

Notes from the meeting held July 19th, 2011

Present: Susan Antler, Scott Childs, Zac Childs, Jill Cuthbertson, Melana Janzen,

Regrets: Marco Bianchi, Matt Bremer, Margaret Isabel, Danielle, Councillor Layton

1. We started by going over the agenda items from Marco plus 2 from Melana and 1 from Susan.
2. Concern was expressed regarding the low turn-out at the meeting. It was agreed that we would individually try and pull some new people on board.
3. Discussed putting solar panels on the roof of the washroom and talked about MicroFIT program and whether it would be cut as part of government cut backs. Melana mentioned solar panels/MicroFIT is great because it could provide ongoing funds for the park.

There is also a Toronto LiveGreen program that funds capital projects. If we had applied this year, we would have likely received funding. The overall Live Green project is under scrutiny right now --- but the opportunity for funding from external sources is a possibility for the installation of solar panels.

4. Nervous about KPMG/City cutbacks proposed for parks and necessity of generating some of our own funds. Talked about possibility of capital grants. Does the city go after grants on our behalf? Not likely. Talked about accessing grants through supporting non-profits. We are still interested in approaching three 1. People Parks, Compost Council and Garrison Creek as 3 possible fits. Discussion on question of how much maintenance will be required for our proposals on an ongoing basis. Should we be focusing in on amenities that can be community run in a pinch?
5. Melana told us a bit about People Parks, and thought we should at least consult them on our plan since they are so knowledgeable about parks. Melana wondered about inviting the executive director, Dave Harvey, to our next meeting.
6. Discussed idea for design competition as a technique to get more information and creative ideas. Chance of something good coming out of it that we or city staff might not otherwise come up with. This could be complicated, Jill and Scott were both cautious about setting parameters for a competition - often highly politicized and don't always get best result. Susan noted we should get public input on our priorities before we ask anyone to come up with a specific plan. General agreement to not get ahead of ourselves before getting community buy-in. Need more help figuring out how to do that? Marco, we're hoping there might be some city processes or precedents that can be used for the public consultation.
7. We would like to present something at Environment Day on Aug 27 that shows areas allocated with proposals for specific activities. Once we get an idea, does this go to staff for review before public consultation? (when we met in June I think you suggested public consultation first...but we're nervous about that)? Need info from Marco about process.

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8. Wondering if Marco can provide current specifications on standard equipment (seating, lighting, etc.). For instance, no need to ask a designer to think about seating if we like whatever is "standard issue" from the city.
9. Still keen on the idea for splash pad/skating. If it has a summer purpose it would help winter access in the park.
10. George Ben Park – agreed not to substantially involve the park in this round of enhancement. Perhaps allow for more obvious gateway connections between the parks (ie. where the opening and gates are located in each of the fences).
11. Roxton Parkette - Suggestion to have local business support an initiative in the park. Others felt it needs to be self-sustaining - solicitation and maintenance of relationships too risky over time. Discussion about virtues of allotment gardens and community gardens...passionate arguments for both. Agreed that we should leave it out of current planning and see what City of TO staff would suggest. If we could present a case for both at either Aug 27 or the November public consultation, we could get input on what community members would prefer.
12. Discussed access points for both Fred Hamilton and George Ben. Noted on map different locations and whether it needed to be ramp or stairs. Need smoother pathways for wheelchairs. Everyone agreed we should focus on Fred Hamilton Park, make that work well and then move into adjoining parks once we know what works well, have more time for research and consultation.
13. Discussed bike lane through Roxton Parkette. Melana offered to talk to Management of Bellwoods House (large home at corner) and find out more about right-of-way that was agreed to as part of their construction project. Melana hoping that Marco would be looking into the right-of-way as well. Agreed if we do anything with the Roxton Parkette, we should include the Bellwoods House in the conversation.
14. Agreed it would be good to have park drawing for the Aug 27 date. Melana agreed to draft up some drawings and asked everyone to supply images of things / element they would like to see.
15. We need to come up with ideas about gathering info from the public on our ideas, before going to public consultation, based on how the last proposal was received - it could have used a little more advance consultation. Jill will start an email trail with some suggestions for gathering info.
16. Exciting idea coming out of the meeting was to not tear down the washroom building but to develop it so it is both a washroom, but also a coffee house - either run by the Friends group or rented to some entrepreneur.

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17. Talked about community garden in Fred Hamilton - quick cheap idea is to add a bench to stop people from walking through the garden.
18. Matt, we'd like it if you could volunteer to run a Friends of Fred Hamilton email group and possibly get the Friend's group off the ground. We feel like we could use this to toss around our ideas, but also to try and get a few more neighbours to engage early on in discussions. Marco suggested bring in a person to give advice on starting a Friend's group - interest in this expresses. Marco, do we need to have more people on steering committee?
19. Scott agreed to talk to lady at Dufferin Grove about how they operate their snack bar business.
20. Marco, can you get input from city staff in advance on some of our proposals?

Next meeting Tuesday August 9th at Melana's house - 409 Shaw Street, 6 pm. so we can plan what is required for Environment Day booth. Scott, Jill, Zac, and Melana will all be away on Environment Day.