

Topham Park Improvements Master Plan – Summary of Public Information Meeting

Meeting Date July 11, 2019

Time: 6:30-8:00pm

Location: East York Civic Centre
850 Coxwell Avenue, East York, Council Chamber

Project: Topham Park Clubhouse, Playground, and Waterplay Improvements
Master Plan

Summary

Prepared by: Cosburn Nauboris Ltd.

Attendees: Councillor Brad Bradford, Ward 19
Peter Woodcock, Constituency Relations for Ward 19

Nancy Chater, Senior Project Coordinator, City of Toronto, PFR
Wendy Hoare, Construction Coordinator, City of Toronto, PFR
Todd Davidson, Supervisor, Community Recreation, City of Toronto, PFR

Consultants

Cherie Ng – Cherie Ng Architect Inc.
Howard Nauboris – Cosburn Nauboris Ltd.
Millie Brandon – Cosburn Nauboris Ltd.

Community Representatives

Rebecca Cowling, Topham Park Community Association
Cathy Smith, Topham Park Minor Softball League (Snack Bar Convenor)
Dave Scheffel, Topham Park Minor Softball League (Equipment Manager)

Summary

Meeting Format

1. Approximately 20 residents attended the public information meeting.
2. Councillor Brad Bradford provided a brief introduction, clarifying that the meeting is held to discuss master plan design; construction and implementation is tentatively scheduled for 2021-2022.
3. City's project coordinator, Nancy, provided further detail, describing the City's intent to create a comprehensive, integrated master plan for playground, water play, and clubhouse improvements at the east end of Topham Park.
4. A slide deck presentation by the consultants was followed by a discussion period.

Part 1: Landscape Presentation: Playground and Waterplay Improvements

1. Landscape Architect, Howard, presented two themed layout plans for discussion:
2. It was noted that the goal of the meeting was to receive direction on a preferred concept and theme, to provide direction on finalizing the master plan
3. **An overview of the existing conditions was provided:**

- i. The existing playground does not provide equal opportunities for both junior and senior play
 - ii. The new playground will serve both age groups with separate play structures
 - iii. The existing fence surrounding the playground will remain
 - iv. Existing walkways around the playground are not an accessible width, they will be reconstructed to meet AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) standards
 - v. The front entrance to the clubhouse (between the double doors and wood arbor) was noted as the “heart of the park” and is used as a gathering space for community events, existing flagstone pavers will be replaced with poured concrete paving to improve accessibility
 - vi. The wood arbor will be removed to improve sightlines to the clubhouse from the road, and to increase usable space within the park
 - vii. The intent is to keep the playground and water play in its current location due to property limit constraints and close proximity to the softball diamonds
 - viii. Based on feedback from previous stakeholder meetings, the wading pool will be converted to a splash pad to allow for:
 - Longer operation hours, daily and seasonally
 - Reduced maintenance concerns (chemical testing, pool closures, staff supervision requirements, clogged drains, etc.)
 - Increased play value
 - ix. All existing trees will be preserved
4. Features common to both landscape options include:
- i. Removal of the existing wood arbor
 - ii. Reconfiguration of metal fence between playground splash pad to maximize the usable gathering space
 - iii. Wider pathways to meet AODA requirements
 - iv. Preservation of existing wood planters between the clubhouse and softball diamond to preserve the large existing trees
 - v. Formalized, paved seating area south of the clubhouse
 - vi. Conversion of the existing wading pool to a poured concrete splash pad
 - vii. New play equipment with separate junior and senior play structures within existing playground footprint; safety surfacing will be engineered wood fibre
 - viii. Exterior storage for the Softball League will be provided with a city-built shed. A photo of an example from another city park was shown at the meeting.
 - ix. Solar lights (successful at other park sheds in the city) may be incorporated into the shed
 - x. City noted that the storage shed shown as an example would provide approximately 100 sq. ft. of storage space.
 - xi. Softball League expressed concerns about requiring more storage for softball equipment; city noted that the design and size of shed is to be determined through further discussion and budget review.
 - xii. Renderings of two play equipment options (not specific to either theme) was presented to demonstrate the size of the playground that will fit within the allocated budget and space
 - xiii. Swings will be included in the new play equipment design

