



Meeting Notes

Community Meeting #2

May 15, 2018

Improvements to Jamaica Pond Park Pathways and Entrances

Project Team in attendance

- Lauren Bryant, Project Manager, BPRD
- Margaret Dyson, Director of Historic Parks, BPRD
- Kyle Zick, Principal, Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture
- Danielle Desilets, Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture
- Tracy Hudak, Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture

The second public meeting for Jamaica Pond Park Pathway and Entrance improvements was held on May 15, 2018 at the James Michael Curley House. Below is a summary of the presentation and the issues discussed:

1. Lauren Bryant from BPRD introduced the project team. This meeting was being held to update the community on the work that has been completed since the first community meeting on May 10, to provide a schedule update, to get feedback on some particular components of Phase 1, and to get initial input on Phase 2 work.

Lauren also reviewed the schedule for the project. Given the heavy use of Jamaica Pond Park, the pathways/entrances construction will be done in stages, so that some parts of the park remain open at all times. The project will be phased and some work will begin this fall. The project will require review by the Boston Landmarks Commission (Jamaica Pond is a historic park) and approvals from the Boston Conservation Commission, which has jurisdiction on projects within 100' of a water body.

2. Kyle Zick, consulting landscape architect, reviewed the history of the park and its role in Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace. Kyle also reviewed the project scope and phase boundaries. The scope is focused on the park pathways and entrances, but could include site furnishings, signage and landscape rehabilitation near or adjacent to the paths.

Community meeting #3 is scheduled for September 6, 2018. DCR has begun their Access Improvement Project work at the intersection of Perkins St. and Francis Parkman Drive. The project team is coordinating with this work. Regarding phasing, Phase 1 will focus on the upland portion of the park including the Pinebank area and is expected to occur in fall 2018. Phase 2 will encompass the perimeter path and the remainder of the park entrances. Construction on Phase 2 will occur in the spring to fall of 2019.

3. Findings of the web-based opinion survey was presented. 212 responses had been received to date. The most popular park activities are walking, running, picnicking, concerts/special events, bicycling and dog walking. The most frequently-used entrance is the one at Jamaicaway and Pond Street (at the Boathouse), followed by Jamaicaway and Eliot, and Jamaicaway and Perkins Street. Other entrances are used less often. Respondents also noted that the paths on the west side of the pond, and the perimeter path need rehabilitation the most. Finally, if the budget

allows, respondents were most interested in adding trees, improving erosion, directing bikes away from the pedestrian paths, and adding lighting, water fountains and benches. The survey will close on May 31, 2018, and is available on the project website.

4. The evolution of pathway alignment was reviewed within the Phase 1 area of the park, noting which paths have been consistent from Olmsted's initial design through to the present day. The project team uses this information when considering how to address the current paths. Kyle also presented the current widths of the paths in Phase 1, which range from 5' to 24.' The paths around Pinebank are in good condition, while the other paths in the Phase 1 area are in fair or poor condition. Most of the paths in Phase 1 are accessible. Steep natural topography is the primary reason that some paths are not accessible. The main attractions in the Phase 1 area, including the ballfield and Pinebank are adjacent to an accessible route.
5. For Phase 1 most paths will be repaved in the same width and alignment that they are currently. The paths around Pinebank are in good condition, and will not be repaved. The path from Pinebank to the ballfield will be analyzed to see if widening or a change in alignment would help with erosion on the path edges. The path from the Moraine Street gate to the pond stairs is currently gravel (and may have been paved at some point). Erosion is a concern with this path. The team sought input on that path and if it should be paved.
6. Concepts for the Perkins and Jamaica Way Entrance and the Pinebank Drive Entrance across from Moraine St. were reviewed. The Perkins and Jamaica Way Entrance is the third most popular entrance into the park and is the link to Olmsted Park to the north. Changes have been made over time, but the changes have not been done comprehensively.

The Pinebank Drive Entrance has a gate used by special events vehicles, park rangers and maintenance trucks. While Jamaica Way lacks a crosswalk at Moraine Street, pedestrians also enter the park at this location, whether from Moraine St. or from the multi-use path along the Jamaica Way. A social trail has formed to the outside of the gate. The project team wants to better accommodate the vehicles that need to use this entrance as well as the pedestrians who use this entrance. In addition, it is important that pedestrians feel welcome, and not secondary to the vehicles.

7. Each of the 4 staircases in Phase 1 (pond stairs, Perkins and Chestnut Streets, puddingstone stairs, and the Hancock stairs) have been analyzed and will require different levels of repair. The Perkins and Chestnut Street stairs require the most work, while the Hancock stairs only require minor shimming.
8. The current site furnishings in the Phase 1 area are not entirely consistent with what is used in the remainder of the park. The project team proposed using the slatted wood and metal bench present throughout much of the park, but with slats that have rounded edges for a more graceful appearance and comfort. The project team also proposed a few locations for additional benches in the Phase 1 area. Meeting attendees agreed with the idea of adding more benches along park paths.

