



Natural Resources Department
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Public Meeting Notes

Project: Camille Park – Nature Play Area and Oregon White Oak Preservation
Location: Garden Home Recreation Center, Room 12
Date & Time: November 2, 2010, 6:30-8:00 PM

Staff Present: Bruce Barbarasch, Supt. of Natural Resources & Trails Management
René Brucker, Park Planner
Kyle Spinks, Park Ranger

Introduction:

Ten neighbors and interested park patrons attended this public meeting for Camille Park. Bruce Barbarasch presented general information on the Camille Park Master Plan and the bond measure that is funding this project. He discussed preservation of the Oregon white oak woodland in the park and the installation of a nature play area as elements of the Master Plan. He then introduced René Brucker and Kyle Spinks.

General Information:

René discussed details about the nature play area and provided a graphic that described various proposed nature play elements, asking the participants for input regarding these elements. René and Bruce answered questions regarding the existing play structures and the nature play area proposal.

Kyle discussed details regarding the preservation of the Oregon white oaks in the park, and went into detail about the need for removal of the Oregon ash trees that are inhibiting proper growth of the oaks. He described the three zones that are proposed for tree removal, noting that four different tree removal options were being proposed. He asked that meeting participants select their first and second choices for tree removal zones, noting that the primary zone (Zone A) was included in all four options. Bruce and Kyle answered questions regarding the oak preservation and the natural area restoration work.

Concerns & Responses (from the meeting):

- This concept doesn't invite wildlife.
 - *Response: As the oaks are released from the overtopping ash, their health will improve and the woodland habitat value will increase. Part of the restoration work will also include installation of native shrubs in selected locations, which will also increase the habitat value within the park. Both of these improvements are expected to increase the amount and diversity of wildlife in Camille Park.*

- The existing play area is too loud.
 - *Response: Staff will investigate.*

- Neighbor thought that the Master Plan suggested turning the park into a natural area.
 - *Response: The Master Plan indicates that the park will continue to be a multi-use recreation area that will include both active and passive recreation as well as natural area restoration.*

- Neighbor had concerns about the height of the grasses and possible fire dangers.
 - *Response: The grasses will be allowed to grow. Fire dangers in this park are not expected to be very high due to the wetland nature of the majority of the site. In addition, fire starting along the freeway would need to cross through the wetland forest along the western edge of the park, which is not likely due to the type of the vegetation in this forest.*

- Will THPRD replace the logs in the nature play area as they decay?
 - *Response: THPRD is expecting that regular maintenance should extend the lifetime of the wood structures in the nature play area, but that logs would be replaced as necessary. In some cases, old logs may be left to decay on site, but new logs will be placed nearby.*

- Where will the volleyball play area be located?
 - *Response: The area immediately north of the eastern tennis court will be maintained as turf grass, and should be suitable for volleyball. In addition, some grading may occur to level this area to improve the site for volleyball or other such activities.*

- The existing play structures (swings and slide) are important for little kids, especially those younger than about 9 years old.
 - *Response: Staff will investigate.*

- Will THPRD take out all the trees in Zone A?
 - *Response: No. There is a triangular section of the central woodland, dominated by Oregon ash trees, which will not be included in removal. However, most of the remaining ash trees growing among the Oregon white oaks will be removed to improve the oak habitat.*

- Will native grasses be installed?
 - *Response: The current budget may provide enough to pay for some native grass seed.*

- Mowing kicks up a lot of dust during certain times of the year and in certain areas of the park.
 - *Response: All mowing within the oak restoration areas will be eliminated, so the problems of dust should be reduced or eliminated as well.*

- Can the dandelions be removed?
 - *Response: Part of the natural area restoration for the park includes improving the camas meadows. This will entail weed management and some shrub plantings. We are expecting to focus on broadleaf weed management (e.g., dandelion) as part of this work.*

- How will the ash outside the current mowed boundaries of the park be managed? Concerns about the health of the ash trees.
 - *Response: the area south of the tennis courts and along the SW edge of the park is owned and managed by the Beaverton School District and part of the forested area along the western edge of the park is owned and managed by the storage facility. The restoration in the park will not involve any work in these areas, but is not expected to have any adverse impacts on the trees in these areas.*

- Interpretive signage is good.
 - *Response: Interpretive signage in the park will be designed with the site characteristics in mind, including such topics as oak preservation and habitat value and camas meadows/botanical history. Interpretive signage will be funded through a separate bond program.*

- Will THPRD leave downed limbs on the ground?
 - *Response: Yes, for the most part, though we will remove limbs that impede trail use and may remove some that may come down after a storm event. We may also leave some of the larger Oregon ash logs on site to improve the habitat and soil health.*

- Some trees in the central section of the park, near the paved path, are leaning a lot and/or on other trees.
 - *Response: Trees that have been rated as 'poor' may be removed as part of the overall Oregon ash removal project. A staff arborist will assess any hazard trees and a plan of action will be developed to deal with these trees. We strongly recommend that neighbors call THPRD if they are feel a tree poses a particular risk to people or structures in or surrounding the park.*
- Will education programs be using the park?
 - *Response: Camille Park will not be an education site hub (much as the Tualatin Hills Nature Park is), but will have occasional education programs scheduled.*
- Neighbor is surprised that very little fungi are found in the park.
 - *Response: Staff will investigate.*

Concerns & Responses (written):

- “Please keep the slide and swing set for the young ones.”
- “I like many of the suggested ideas for the Camille Park improvement. I am however, opposed to a covered structure over the picnic area. I think it blocks or creates an interruption of the sight line to the tree canopy. I also believe it will attract unauthorized use after park hours. In addition, any night lighting of that area would create light pollution, something I feel would impact my own residence abutting the park.”
- “[We] attended the latest meeting at Garden Home Rec Center regarding Camille Park. We ... see a good deal of what goes on in the park. I think that it was stated that the current play structures would be eliminated in the new plan. Would it be possible to keep the basics, swings, slide, climbing structure (eliminate the bouncy thing), where they are and add the nature oriented items in the area indicated on the map across the pathway?”
 - *Response: Staff will investigate.*
- “We visited Cooper Mountain Nature Park yesterday to look at the play area. I assume that the play area there is a smaller version of what is proposed for Camille, but I can see problems from the start. The sand pit might be fun, but I am concerned about the many dogs and cats using it for their needs as well as glass and other items ending up in the sand.”
 - *Response: Staff will investigate.*

- “When the park is allowed to return to nature behind our house, will the area behind our house eventually look [un-landscaped]? Would plantings in Camille Park reflect natural, random patterns or would they be defined, structured plantings?”
 - *Response: The plants will be installed in a more natural fashion...clumped in groups...rather than in rows or approximating a landscaped look.*

- “We are just concerned that after a while, with dead wood piling up, grass growing chest deep, etc.”
 - *Response: We don't anticipate that we will have wood accumulating, though we do expect to leave some downed wood in place to encourage a more varied ground-level habitat as well as to provide some organic material as the wood decays. In the event of a storm event, we will assess the amount of woody material that has come down and remove excess debris and hazard trees, as necessary.*

- “[We are concerned] that the park will look unkempt and unappealing.”
 - *Response: Staff will investigate.*

- “On the positive side, we like very much the additional pathway and bridge over the creek. We also think that removing the ash trees will be an improvement.”

- “Since many families who use the park drive in and may not get the notices regarding changes, it might be nice if there was some advance signage close to the play area stating that changes are planned and comments are welcome with email addresses.”
 - *Response: We will post information at the kiosk and at the southeast entrance that briefly describes the proposed park improvements.*