5. Landscape – Option 1 – Meadow Theme

- i. Play structure will be nature/treehouse themed
- ii. Splash pad features will be more natural (ex. flowers and cattails)
- iii. Rocks/boulders will be incorporated into the splash pad design

6. Landscape – Option 2 – Solar System Theme

- i. Based on the community's historical nickname "Sunshine Valley"
- ii. Splash pad will be solar system themed with planets represented to scale to provide a learning opportunity
- iii. Play equipment will be space/rocket themed to match

Discussion of Landscape Concepts

7. **ROADWAY CHANGES:** Residents asked about the potential use of the new "green space" at the reconfigured intersection of Westview Blvd and Tiago Ave to increase the playground footprint
 - i. The City clarified that this extra "green space" between the two sidewalks will be the result of Transportation Services project to improve the safety of this intersection.
 - ii. To acquire this ROW (right-of-way property) as park land would be cost prohibitive due to the extensive amount of environmental testing required; the process would also take several years to complete, and the timing of the road work and playground improvements are not aligned.
 - Residents noted that although extra green space will not be incorporated into the park, the sodded boulevard will be beneficial to the park as a buffer between the playground and vehicular traffic
 - It was noted that existing boulevards and traffic islands in the neighbourhood are not maintained/mowed very often; the City noted that this concern will be passed on to the Transportation division which is responsible for boulevard maintenance
8. **DRAINAGE:** A resident was concerned about the possibility of drainage issues from the implementation of a splash pad
 - i. The landscape architect explained that there will be no standing water in the proposed splash pad design; the splash pad drain will direct water into the city's sanitary system
9. **SPLASH PAD CONVERSION:** There was overall support for the conversion of the wading pool to a splash pad:
 - i. A resident noted that they enjoyed the interaction with wading pool supervision staff and that wading pools seem to keep their kids entertained longer when compared to a splash pad
 - ii. Community association representatives noted that they were in favour of a splash pad due to longer operational hours and more heat relief provided in the shoulder seasons (wading pools are open only during the months of July and August)
 - iii. The idea of a combined wading pool/splash pad water play feature was discussed
 - The available space for water play improvements does not allow for splash pad water to be directed to a separate drain away from the wading pool

- Parks Staff was not in support of this approach as a clogged drain during unsupervised hours with the splash pad features in operation poses a drowning hazard
 - The combined splash pad and wading pool approach is no longer supported by the City
10. PREFERRED OPTION: At the end of the meeting, community residents were invited to take a closer look at the presentation boards and provide input on the playground and splash pad concepts to establish a preferred direction
- i. Residents were given one sticker to vote on their preferred layout, and one sticker to vote on their preferred theme
 - ii. Based on the votes placed at the meeting, Option 1 was the preferred layout and theme (Meadow)
11. SUPPORT: overall there was strong support for the playground and splash pad concept designs presented.

Part 2: Clubhouse Improvements Presentation

1. Architect, Cherie Ng, presented a clubhouse renovation plan for discussion:
2. Cherie noted that the budget for clubhouse improvements provides three types of improvements:
 - i. State of Good Repair Work
 - ii. Accessibility Improvements
 - iii. Building Upgrades
3. The existing condition of the clubhouse and proposed improvements were discussed.
4. Funding: The State of Good Repair (SGR) work includes a new roof, replacement of existing windows, a new furnace, mechanical updates, and accessibility improvements. By combining the budget for SGR with additional Section funds associated with a proposed Ward 19 development, further building upgrades could be completed. The building improvements funding associated with the development project needs to be secured before the project moves forward per the conceptual design.
5. The conceptual design shows the integrated improvements which would facilitate community recreational programming in the building.