9. Regarding signage, the project team is proposing refurbishing the black park identification signs that are in a historic style and updating the other park signs so that they are standardized and current. The interpretive signs at Pinebank will be reprinted with the current printing technology to create longer-lasting panels. The team asked for input on directional bike signage and what meeting attendees have seen that works to help avoid conflicts between users.
10. Kyle presented the preliminary vegetation restoration plan, adding trees to areas in Phase 1 where tree removals have taken place in the past, and where there could be some benefit in adding additional trees. Much of Phase 1 (excluding the bowls, field, and Pinebank) is already pretty densely wooded, which is one of the best features of the park. Lauren noted that Phase 1 will also include pruning trees for tree health and safety, particularly trees that overhang pathways. Existing trees will be protected during construction with tree protection fencing. In area where the pavement base is still in good condition, re-paving can go forward without disturbing existing tree roots.
11. Lauren Bryant reminded participants that the project team will make changes and finalize decisions on Phase 1 before the next Public Meeting on Sept. 6. She will post the final design decisions on the project website, and there will also be a hearing with the Boston Landmarks Commission that is an opportunity for further public input.
12. A brief overview of Phase 2 was presented, noting that there will more work done in Phase 2 on planting and stormwater/erosion issues adjacent to the perimeter path. Photos of each area along the park's perimeter path characterized the various conditions: along Jamaicaway, below Pinebank, adjacent to Perkins St., along Parkman Drive, and at Kelley Circle. Local trail precedents were also discussed.
13. The project team took questions throughout the presentation. The following topic areas were discussed by meeting attendees:

Pathways

Generally, attendees expressed an interest in minimizing pavement and putting the emphasis on the natural areas of the Park. Attendees also pointed out that stone dust is not the best surface for heavily used paths and that it is prone to erosion. Attendees generally supported paving the path from the Pinebank Drive to the pond stairs if it improved erosion or accessibility issues, but wanted the project team to explore options for gravel or other surfaces. Some attendees did think the path should remain unpaved.

Pathways and Conflicts

Attendees varied on the best way to minimize pedestrian and cyclist conflicts, particularly keeping cyclists off the pedestrian paths. Pavement markings, signage and surface texture were all suggested as potential ideas. In general, attendees felt that a multi-pronged approach should be used.

Perkins and Jamaicaway Entrance

Attendees generally felt that this entrance is currently over-paved. Most felt that bike racks proposed in this location might not be well-used and that bike racks near the ballfield would be

a better option. The benches that are currently at this entrance do not receive much use. Attendees noted that the real attraction is the park itself, and benches facing traffic aren't desirable. While a bench or two might be good for convenience, this location is seen as more of a pass-through than a destination. Attendees still felt that the entrance should be more welcoming. The bottle filler location is generally seen as convenient and not 'in the way.'

Attendees also noted that this is an area of conflict between cyclists and pedestrians. Suggestions included creating a 'hard line' to keep cyclists on their portion of the path, or using pavement texture changes or width changes to differentiate the pedestrian, cycling, and 'mixing zone' areas.

Pinebank Drive (across from Moraine Street)

Attendees generally reacted positively to a pedestrian path beside the vehicle gate. The project team also investigated using a two-part gate with a pedestrian pathway in the center. However, the Parks Department has experienced problems with the drop pins that this configuration would require, both in terms of vandalism and longevity. Attendees did not necessarily feel that the pedestrian path needed to be separated from the vehicular entrance by vegetation. Rather, they felt that the entrance should not be made too appealing since it is an unsafe place to cross the Jamaica way. To offset any additional pavement, some attendees expressed an interest in reducing the curve radii to add green space and limit speeds. The project team will continue to look at this possibility, but noted that often a smaller radius leads to pedestrians and vehicles cutting corners. Attendees suggested stones or shrubs to deter that curve-cutting behavior.

Staircases

Pond Stairs – will be reset to help preserve them and for pedestrian safety. When constructing new staircases, accessibility regulations require handrails 5 feet apart, which would require coring holes through the historic stair treads for railing post installation. Generally, the attendees were against coring through the stairs. The group was split on leaving the stairs without handrails or adding just one handrail to one side to help those needing assistance. Either scenario would require a variance from the Access Board.

Chestnut and Perkins Stairs – will be reset to help preserve them and for pedestrian safety. The same handrail issues apply for these stairs as for the Pond Stairs. In addition, the Chestnut and Perkins Staircase has a steep section of pathway at the top of the stairs. This could be remedied with the addition of new stair treads. The group had no firm opposition to adding treads to the stairs. The main concern with these stairs was the erosion to the side and its prominence as an entrance.

Puddingstone Stairs - will be reset to help preserve them. Some attendees wanted the stairs to remain in their current state. Margaret Dyson pointed out that resetting the stairs will help with their preservation. Regarding the landings, the group was generally opposed to repaving the bituminous landings between the stair treads. Stone dust was suggested. Margaret pointed out stone dust can become overgrown with weeds if they are not on a heavily used path.

Hancock Stairs – These stairs were renovated in 2007, and are in need of only minor shimming work to stabilize rocking treads. No comments from attendees.



Site Furnishings

Attendees preferred the metal and wood benches, and preferred the curved slats. No attendees expressed a strong preference for connected vs. separate benches.

Vegetation

Meeting attendees were supportive of adding trees, including between the ballfield and the bowl. There was a suggestion to examine the pine trees at and around Pinebank to ensure the continued presence of pine trees in that area.

Next Steps

- a. The meeting notes and presentation will be posted on the Boston Parks and Recreation Department project website. <https://www.boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/improvements-jamaica-pond-pathways-and-perimeter>
- b. A survey is available online for community members to provide initial feedback on their use of the pathways and what improvements are most needed. The survey link is available from the project website, and closes on **May 31**.
- c. Contact Lauren Bryant at lauren.bryant@boston.gov or 617-961-3019 with any questions.
- d. The next public meeting is September 6, 2018.
- e. Phase 1 design will be finalized before the next public meeting. Stay tuned for updates on the project website.