

**Notes from Virtual Meeting with Community Garden Group for  
Martin Luther King, Jr. / Warren K. Branch Park Stormwater Project  
6:30 – 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 5, 2022**

**Attendees**

- Nichelle Smith
- Joanna Lemmon
- Daschinique Johnson, Uptown Partners
- Claire Matway, Grow Pittsburgh
- Meghan Simek, PWSA
- Elaine Hinrichs, PWSA
- Rachel Carroll, Michael Baker
- Erica DeLattre, Collective Efforts

**Discussion**

- The gardener group provided an overview of the 3 things they wanted to talk to PWSA about: the garden restoration layout, the meadow seed mix, and the in-ground bed lumber border.
- Elaine shared the updated garden restoration drawing on her screen.
  - Nichelle: We would like a gap between the main meadow area and the meadow border of the children's area.
  - **ACTION:** PWSA will revise the garden restoration drawing to have a grass path between the main meadow area and the meadow border of the children's area.
- Nichelle: Could we put the raised beds to the east of the children's area, and have an open space over the cistern?
  - Meghan: We are open to that. The reason we had the raised beds on top of the cistern though is because you won't be able to dig inground beds over the cistern in the future.
  - Nichelle: We will think more about that then.
  - Meghan: Okay, we will keep the raised beds over the cistern for now.
- Nichelle: Are you still on target for construction start in March?
  - Meghan: We are still on target. The project is still in permitting, so we will have to see how that goes.
- Claire: I don't have a quote with specs yet for the lumber for the in-ground beds. Instead of the rebar heavy duty style, we are thinking more of a lighter-duty style, since the beds may change locations in future years as the garden grows and changes. If we go for a lighter-duty wooden border, we are hoping that PWSA could provide heavier duty groundhog fencing.

- Meghan: We are open to that. Could you explain more about what you are thinking for lighter duty wooden borders?
  - Claire: Similar structural idea to a raised bed, but just with 6 inch or 4 inch wood borders.
  - Meghan: So, either a 2x4 and a 4x4 border with a 4x4 in the corner?
  - Claire: Yes. There is a lot also that Grow Pittsburgh could support for installation with a volunteer group. That's why I'm thinking about better pest fencing installed as part of this restoration with the stormwater project, rather than heavy duty wooden borders, since a volunteer group could potentially install lighter-duty wooden borders.
  - Meghan: Send us over the specs for the groundhog fencing, and we will try to incorporate that.
  - **ACTION:** Claire will send Meghan specs for heavier duty groundhog fencing.
  - Meghan: I have to clear a volunteer installation event with PWSA's legal department, for a volunteer group to be involved in labor on one of our construction projects. Our engineering department thinks it could be a great community involvement opportunity, but we have to check with our legal team.
  - Claire: It could be that PWSA provides materials, and then a volunteer group installs the beds with the materials.
- Meghan: We are planning to have the garden restored before Memorial Day, then still have construction in other areas surrounding the park.
    - Claire: While that construction outside the garden fence, will there be parking available and will the fence line be closed up again?
    - Meghan: The fence line will be closed back up. I am reaching out to Andrea Ketzler at the Department of Public Works (DPW) to ask about using the area off of Kirkpatrick Street for temporary parking during construction. There is already a driveway there and think we could use mulch for a parking area.
    - Claire: Wood mulch or gravel?
    - Meghan: Wood mulch, because gravel is usually considered impervious surface, which could create permitting issues.
    - Claire: So, a dirt and mulch parking lot.
- Nichelle: After construction, would the Kirkpatrick parking area be kept, or would the lawn be restored?
    - Meghan: I don't think we could keep it as parking area because would be indefinitely muddy then. We will restore the lawn.
- Nichelle: Between the shed and the in-ground fenced in beds, how much space is that?
    - Erica: Based on the drawing, about 14 feet.
- Claire: We would like the Showy Wildflower Mix from Ernst for the meadow, instead of the Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden Mix from Ernst. Is that okay?
    - Erica: I will look it up.

- **ACTION:** Erica will look up the Showy Wildflower Mix from Ernst that the gardens want to replace the Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden Mix for the meadow.
- Claire: Also, could the main meadow be seeded with the mix, and then a 3-foot edge of the meadow be seeded with black-eyed susans or orange coneflowers, to help define a border and show where to weed and mow?
  - Meghan: I think we could do that.
  - Rachel: For the meadow around the children's' area, the meadow itself is only 5 feet wide. Would you like the 3-foot border of black-eyed susans or orange coneflower there, with then only 2 feet of meadow mix?
  - Claire: How about a 1-foot border of black-eyed susans or orange coneflower for the meadow around the children's area?
  - Nichelle: Yeah, that would work.
  - **ACTION:** PWSA will plan to plant the main meadow edge with 3-foot wide edge of black-eyed susans or orange coneflowers and plant the children's area meadow with a 1-foot wide edge of black-eyed susans or orange coneflowers.
- Claire: Do you all have experience with the Ernst seed mixes with grasses versus without grasses?
  - Erica: I do not. My only experience with Ernst seed mixes is using them for restoration of construction areas. Ernst seeds tend to establish quickly.
- Nichelle: I see a 12-inch inspection port in the meadow on the drawing. What is that gets overgrown?
  - Erica: It doesn't matter if the inspection port gets overgrown. The port has a plastic cover and is flush with the ground. When someone needs to access it, they can walk through the meadow and clear off the port, look inside, then close it up again.
- Claire: What about signage?
  - Elaine: I haven't revised the draft underground facility warning signage yet, but I can tell you all what I am thinking for revisions based on our last meeting. I think it would be good to add a icon of a shovel and the ground with an "X" across it to represent the no in-ground digging warning. I also think arrows pointing to the next warning post and a basic map of underground facility within the park border would be useful.
  - The gardeners and Elaine discussed signage ideas and options.
  - Elaine will plan to put the sign, probably vertical/portrait, on the side of the 4x4 wooden post, rather than the top, and instead put a high vis cap on the top of the post.
  - Claire: Perhaps use an 8 by 10 inch sign.
  - Nichelle: Signage color is fine with black and white and red. Like the idea of adding a shovel symbol. Could do the logo in color.
  - Elaine: Okay, great. Lighter colors tend to fade quicker, which is why I was thinking to use primarily black text and a black logo.
  - **ACTION:** Elaine will draft a revised underground facility sign in the next week and send the design to the garden leaders for feedback.