

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

Attendees

- Nichelle Smith
- Claire Matway, Grow Pittsburgh
- Erin Tobin, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy
- Meghan Simek, PWSA
- Elaine Hinrichs, PWSA
- Rachel Carroll, Michael Baker
- Erica DeLattre, Collective Efforts
- Phone attendee

Discussion

- Meghan: Here is most recent garden restoration drawing. The main changes were to add the black-eyed susans borders to the meadows and to re-shape the meadows.
- Meghan: We are still waiting on permit approvals from the Allegheny County Conservation District (ACCD) and the City. Since permitting is taking longer than expected, and our bid to construction process takes four months after permits are in hand, we are expecting a change in the construction schedule. We plan to start construction outside the fence in the late spring, then the construction inside the fence schedule would next fall, after Labor Day.
 - Claire: The two most important starting dates to the garden group are the DeRuad parking area and the garden fence dismantling.
 - Meghan: When we get the permits back, construction can usually start four months after that. If we get the permits in January, it would be April that we could start construction. If we got the permits in February, it would be May or June that we start construction. So based on the permit approval delays now, we are expecting to start construction outside the garden fence in the late spring 2023, then dismantle the garden fence and begin construction inside after Labor Day 2023.
 - Claire: So, the beds would be usable until the beginning of September, as long as people can find parking?
 - Meghan: Yes
 - Claire: So, the work would be complete before spring 2024?
 - Meghan: I anticipate that the work inside the fence should be able to be restored by the end of fall 2023.
 - Nichelle: I missed my target date for garlic planting in the fall for the spring
 - Meghan: I'm sorry, I wish we knew earlier that the permit reviews weren't moving along.

- Claire: We prepped for spring construction disruptions.
 - Meghan: We are waiting too, because we are delayed by the ACCD and the City.
 - Elaine: Here is the revised draft warning sign for the underground stormwater storage facility. I've made it larger than before, at 10 inches tall and 7 inches wide. I added a map and icons to help convey the no-digging information. What do you think?
 - Erin: Is there a chance to add a QR code to the landing page on the project website?
 - Elaine: We could if necessary. In the long term, PWSA will also have interpretive signage at the site to explain the project purpose and features.
 - Erin: Okay, that sounds good.
 - Nichelle: I like it
 - Claire: I like it too. Thank you for incorporating our feedback.
 - Meghan: How much of the sign will overhang the 4x4 post?
 - Elaine: About 1.5 inches on each side overhang horizontally. I choose 10 inch by 7 inches for this sign, since that seems to be a standard size for these types of aluminum warning signs, which would help bring down the price.
 - Claire: Recommend that you add labels and arrows for Kirkpatrick St and DeRuad St to the map.
 - Elaine: Great idea, will do.
 - **ACTION: Elaine will revise the no digging warning sign to include labels for DeRuad St and/or Kirkpatrick St.**
- Meghan: I met with PWSA attorney today to discuss the request to install the planter beds through a community volunteer activity, and she was concerned about liability of the planter installation.
 - Nichelle: Are they concerned about donated materials?
 - Meghan: No, they are worried about if someone were to get injured during the installation. So we are still figuring that out. I am setting up a meeting with DPW to get their input. I know that community gardeners have installed materials like this before.
 - Nichelle: Companies often donate materials and aren't liable.
 - Meghan: We haven't done this before, other than volunteer plantings, so I'm not familiar.
 - Claire: That makes sense if this isn't in your regular wheelhouse. My memory is this volunteer conversation came from conversations about materials for restoration and budget. If the detailed specs for supplies already fit within the budget, then we wouldn't need to pursue the community installation.
 - Meghan: Yes
- Meghan: Are you still interested in a heavier-duty groundhog fence?
 - Claire: Yes
 - Meghan: Could you send us those specs when you have them?
 - Claire: Yes
- Meghan: In addition to the heavier duty groundhog fencing, you had mentioned last time potential for lighter-duty in ground beds
 - Claire: For the in-ground bed outlines, I'd suggest a basic 4x4 or 2x4 lumber connected by corner posts or metal corner brackets. I'm wondering if those specs depend on who

you are contracting for that particular work – who would be supplying the materials, which set of the materials would be the most cost-efficient, who would be installing it – and all that would be different if it was the construction contractor or the garden volunteers.

