

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lauren Bryant, BPRD

FROM: Malcom X Project Team

MEETING DATE: 08.25.2020

SUBJECT: Virtual Community Meeting #2 – Meeting Minutes

Panelists

- Lauren Bryant, *BPRD*
- Christine Brandao, *BPRD Community Outreach Coordinator*
- Zoe Davis, *Climate Ready Boston Coordinator*
- Jessica Thomas, *ONS Roxbury Neighborhood Liaison*
- Gene Bolinger, *W&S*
- Mike Easler, *W&S*
- Elise Bluell, *W&S*
- Farah Dakkak, *W&S*

Attendees

38-40 attendees total

[**bold** indicates member of Community Leaders Committee]

- **Roy Thompson**
- **Joseph Feaster, Jr.**, *founder of Mayfair-Elmore-Kensington Street Neighborhood Association*
- **Donald Brown**, *councilor Janey's office (?)*
- **Rodnell Collins**, *great grandnephew of Malcolm X*
- Fatuma Hassan - *Somali Interpreter*
- Terence Moran - *Spanish Interpreter*
- Deniere Watford, *Roxbury Youth Soccer League*
- Dwayne Simmons
- Galaxy S9
- Jzaria Mitchell
- Jamila Mitchell
- MMiles
- Shamaine Darden
- Donna Bivens
- Alenor Williams
- Call-In-User 1
- Diane Galloway
- DRTS
- Aliese Lash - *Resident on Dale St. and Captain for Pioneers Run Crew*
- Nfitzpatrick

- Norm Stembridge - *life-long resident of Roxbury and Dorchester*
- Tia Tia
- John - *Boston Scores*
- Lauren Camuso
- Peanut
- Kenya Beamanb
- Chalres Cofield
- Dovi Abbey
- Lauren Camuso
- Leah Christie
- Barak
- Stefanie Seskin
- Debi
- A Hines
- Jamal Simon
- Mr. Malcolm X Park
- Nate Lash
- Jefferson Correia

Presentation Notes:

Lauren Introduction:

- Thank you and welcome
- Translation services
- Agenda and Project Team
- The majority of the presentation will focus on design ideas and concepts for what the park might look like, and most importantly we will be asking for your feedback. Like the first meeting, we will be asking for feedback using polls during the meeting and will also open up for a discussion and Q&A.
- Previously we have done outreach with community leaders, had an initial community meeting in June with over 70 in attendance and hosted an online survey with over 700 respondents.
- We will take the feedback we gather tonight and with our next survey (which we will talk about at the end of the meeting) and create a final design concept. We will be sharing that with the public at our 3rd community meeting later this fall.
- This project is funded by the City's Capital Improvement Program. The construction budget for this project is \$4,500,000.
- The field was not originally part of this project due to it being renovated in the last 5-7 years. However, we heard loud and clear that the community felt the field should be part of the project. I spoke to the commissioner and he agrees we should look at it. That being said, we are currently not funded for the field. It would likely happen as a second phase.

Gene gave an overall summary of the project work done to date, what we heard at the first public meeting and online survey:

- Shared the first virtual community meeting:

- Update playground and increase play value
- Increase site-wide accessibility and seating options
- Upgrade courts and court amenities
- Upgrade and unify park entrances
- Provide community gathering spaces
- Maintain existing tree canopy and supplement with additional trees
- Address safety concerns (as best we can)
- Strengthen community connection to the park
- Develop meaningful community engagement design process
- Shared what we heard in the online survey. 731 residents and neighbors took the survey. The results of the survey were very telling- key takeaways included:
 - 46% of survey takers visit the site at least once per week
 - Many people arrive both by car and by foot at times
 - The main entrances to the park focus along MLK Jr Boulevard and Washington Street
 - The largest draws to the park were community events and Basketball playing/watching.
 - Basketball courts were the most desired amenity in the park
 - Second was lighting and third was play equipment
 - 88% of people want to see increased recognition of Malcolm X within the park
 - A large portion of the survey takers were in the 19-39 age bracket, but a significant portion were older, making it important to design to all age groups.
 - Open responses often mentioned Basketball, tournaments, cookouts, and community events.

