

City of Bath
South End Waterfront Park
Public Input Meeting
Meeting Report
October 2, 2014



Good Group Decisions

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About the Meeting

The City of Bath is seeking public input before making any decisions about improvements to South End Waterfront Park. The purpose of this meeting was for the public to understand the general possibilities and constraints regarding what could be done with the Park, and for the public to offer ideas, suggestions, and opinions about how the Park should optimally be used and/or improved. The meeting was professionally facilitated by Craig Freshley and Kerri Sands of Good Group Decisions in Brunswick.

Attendance

- Gary Anderson
- David Barber
- Nancy Barber
- Susan Bauer
- Susan Berge
- Al Cerutti
- Jeffrey Clark
- Pat Clark
- Chris Cornish
- Abby Deci
- Adair Delamater
- Jacqueline Dwinal
- Mari Eosco
- Stephen Foster
- Tom Garch
- Maurice Hackenberg
- Beth Haskell
- Robin Haynes
- Victoria Jackson
- Sandra Johnson
- Bruce Kaake
- Natasha Klimouc
- Gretchen and Jim MacLeod
- Robert McChesney
- Bonnie McDonald
- Jane McGuire
- Jane Morse
- Meadow Merrill
- Anna & Greg Page
- Martha Pratt
- Julie Rice
- Michelle Sanborn
- Susan Shattuck
- Vicki Sprague
- Ken Soda
- Anne Spencer
- Cal Stilphen
- Ron Sullivan
- Kate Varrar
- W. Bruce Webb and Ellen Pettigill
- Virginia Wright
- Diana Wells
- Eric Wilson
- Cynthia Zelinke
- Andrew Deci, City of Bath
- Steve Balboni, City of Bath
- Bill Giroux, City of Bath
- Craig Freshley, Good Group Decisions
- Kerri Sands, Good Group Decisions

Welcome and Process Overview

Andrew Deci, Director of Planning and Development for the City of Bath, welcomed the group and briefly explained the six-month process by which the City intends to make a decision about the future of the Park. The following comments were captured:

- Welcome and thanks for coming
- We are in a lucky position: we have money to improve the park
- We want to make sure we reach out to user groups to see how the money should be spent
- Tonight is an input meeting to hear your ideas, thoughts, and suggestions about how to

make the park a better place

- Afterwards, we will review comments and come up with a few conceptual ideas
 - We may work with professionals on this
- We will come back to the community with those ideas, probably in early 2015
- Then we will develop a recommendation to present to the City Council
- If you signed in for tonight's meeting, we will send you an email about when the next meeting is
- I would like to hear your ideas anytime. My office is at City Hall - don't be shy!

Ground Rules

Craig Freshley, Facilitator, explained that he had been hired to manage the process for tonight's public meeting and that he had no personal opinion about the future of South End Park. Craig reviewed the following ground rules, things to keep in mind for an effective and efficient meeting:

- **Understanding first** - Before any decisions are made, we want to make sure we understand the situation. The city officials want to understand you, and we ask that you try to understand the views of your neighbors.
- **All views heard** - Tonight we will write our ideas on paper and put them up on the wall. Later you can go to a city website and give feedback.
- **No decisions tonight** - No official decisions are being made tonight. Don't leave the meeting tonight saying, "We decided XYZ!"
- **Be recognized before speaking** - Please raise your hand to make a comment so we can make sure everyone has a chance to speak
- **Tell us your name** - The first time you speak, tell us your name
- **Neutral facilitation and report** - We are not facilitating or writing our meeting report from a particular perspective. We are trying to serve the City of Bath as a whole.

About the South End Waterfront Park

Steve Balboni, Director of Parks, Recreation, Forestry and Cemeteries for the City of Bath, provided a brief overview of possibilities and constraints regarding the Park. The following comments were captured:

- Thanks for coming out tonight - this is a great turnout!
- History:
 - The Park was conveyed to the City between 2002 and 2004, in two phases
 - The property used to be a storage yard for BIW
 - Contaminants were identified and have been capped - there are 18 inches of clay underneath the park
- We must maintain certain environmental standards and have regular inspections
- Upgrades made after 2007

- Walking path - 1/3 mile
- Bocce courts
- The leash ordinance was lifted via a public process
 - This means that you must be in voice command of your dog
 - This park is the only place in Bath without a leash ordinance
- It is a well-used park
- Restrictions to keep in mind:
 - No ground water supply, so no well or tap water
 - We can't penetrate the 18-inch cap without DEP approval
 - This doesn't mean it *can't* be done, but it requires DEP involvement and there may be stipulations, for example, treating removed soil
- We are looking forward to hearing what you think

Participants had an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. The following questions and responses were captured:

