

3 Plans for 3 Parks
Shawnee Mission Park Public Meeting Minutes

Tomahawk Recreation Center
7:00 pm, September 23, 2003

Consultants in Attendance: Doug Pickert, Meg Babani and John Chamberlain (Landplan Engineering)

Staff in Attendance: Michael Meadors, Bill Maasen, Bill Cobb, Randy Knight, Grant Evans, et al.

Patrons in Attendance: See Guest Sign-In Sheet

Landplan Engineering consultants presented the proposed Master Plan for Shawnee Mission Park. Following the presentation, the consultants invited public comment and discussion.

Oakridge Stables and Equestrian Trails Discussion:

- ❑ A request was made to maintain the Oakridge horse stables in combination with other trails in the area in order to maintain a “horse presence.” Stable users felt that there is room for both horses and other users. It was also expressed that they (stable users) may not need as much pasture as currently is in use, so some compromise may be possible.
- ❑ Equestrian interests expressed their feeling that the stables are self-supporting because of the fees they pay for boarding their horses.
- ❑ A request was made to create more equestrian trails. It was expressed that trails in the northeast section of the park have traditionally been shared by all users (equestrian/bikers/hikers) and equestrian trail users feel that the system works well in Shawnee Mission Park.
- ❑ It was the impression of one stable user that the Oakridge area was donated with a covenant for maintaining horses on the site. A Park District representative explained that the area was purchased with an understanding that the stables were to be a temporary use. This use has now lasted 17 years.
- ❑ Stable users expressed frustration with not having been previously made aware of the master planning process. The District explained that the meetings had been publicly posted at all Park entrances, at the stables, and on the website. The stable users claimed that an announcement for this meeting was never posted at the stables and requested a meeting with the Landplan Engineering consultants to offer direction on planning for other options and compromises for use of the Oakridge area.

Shawnee Mission Park Trails Discussion:

- ❑ One attendee expressed concern that high prairie grass draws snakes and therefore prairie restoration efforts may present potential conflict for walking trails.
- ❑ A mountain bike advocate observed that the proposed Master Plan shows a mountain bike trail system of about the same length as currently exists. He wanted to see the mountain bike system lengthened.
- ❑ Mountain bikers suggested combining hiking and biking trails to increase bike trail distances. The mountain bikers don't feel it necessary to separate hikers and bikers.

- ❑ Some mountain bikers expressed resistance to trails that follow the contours of the land. They want more extreme grade changes. The consultant explained that these types of trails cause erosion problems and are harmful to the land. Also, the newly acquired quarry area was proposed as an area that could accommodate more extreme trail riding.
- ❑ One equestrian user also expressed the desire to maintain the “extreme” experience of Shawnee Mission Park with more challenging horse and bike trails that traversed the steep slopes.
- ❑ There was agreement that hiking trails should remain unpaved. Concern was expressed for eco-friendly non-paved surfaces in the Oakridge area.

Other Features Discussion:

- ❑ A request was made to maintain the existing primitive campsites in the northwest corner of the park. The consultants indicated that no suggestion had been made to remove the campsites.
- ❑ A request was made to maintain the character and tree canopy along Ogg Road when proposed improvements are implemented. Assurance was expressed that safety is the major concern as Ogg Road is increasingly used as a major park entry. The Master Plan does not recommend that the character of the road be altered, but it is necessary to rebuild the road to a safe cross-section with shoulders.
- ❑ A suggestion was made to build a white water kayak course in the area of the proposed wetland cells or at some place in the park. It was explained that such a feature would likely present a conflict with the purpose of creating the wetland cells, which is to improve the water quality and reduce silting in Shawnee Mission Park Lake. While another more suitable site might be found for such a facility, cost would still be a major factor.
- ❑ A request was made to add pathway lighting along the walkway from Shelter 10 to Walnut Grove. Lighting improvements in this area are included in the Master Plan.
- ❑ Archers present at the meeting expressed support for the proposed re-location of the archery range. While some questioned the need for 90 meter targets, others stated their support for these lengths. It was suggested that the archery area could accommodate revenue events. A request was also made to include an elevated platform for bow hunting practice.
- ❑ BMX interests expressed a desire for implementation of the proposed BMX facility within the quarry area. They feel the area could attract large events that could generate revenue.
- ❑ Disc golf course interests expressed support for the proposed disc golf course in the southeast portion of the park.
- ❑ Attendees present at the meeting stated a desire to provide volunteer efforts and potential revenue for the Park from their various activities. Bill Maasen expressed encouragement for any special use groups to work with the District to encourage the various improvements and suggested that the Earth Riders Mountain Bike Club might serve as an example of how to coordinate these efforts.

All in attendance were encouraged to forward additional comments via the comment forms at the sign-in table or through the park district’s web-site.

With no further public discussion, the meeting was adjourned.