Mike Design:

Taking all of this information into account, presented the three concepts for the park, each of which addresses the Courts, Playground, and Passive Recreation areas of the site.

Some common improvements that all of the plans have include:

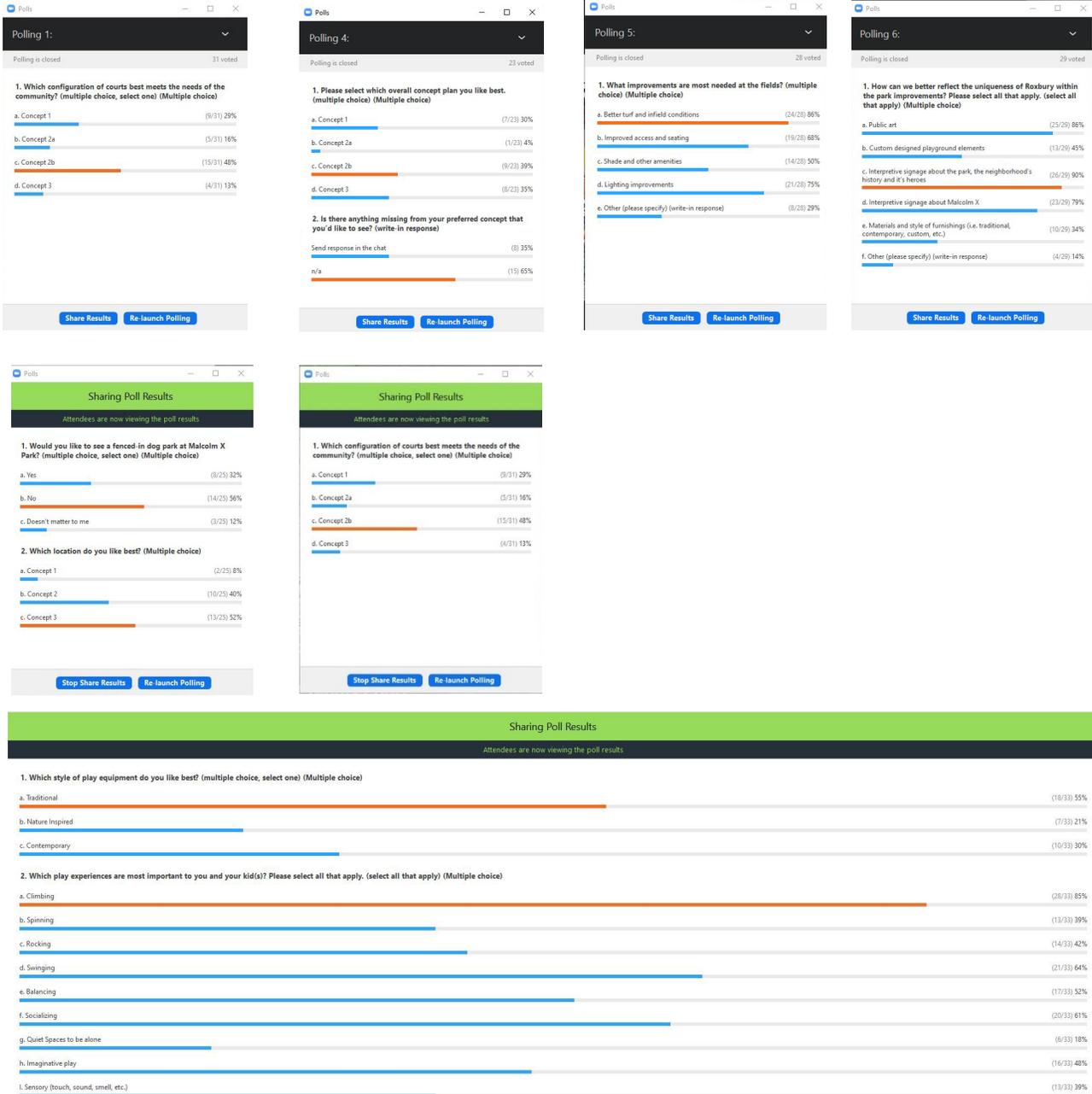
- Improved seating
- Designated barbecue areas
- Optional locations for a dog park (for discussion tonight)
- Improved play equipment
- Improved picnic areas
- Improved splash pad
- Improved Basketball courts
- Improved Tennis courts
- Improved Court lighting
- Adult fitness nodes

