

GREEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES FROM JOINT MEETING WITH SG COLLABORATIVE

Meeting Date: February 16, 2021

Location: Zoom Meeting

Called To Order: 3:03 p.m.

Adjourned: 3:45 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: **Monday, March 1, 2021 5:15 p.m. ZOOM MEETING**

ROLL CALL:

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT
Ann Omura		X
Annie Russell		X
Bill Hoss		X
Carrie Coyne, Chairperson	X	
Ginger Garrett	X	
Jerry Pinkner	X	
Laura Jordan		X
Lynnda Greene	X	
Pam Bliss, Council Liaison	X	
Tessa Wasserman	X	
Yvonne Steingrubby, Staff Liaison	X	

+ Michelle Clemens (staff)

+ Scott Davis, Director of Parks & Recreation (non participant)

SG COLLABORATIVE: Liz Austin Amanda Auer Phil Hulse
 Larry Chapman Joel Oliver

LOOMIS: Rusty Saunders

A reminder was given to those participating via ZOOM that the meeting was being recorded.

Green Space Advisory Commission (GSAC) Chairperson Carrie Coyne began the meeting thanking everyone attending via ZOOM. She stated that the purpose of this meeting with SG Collaborative was to discuss the proposed redevelopment plan that is being put together and how it relates to green spaces at that location. It was made clear that there have not been any redevelopment plans presented or approved as of this date. The project is still very much in the planning stage and will be presented to City Council after more data is obtained from the impact study and other input.

Liz Austin from SG Collaborative (SGC) indicated there were several representatives from SGC in attendance and were interested in hearing the GSAC concerns and input.

Larry Austin asked what the role of the GSAC was in the City. Carrie responded that the GSAC was comprised of 9 Webster Groves residents who are appointed to the commission by City Council, plus a Council liaison and staff liaison. Their focus is on public green spaces in the City, other than dedicated park space.

SGC has engaged with Loomis Associates to perform a tree study of the proposed area. Carrie mentioned that the GSAC was passionate regarding any impact to trees as a result of development. She has seen many developments come in, with the results being the loss of mature trees.

A big concern is the potential number of trees that may be lost with the proposed development. These trees may not necessarily have significant value but are still important to the local environment.

Larry Austin responded that they will try to save healthy trees as much as possible but experience has shown that trees are usually lost due to the massive disruption in a redevelopment area. Their focus would be to implement the best plan for revegetation. Trees will be lost during the redevelopment, especially the unhealthy ones currently at that location.

Carrie Coyne asked whether they could study how best to minimize the impact by avoiding certain areas, etc.

He responded that the only way to minimize the impact was to leave the grading, etc. as it currently is. At this particular site, grading is essential to the project. A development of this size cannot be completed with disrupting current areas.

Carrie mentioned that the GSAC is familiar with the area and Shady Creek, including the ecology and habitat value even though the area may appear rough. She commented she felt that it would be great if this proposed project could “blaze the way” in prioritizing green infrastructure.

Rusty Saunders from Loomis Associates stated that an arborist with their organization had completed a tree inventory, as required by the Webster Groves ordinance. He mentioned that there was not an abundance of tree variety and that the upper side was planted near structures but many trees were just volunteered in that area. Tree variety includes elm species, black oak, sycamore, oak and maple. This is typical of what is seen near urbanized creeks and streams. Some of these trees have proved to be tolerant of flooding in that area. They are working on a brief tree presentation plan which is being drafted based on proposed grading, etc. Many things could change before a final plan is adopted.

They did not do an individual breakdown of all the trees in that area but the highest tree rating was 50%, based on a 0 – 100 % rating.

City Park Superintendent Yvonne Steingrubby asked whether the GSAC could visit the proposed development site.

Larry Austin replied that the area is all privately owned but could be visited. The next step is to see if the City Council embraces the preliminary concept. If so, they can then move forward with getting all the various teams in place. This would include a “green team”. He could not say specifically what areas would be “green” as it will depend on what is finalized. Carrie Coyne will serve as the GSAC contact between SGC and the GSAC.

Tessa Wasserman asked if there would be hard structure by the creek. Larry Austin responded that the Great Rivers Greenway trail is on the south side of the creek so it is possible to develop something where it already hits the creek bank: turning it into a natural habitat incorporated into the development. Tessa agreed that the creek area does look rough.

Larry Austin said SGC believes they can improve the site as a living, educational experience. It will involve many pieces: Corp of Engineers, MSD, FEMA, etc. Before any of that happens, however, we need to see whether City Council approves of moving forward with the development concept.

Carrie Coyne mentioned that she noticed previous input regarding sustainability, etc.

Councilperson Pam Bliss informed the GSAC that the City has approved an impact feasibility study be done regarding how the area would be impacted by the project.

It was noted that different areas outside the development areas could also be impacted: additional traffic, parking, additional park usage in addition to impacting current green space. Sustainability is a very important piece of the project such as a bio-retention area, use of the correct pavers, etc.

Larry Austin added that the focus right now would be on public green space: grading conducive to tree growth, native plantings, etc. but there are no definite plans. Water runoff control would be improved, as well as the quality of the water and some re-use. Each area has to be approached individually to fit together over all. They will use environmentally sound practices but they cannot do anything further at this time without Council's input and go-ahead. It is unknown at this time who would ultimately handle the maintenance of the new "green" areas: residents or the City.

He mentioned that SCG's website has all the town hall presentations, etc. previously held.

As there were no more questions or comments, Carrie Coyne thanked everyone for attending and answering their questions.

NEXT GSAC MEETING: Monday, March 1, 2021 5:15 p.m. **ZOOM MEETING**

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.