



MEMORANDUM

To: Ross Bintner
From: Renae Clark
Date: July 20, 2017
Re: Arden Park Community Meeting 5 and 6 Summary

The purpose of this memo is to provide a summary of the previous two community meetings regarding the concept plan development for Arden Park.

At the City Council meeting on June 6, we heard from members of the public that are not in favor of the dam at 54th St. being removed and that the public notice and process for developing the Arden Park concept plan was not satisfactory in engaging the neighborhood. James Wisker provided project background, information and context, and also offered an opportunity to meet with residents to continue listening to feedback and concerns. Mayor Hovland directed the public to reach out to District staff. After hearing no public response, on Thursday June 8, I contacted Stan Davis to offer a community meeting. He responded on Friday June 9 and accepted our offer to meet on Tuesday evening June 13 in advance of the previously scheduled Council action. I reserved meeting space at Public Works and asked Mr. Davis to spread the word through his networks. The District also posted the meeting on our website and I alerted other engaged residents in the neighborhood through email.

We had 53 people sign in and counted 62 attendees. For many it was their first Arden Park project meeting. After a brief introduction about the District and the project, acknowledging we understood folks were there because they do not want the dam removed, we facilitated the meeting using small group discussion on the following three questions, with reports to the full group by a self-selected person from each table. The questions were:

1. What do you value about the waterfall?
2. What do you value about the park?
3. What do you like about the concept plan?

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People were very passionate about the sense of place and all the attributes about the waterfall and park they enjoy, including its natural character and wildlife. The raw notes recorded at each table are part of our record.

The second part of the meeting was a question/answer session about project benefits from the dam removal, changes to the creek, and ecosystem. Jonathon Kusa was on hand as a technical expert from Inter-Fluve, the design consultant. Inter-Fluve specializes in dam removal, stream and fisheries restorations around the country.

The meeting was scheduled 6:30 – 8 PM and actually concluded about 8:30 PM. People were appreciative of the opportunity to speak and learn more about the project. In effort to authentically listen and respond to the information that was shared we committed to delay Council action and offered to come back to the community again prior to Council consideration.

We were asked on June 13 to provide site specific, scientific justification for dam removal and remeandering the creek.

Meeting #5: On July 17, 6:30 – 8 PM the District scheduled a follow-up community meeting hosted at Edina Public Works. Public notice was provided the same way, through phone and email to community members and through the District and City of Edina’s website. Approximately 50 people attended. Jonathon Kusa from Interfluve presented site specific science regarding existing and expected proposed ecological conditions related to stream health, wetland health, floodplain changes, and tree impacts. I presented the concept plan again with maps showing the overlay of stream alignment and corridor impacts over the tree survey and over existing conditions. I also presented upstream project examples, budget, schedule and next steps. We took questions about the science and comments about why people value the park.

An overwhelming theme from project supporters and opponents is their value of the rustic experience. If the project moves forward, a primary consideration for the initial design will be the level of new trail and creek access points provided. This part of the design I expect to be driven heavily by the City.

Stan Davis reserved the same meeting space following the meeting. He presented a video of people tubing, kayaking and fishing around the dam and pointing out desirable clams and vegetation that is in the creek today.

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