Other improvements are only in some plans, for spatial or coordination reasons, but are NOT necessarily only able to be included in that plan. Things like:

- Informal amphitheaters
- Picnic/shade shelters
- Outdoor classrooms
- Multisport courts

The Field area is being considered for future improvements, and we will talk a bit more about this near the end of the presentation.

Presentation Polling Question Results:



Questions and Discussion:

General Site Questions/Discussion:

- What about the handi-cap access. Can we please talk about the handi-cap access - Rodnell Collins
 - ME (answered later) All major components will be designed to have an accessible route and to be accessible themselves.
- Are all of these amenities in kahootz with the shelbourne center, the cass pool, and cass dcr multi-purpose rink? - From Anonymous Attendee 07:19 PM
- Once the project is approved. What area will be started on first and how long will the project take? - From nfitzpatrick
- Will vehicle access be eliminated? - MMlles
 - (Asked for clarification)
 - LB: the conflict between limiting vehicular access and blocking accessible routes is always complicated. Mitigating and discouraging vehicular access will be important as the design moves forward.
- Do you know how much each concept changes the amount of impervious surface currently in the park? A lot of the photos shown of the new and updated features do not include any grass or green space. - Anonymous

Project Team and Administration Questions/Discussion:

- Are there any foundational Black/African Americans on your planning team? - From Lavette Coney
- Please also address the issue of racial diversity on the team. Art commissioned to Roxbury artists, Racial diversity must be seriously considered here on the design and management teams - Dovi Abbey
- Does anybody on the design team live in Roxbury? - From kyle m.
- How long will the improvements take? - From nfitzpatrick
- Are there any residents on this committee? - From Denise Washington
- I understand that there will be an in-person meeting to have additional discussions, which is great. Is there a way we can incorporate some of these discussions into more avenues of dissemination, like the Boston Banner? Or is there another way to incorporate community members from an oversight perspective, and not just design? - From kyle m.
- We would like black people involved in all facets of the project (l.e planning, design, building, Construction, etc) I appreciate your efforts but what you need to ask us is if we have ideas on how to help you identify ways to involve black residents or other blacks involved in paid positions even if these positions need to be created. - Alenor Williams

- Thank you all for our hard work and dedication regarding this project. Please add my contact info to your list: debi_w@hotmail.com. We've got to work more diligently on establishing and building more racial diversity – Debi
- FYI: Rufus Faulk, a city worker who, I believe, is a Roxbury resident, had to clean up Malcolm X park because of the mess that was left there. He may be a good person to pick his brain about the park. - Kenya Beamanb
- You all should advertise this on Grew Up in Roxbury FB page - Lavette Coney

Site Amenities Question/Discussion:

- How can there be cookouts without grills? - From Nate Lash
 - (answered later in presentation)
- Hey, I believe it's key to keep the BBQ/Grilling area fairly close (as seen in Concept 1, close to the first court) as many gatherings are centered around sporting events. - From Shamaine Darden
- More BBQ areas around be great. Maybe on the Dale St. side of the park?