The key features of the conceptual design include:

6. Sightlines will be improved into the clubhouse with larger windows
 - i. Upper windows will be operational to allow for air flow
 - ii. Residents were in support of move visibility into the clubhouse
 - iii. The addition of air conditioning is not proposed due to budget constraints
7. Existing washrooms will be reconfigured to allow for access from outside the building
 - i. A universal washroom will be added with the provisions for an adult change table to be installed at a later date; it is anticipated that an adult changing table will not fit within the allocated budget for clubhouse improvements
 - ii. Residents expressed their preference to implement all the improvements at once; they propose to raise funds for the adult change table if the cost does not fall within budget
8. The existing mechanical room will stay in its current location.

9. The existing clubhouse entrance from the playground side enters directly into the main multipurpose room; programs are interrupted when staff require access to the janitor's closet; the arrangement is not ideal for programming and is reconfigured in the concept plan.
10. The snack bar and pantry will retain its current footprint
 - i. Additional storage will be created with upper and lower storage cabinets
 - ii. A servery will be added to allow for access from the multipurpose room
 - iii. A new overhead operator will be installed
 - iv. The stove will be electric
11. A second multi-purpose room with storage and a sink will be added to allow for additional programming
 - i. Community Recreation Supervisor, Todd Davidson, noted that the availability of sinks and storage in both multi-purpose rooms will allow for a wide range of recreational programs
 - ii. Residents were in support of improvements to the clubhouse to allow for year-round use of the building and during the Softball off-season

Discussion of the Clubhouse Improvements Design

12. STORAGE: The Softball Club expressed concern about needing more space, since they are losing interior space in the clubhouse. The City noted that the size of the exterior storage shed for the club is still to be determined through further discussion with the Softball Club, Parks Operations Staff, and a review of the budget.
13. NATURAL ICE RINK: A resident asked if storage was being provided for ice rinks boards from the local natural ice rink group. The City noted that this is not planned at this time due to space constraints, and the need to maximize year round opportunities for community recreational programming in the clubhouse.
14. NATURAL ICE RINK: The city notes that to support the local community natural ice rink group, a hose bib with a heat tracer will be provided at the south-facing wall of the building to allow for access to water for the outdoor skating rink, and space for temporary storage of hoses during winter rink operations will be made inside, on rubber mats to protect the new floor.
15. HERITAGE: A resident noted that Topham Park's history of being a wartime housing community is currently noted in a plaque outside the clubhouse
 - i. Architect confirmed that the plaque will remain/be reinstated; the existing outdoor bulletin board mounted to the building wall will also be reinstated
 - ii. Residents suggested incorporating war memorial elements to the clubhouse improvements
 - iii. City staff and architect noted that community initiatives can be made to highlight the neighbourhood history (e.g. murals, memorabilia displays, etc.)
16. SECURITY: Concerns were voiced about the security of stored materials and equipment within the clubhouse for various user groups
 - i. Architect confirmed that storage will be all keyed individually
17. SHARING THE SPACE: The Topham Park Softball League was concerned about the availability of the main multipurpose room for league events during the softball season

- i. Community Recreation staff noted that communication with the City will be required to ensure that there are no scheduling conflicts; the league will be able to book the room ahead of time to ensure availability
18. SAFETY: A resident was concerned about provisions for potential seismic activity and fire safety
- i. Architect clarified that the clubhouse is a low-rise building and improvements will be categorized as an “extensive renovation” under the building code; provisions for potential seismic activity will not be required
 - ii. The building code does not require overhead sprinklers to be installed for the types of use anticipated for the clubhouse; fire extinguishers will be available throughout the building for fire prevention
19. SUPPORT: There was strong support for the clubhouse improvements design and residents expressed excitement about the potential programming activities that could take place in the building.

Next Steps: A feasibility report will be prepared by the consultants to summarize the master plan with the preferred concept options presented at the meeting and associated construction cost estimates, with a record of consultation meetings. This will conclude the project.

Enclosed: Slide deck presentation showing landscape and clubhouse conceptual designs.

Distribution:

Attendees
Peter Didiano, PFR Capital Projects
Dave Nosella, PFR Capital Projects