- How much money is available for park improvements and where is it from?
 - \$100,000
 - As a result of contract rezoning, BIW made this contribution to the City
- Is there a time stipulation for using the money?
 - No
- Can the money be used for yearly maintenance?
 - No, it's for capital improvements
 - City budgets will be used for maintenance
- Is the money specific for this area or can it be put toward another city park?
 - It is specific for the South End Waterfront Park
- Are there cost estimates for various proposals?
 - That will happen later
 - We could make some ballpark guesses, but it's hard until we really know what the ideas are
- You said you couldn't drill a well. Is there any other way to get water to the park?
 - You'd have to be creative
 - Can't say it's impossible
 - It would have to be seasonal
- So, there is no preliminary plan about how the park needs to be improved? I have heard some rumors.
 - We have heard some rumors too, but it is correct that there is no current plan and no decisions have been made. That's why you are all here. We wanted to involve you.
- Will you need to do soil tests before any major work is done? I understand that clay will sink.
 - That clay was brought in specifically to cap the property
 - At this point there is no plan for soil testing

Public Comments

Craig asked the group the following question:

- How should the Park best be used in the interests of the City as a whole?
 - Considerations:
 - What should it look like?
 - What activities should occur there?
 - How should it be maintained?

Everyone was invited to write their ideas on paper and the ideas were collected and organized on the wall. The following ideas were shared:

Preserve Dog Park

- Make it an official dog park
- It is currently configured at its best and highest use. No changes would improve it!
- Open space as currently used
- Leave it as a dog park
- Do not diminish space for dogs
- Keep large area available for dogs to run free
- Very large expanse for dogs to range and run. Not small enclosure like Brunswick Dog Park.
- Primary dog use (unleashed)
- The park should remain a relaxed, stress-free environment for dog owners and their dogs
- No picnic tables
- Continue use as a dog park. No playgrounds.
- Off leash dog park
- The park is one of the nicest “dog friendly” parks available in area - just as is
- Dog park off leash
- The park is very nice as it currently is. Dog owners have few options for off leash exercise. Please do not change that!
- Dog park
- Dog park - no picnic tables or grills
- Happy for dogs
- Remain open space for dogs and people
- The way it's used now is great. It allows for great, friendly comingling between people and animals. Do not harm! Seasonal water and leave as unleashed dog park.
- What other use for this space? Playground? I think not. Thinking about proposed playground across from library. We have other empty space - let's let the dog owners and walkers enjoy this space.

Fencing for Dog Park

- Safety for dogs (no running into street)
- Fence along Washington St. and first 30 ft. of parking lot from Washington St.
- Fence along Washington St.
- Secure (fenced in) area where dogs can run free
- Continue as dog park for all different size dogs. Place fence at street. Create small fenced-in area for smaller dogs. Fix fence on right.
- Keep it as a dog park. Provide water. Put a chain link fence along Washington St.
- Fence just to keep dogs from running into street
- Dog-proof fence along Washington St.
- There should be a fence along the road. Either link fence or chicken wire by the wooden fence.
- Fencing protection from Washington St.
- Fence along the road
- Dog park - maybe fenced surrounding - Water fountains, small, medium, large - Love the dog park - very important to our community!
- Designate it as a dog park. Put a fence along Washington St. More dog bags throughout.
- Place for dogs to run
- Fenced dog area
- Fenced in area for small dogs (maybe in the south part)
- Fence around parking lot
- Dog park. Enclose outer edges to street so dogs do not run into street. Fence in parking lot.
- Dog park - have fenced-in area for small dogs. Fence down to water on right (next to woods and fence).
- Fence on west side and part east

Multi-Use

- Multi-use dog park with H₂O in hot weather
- Put a low aesthetically pleasing fence on road side so less chance of dogs accidentally getting into traffic; open at ends for walkers access in and out
- Fenced dog zone
- Multi-use dog park with fencing along Washington St.
- Fence in parking and fence across park on river side of bocce court
- Leash free dog park as is - fishing, bocce
- Fence off marsh on BIW side for dog park
- Priority for dogs
- Continue multi use but keep it beautiful
- West third - family/group function. East two-thirds - primarily canine use. Fencing to separate the two sections and fencing for a small dog area.
- More use vs. only dogs. (People are restricted to path mostly).
- Division between dogs and kids if both are present



One participant drew a small map with a vision for the park

Maintenance

- Continue good maintenance
- Thank you to the city!
- Maintained by city budget
- Maintained by city and users - volunteers
- Continue good self-regulation ethic
- Mindful of ongoing maintenance costs
- Establish maintenance fund
- Creative ways to use capital funds for maintenance

Open Vista

- Keep it open - no fences
- Unique open space on river, unconfined by fencing or shrubs
- Keep open vista
- Unobstructed viewshed of river - no fences
- A fence on Washington St. blocks sidewalk access
- Retain river view - no more trees. If fencing, keep it short.
- Open space - no clutter in the field, edge enhancements only
- Please don't put in ugly fences - it's beautiful open space

Shaded Places

- Shade trees
- Shade trees
- Perhaps a few shade trees
- Current use - add some shade
- Sheltered tables - north jetty
- Build open-sided shelter
- Multi use gazebo / shelter from sun for river watchers and dog owners

Playground

- A place for children (this is a hard time for parents to meet and give input)
- Fenced playground w/ shaded table
- Promote family leisure time - sports area, playground
- Quality for families to enjoy! Fencing because...?
- A safe place for children to play, with equipment for a fenced playground. Multi use.
- Playground area

Parking

- More parking
- Enlarged parking
- Larger, safer parking lot
- Speed bumps in parking lot
- Concern with expanded parking

- Signs stating that it is NOT all day parking. It leaves less room for those of us actually using the park.