Court Related Questions/Discussion:

- I selected 2a in the first pool. I'd like to know what considerations are being made for noise between the basketball court and tennis court. - From A Hines
 - ERB: this is something we can follow up on in the design, with the possible use of the elevation changes, plant, and material barriers
- I would like to know what the adult fitness nodes will consist of and why does it need to be right near basketball and tennis courts? - From Leah Christie
 - ME: The nodes would be small areas for workout routines like sit-ups, pullups etc. they would be non-moving equipment and kept separate from the play area. We are currently showing them near the courts as a fitness "zone" but they could be located in other areas in the park.
- How will the revised basketball court and seating concepts affect the parking situation on MLK Blvd? - Kyle m. 07:33 PM
 - ERB: There are not any plans to reduce parking along MLK Boulevard.
- We want the top court to be the Mecca. We want mega seating around the top basketball court...especially in between the tennis court's and the top basketball court... – Donald Brown
- What would the surface of the fitness loop be made out of? - Jefferson Correia
 - ME: The track could be of multiple surface materials- asphalt, concrete, or even a running-track based material, such as that proposed at McConnell Park. We haven't developed the plans enough yet to have chosen a final material.

- ERB: even more materials could include crushed stone etc. (NOTE: not good for sloped paths...)
- For women and fitness, they need to feel they are in a safe area with children included? Because we have several shelters for women with children - Rodnell Collins

Field Related Questions/Discussion:

- How does everyone feel about turf to accommodate two diamonds and full-length soccer? Also curious to hear what the permitting issues are? - Dwayne Simmons
- Thank you for including the fields. If work was done would it be turf? The correlation between rubber turf and cancer are concerning. - Deniere
 - ERB: Yes, there are concerns about synthetic turf fields. The most current research we have reviewed by staff scientists shows low to no correlation between crumb rubber and cancer, but as these fields are designed further, and IF they are determined to be synthetic, then this will need to be discussed more in depth.
- Would you consider field improvements as part of Phase 1 if outside funding were available? - John - Boston Scores
- There are different types of synthetic fields. I think that the issue is which quality is being proposed? - Dovi Abbey

Other improvements Questions/Discussion:

- It would be great to make sure that art is curated by those persons, agencies and organizations who are already rooted in Roxbury. Hibernian Hall, Roxbury Cultural District and Oasis @ Bartlett are a few that come to mind. - A Hines
- Will there be cameras installed in the park? - Roy Thompson
- Have there been talks of police call boxes for safety - From nfitzpatrick
- There was a ROXBURY LOVE mural on Warren Street on a property that will be developed by CRUZ which was recently demolished. Richard "Deme5"Gomez and Thomas "Kwest" Burnes were commissioned by the nonprofit Alliger Arts as part of the city's "Pop Up! Dudley Connections" program in 2014 to paint that mural. It would be wonderful if those artists could be contacted and possibly commissioned to reproduce that type of artwork or similar representation in the park. - Debi

Dog Park Related:

- Is a dog park really necessary? - Anonymous
- How would we enforce self-cleaning of the dog park area? - From Joseph Feaster, Jr.
- Has any research been done for a dog park? Keep in mind that a dog park is a marker of gentrification. Who has an interest should be noted. People space is paramount - From Lavette Coney

Summary Notes:

- Strong desire from the community to see active local participation in more than an advisory capacity i.e. paid artists, designers, contractors etc. The community members want to see increased paid Black representation within the project team.
- Little public support heard/seen for a dog park at this meeting. In fact more negative feelings towards a dog park were voiced.
- Preferences were evenly spread, so while that may not help truly narrow the design, overall response was positive to the plans.
- Appeared to be a strong preference for “traditional” play aesthetic. More specific equipment pieces should be brought to the third interaction for further feedback.
- Surprisingly strong support for multi-use court
- Top basketball court needs to be the “mecca” aka akin to Rucker Park in NYC
- Many liked the idea of a plaza/court space tied to BBQ.
- Think further about fitness loop/nodes and their locations within the park. Also possibility and feasibility of an park-wide fitness loop.
- What are the environmental considerations to aid stormwater management and manage the mature tree canopy? Would like to see as much green space as possible.
- Next meeting should allow for open discussion rather than relegating communication to the Q&A feature only