play
- Movies, art, culture
- A community project
- Community gardens - fresh food
- Water reclamation
- Obesity reduction
- Reduces crime

Question #2: What role could open space play in your community? How would having some/more green space affect your neighborhood or community?

- Access for seniors - ADA
- Protection of watershed from sedimentation - protect slopes/erosion
- Education through signage
- Softer neighborhood edges with greener river banks
- Make the city look better
- Need dog runs
- Reuse vacant land
- Access to neighborhood parks in underserved areas

Question #3: Given what we've said so far, what values, priorities, or principles should guide the Commissioner and his staff in the Department of Parks and Recreation in their **decision-making regarding new or additional green spaces? (*ranked in order with number of votes next to*)**

- (5) Ability to maintain the area - feeling secure and safe
- (3) Access to everyone - underserved areas
- (3) Take advantage of creating environmental benefits
- (2) No one principle should dominate
- (1) Green space is wanted by the community
- (1) Collaborative design process – bottom up

- Fit the neighborhoods' desires and definition of "green space"
- Change park design as neighborhoods change
- Variety of functions and flexibility
- Terms need to be clearly defined
- Seek opportunities and connect spaces/linkages

GROUP #4 Louise/Lisa

Question #1: What role does green space play in your community or neighborhood?

If green space is missing in a neighborhood or community, what impact does that lack have on your neighborhood or community?

- Community gardening opportunities
- Nowhere to go with small kids; feels like a lesser neighborhood
- Access for varied activities: soccer playing, Farmer's market
- Get out of marble and concrete; relax and exercise
- Fresh produce
- Experience of what nature is, for kids in particular

Question #2: What role could open space play in your community? How would having some/more green space affect your neighborhood or community?

- Build community, neighborhood and network at low cost
- Some places for kids to play
- End waiting list to get into community garden
- Calming effect
- Beauty
- Educational
- Grill
- Walk - trails would be nice
- Flash mob
- People watch
- Take ownership, clean it up and maintain
- Neighborhood identity

Question #3: Given what we've said so far, what values, priorities, or principles should guide the Commissioner and his staff in the Department of Parks and Recreation in their **decision-making regarding new or additional green spaces?**

- Equity - All neighborhoods should have it
- Take responsibility/ownership to maintain

- Multi-use - or inclusion of lots of activities
- Safety/Safe place
- Clean – appealing/well maintained
- Solitude or involvement by choice
- Positive feeling of community is enhanced
- Connectedness to nature and the community
- Accessible - easy to get to for all abilities
- Visible aesthetic
- Making a brown space green
- Stabilize property values
- We owe it to the kids to have transformative experiences

Question #4: Given these examples, what “values-based principles” emerge from the work we’ve done so far? *(ranked in order with number of votes next to)*

- (7) Equity - Fairness in how the space is:
 - Established
 - Used/accessed
- (6) Make a brown space green
- (5) Take responsibility/ownership to maintain
 - Clean – appealing/well maintained
- (2) We owe it to the kids to have transformative experiences
- (1) Safety/Safe place

GROUP #5 Linda/Bryan

Question #1: What role does green space play in your community or neighborhood?

If green space is missing in a neighborhood or community, what impact does that lack have on your neighborhood or community?

- Amenity for senior living
- Exercise
- Garden/Orchard
- Different parks - different uses
- Education about wildlife/gardening/green
- Sanctuary from hectic/frantic urban life
- Corridors between neighborhoods
- Can draw people into a neighborhood
 - Exploration
- Gathering place - community center/town square
 - Draws attractions like music, etc.
- Maintenance of vacant lots allow for civic use - holiday events, etc.

- City of neighborhoods - all neighborhoods should have dedicated space
- Different uses have different support; e.g. dog parks

Question #2: What role *could* open space play in your community? How would having *some/more* green space affect your neighborhood or community?

- Not everything should be passive
 - More possibilities (climbing wall, etc.)
- Should allow events (Amphitheater)
- Think about structures
 - Furniture
 - Theatre facilities
 - Playgrounds
 - Statuary/Art
- Places should be unique
- Park as destination:
 - Gaudi in Barcelona
 - Franklin Square in Philly
- Park can be hardscape if it fits
- Should fit scale of neighborhood
 - Dot parks next to
 - Squares in neighborhood
 - Parks in region
- Community support can personalize parks
 - Should not be abstract to community
- Watching others receive stress can relieve stress
- Japanese use of water in parks can establish balance

Question #3: Given what we've said so far, **what values, priorities, or principles should guide** the Commissioner and his staff in the Department of Parks and Recreation in their **decision-making regarding new or additional green spaces?**

- People friendly
- Community has a feel for natural park location
 - Local knowledge important
- Be able to respond to local uses and users
- Incorporate into daily life
 - Create personal and work connections
 - Bike lanes/greenways
- Establish community connections - Inter and intra
- Flexibility to evolve - Organic growth with community
 - Should be able to adapt if problems occur
- Water is not just about stormwater - water as park amenity
- Different parks - different uses and users

- Non-motorized access - Can you reach a park without a car?
- A single use should not dominate

Question #4: Given these examples, what “values-based principles” emerge from the work we’ve done so far? *(ranked in order with number of votes next to)*

- (8) Community knowledge important in planning, location and uses
- (7) Establish community connections in neighborhood and between neighborhoods
 - Non-motorized access important
- (7) Flexibility to evolve
- (5) Single use should not dominate
 - Water can be used as amenity as well as storm water management, for example
- People friendly