Unique

- Make this park unique
- Don't duplicate features found elsewhere in town
- Maintain uniqueness and attractiveness as a dog park
- Maintain as economic benefit
- Enhance the boat launch park for non dog users

Landscape

- More landscape - trees
- Trees - shade and interest
- Be patient with the trees
- Flowers at the edges
- Short native flowers and shrubs - shoreline

Signs

- Put a "Caution - Dogs" sign at entrance for motor vehicles
- Add sign "Dogs Permitted Off Leash"
- Better signage
- Sign on Washington St. and name park

Access to Water

- Add small gravel area for dogs and people to wade in
- Easy access to water (river)
- Add small stone gravel beach area for dog park and people to wade
- Leave river accessible to dogs for swimming

Accessible Year-Round

- Handicap accessible year-round
- Plow the walkway in the winter for safe walking year round
- Plow the sidewalks in winter

Walkway

- Pave walkway
- Paved walkway
- Walking path gets muddy where it is not paved. Either fill path with rocks or finish paving it all around.

Fishing

- Safe access and promotion of fishing
- Expanded fishing piers

Lights

- Lights
- Bring lighting please (solar?)
- Lighting - possibly solar

Other

- One more bio bag post near BIW side near river
- Restore benches
- Site for a work of public art - possibly to honor past shipworkers
- Gazebo - weddings - tied to history
- More trash cans
- Naturalist input for raptor habitat

The following ideas were also submitted but did not make it onto the wall during the meeting:

- Keep area for dogs very large. There will be less dog fights. Dogs can go off to another area and not be bothered.
- Build washroom like that at downtown park along Washington St. (seasonal) with dog water
- No change in open space
- Plow path during winter months
- Water source (s)
- Rules on out side by road
- More benches
- Leave for dog park, off leash with command
- Dog park, off leash, voice command
- Small dog area
- Maintain wide open space without structures/obstructions
- Off leash dog park (bring in water for dogs)
- Make sure no taxpayer money goes into maintenance of park
- Picnic tables
- Approach: informal, natural (as now), low maintenance
- Activities: current plus fenced playground for young
- City with perhaps some volunteer monitoring and assistance

Closing Comments

Andrew Deci thanked those who attended and offered the following comments:

- This is exceptional turnout
- We are very pleased that everyone has come to give input
- If you have more ideas and suggestions to make, please go to this website to give

input:

<http://www.cityofbath.com/southendparkinput>

- A reminder - we can't do everyone's ideas
- As a next step, we will review the summary of this meeting and any other ideas we receive, and we will consider what we have heard tonight, then we will come up with some conceptual ideas and bring them back to the community.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Appendix: Agenda

City of Bath South End Waterfront Park Public Input Meeting Thursday, October 2, 2014, Maine Maritime Museum

About the Meeting

As per a recent arrangement with BIW the City has funds available to improve the South End Waterfront Park and seeks public input before making any decisions.

The purpose of the meeting is for the public to understand the general possibilities and constraints regarding what could be done with the Park, and for the public to offer ideas, suggestions, and opinions about how the Park should optimally be used and/or improved.

After the meeting, City staff will develop one or more options for the Park's future. Such options will be presented to the public in the Spring for consideration and more input. And then a final recommendation will be developed by City Staff for City Council consideration. No significant changes will be made without City Council consideration and final approval.

So that the meeting is inclusive, efficient and productive it will be professionally facilitated by Craig Freshley and Kerri Sands of Good Group Decisions in Brunswick. In addition to facilitating the meeting, Craig and Kerri will also prepare a complete report of the meeting which will be publicly available.

Agenda

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|------|---|
| 6:00 | Welcome and Process Overview
Andrew Deci, Director of Planning and Development, will briefly explain the six month process by which the City intends to make a decision about the future of the Park. |
| 6:10 | About the South End Waterfront Park
Steve Balboni, Director of Parks, Recreation, Forestry and Cemeteries will provide a brief overview of possibilities and constraints regarding the Park. |
| 6:20 | Public Comment
Craig Freshley, Facilitator, will explain a few ground rules and will then facilitate public comments in response to these and related questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How should the Park best be used in the interests of the City as a whole?• What should it look like?• What activities should occur there?• How should it be maintained? |
| 7:20 | Summary and Closing
Craig Freshley will offer a summary of the most prominent themes heard |

among the comments. Andrew Deci and Steve Balboni will offer thanks to those who attended and will adjourn the meeting.

7:30

Adjourn