- Meghan: When we spec out a product, we determine the materials and dimensions. We can't specify a specific manufacturer in a competitive bid process – then the contractor picks the manufacturer they want.
- Claire: Can we set a time next week to have a quick phone call about this to get your more specifics?
 - Meghan: Yes.
 - Claire: I'm available next Thursday and Friday
 - Meghan: I can do next Thursday afternoon
 - Claire: Okay, next Thursday afternoon at 1
 - Rachel: I'm available too
 - Erica: I'm available as well
 - **ACTION: Meghan will send a calendar invite with a Microsoft Teams link to Claire, Rachel, and Erica for 1 PM on Thursday, December 15.**
- Meghan: We need to have a lot of the specs ironed out by end of January, so that all the materials and labor are finalized before we go to bid
 - Claire: I'll bounce the specs off to Nichelle for feedback
- Claire: For groundhog fencing, I would suggest making it taller. Instead of installing into the ground, recommend doing hardware cloth that spreads out. Also having better gates. And having a tighter woven mesh, since rabbits can fit through the current mesh.
 - Meghan: How tall?
 - Claire: Between 5 and 6 feet tall. It's currently about 4 feet tall, maybe a bit less. I can specify all that detail later.
 - Meghan: Is this the groundhog fencing around the in-ground beds? I didn't realize it was that tall already
 - Nichelle: Yes
 - Meghan: Okay, we can talk more about the details next week
- Meghan: When I sent the project drawings back over to City Forestry, they asked us why we weren't using fruit or nut trees since it is a community garden, even though they wouldn't let us previously. So, if you want to change the new trees to fruit or nut trees, you are more than welcome to tell us.
 - Nichelle: Is there a list to pick from for the species?
 - Erica: The person from City Forestry told us that you could select fruit or nut trees and that they would tell us yes or no.
 - Claire: These trees are the ones directly around the parking lot, so any fruit or nuts that wouldn't get picked would land in the parking lot.
 - Meghan: Yes. We could keep the current non-fruit or nut trees planned if desired.
 - Claire: I'm open to switching to fruit or nut trees. For native trees, we could do service berry or paw paws.
 - Nichelle: Yes, we can talk more about which tree species to consider
 - **ACTION: Claire and Nichelle will talk about fruit or nut tree species to consider, and tell Meghan at the Thursday meeting next week**

- Claire: Here are some slides showing desired garden restoration design changes that the gardeners have been discussing. We are interested in re-shaping the meadows and adding a pathway through the larger meadow, moving beds to the same general area, and change the pavilion and shed orientations. We know that PWSA can't provide children's play set, but we want to create space for one.
 - Meghan: So, you would have to stand under the pavilion to open the doors of the shed?
 - Claire: Yes
 - Rachel: Will the inside of the shed be too dark if it is under the pavilion?
 - Claire: Good question. What do you think Nichelle?
 - Nichelle: I'm not sure – we don't have electricity up there to put lights in.
 - Meghan: We want to make sure we still give you open space to gather and picnic
 - Claire: Yes, we were thinking to have that open space between the pavilion and the meadow. We could ask for a certain amount of open square footage
 - Meghan: Okay, we could do this change for the meadows and layout. We expect to need to finalize the garden restoration design in January. We need to have all the materials and amounts, like the number of black-eyed susans and the square footage of the meadow seed, before we go to bid.
 - Claire: I think we can finalize this. There has been gardener fatigue. There will be another MLK garden group meeting the first week of January. We could make a space them for folks to voice any last meeting details, then confirm it with you
 - Meghan: We understand.
 - Claire: I think this revised design idea is similar to what we talked about last spring, and we are circling back. This timeline sounds doable to me. Nichelle, any thoughts?
 - Nichelle: I think Claire is right that this revised design idea is it. Just adding a pathway through the large meadow.
 - Meghan: Can you share this revised image with me?
 - Claire: Yes, I can send you the drawing. I will confirm this basic design with the rest of the garden group, firm up groundhog and in ground beds specs, talk with Nichelle about fruit or nut trees.
 - Meghan: If you can get everything input-wise finalized next week, we can provide the revised official drawings over to you before the garden meeting in January, then we can confirm and move forward for bid.
 - Elaine: Claire, I saw multiple options in your slide deck, did you have one to share?
 - Claire: I need to get the gardeners' input to finalize. I could ask them for emailed input by next week, or I could ask them to give that feedback at the January meeting.
 - Meghan: I'd prefer if you can get any feedback next week, we can finalize our official drawings for January.
 - **ACTION:** Claire will email garden group to get feedback next week on the final design idea drawing to share with PWSA.
- Elaine: I will be leaving PWSA on December 22, but I will be giving our Public Affairs team an overview of this project status and its communication needs. Do you all still want to receive email updates every two weeks and attend regular garden group meetings every 2 months?
 - Nichelle: Yes.
 - Meghan: We will also be adding a construction manager to the project team as we get closer to construction.