

# CENTERWAY PARK ENHANCEMENTS PROJECT: COMMUNITY MEETING NOTES



**DATE:** September, 15<sup>th</sup> 2020

**TIME:** 7:00 – 8:30 pm

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:** Melissa Chotiner, Community Outreach and Engagement Manager

Kathy Dearstine, Project Manager II

Patricia McManus, Design Section Supervisor

Shannon Olson, SharePoint/Office 365 Administrator

Erin Pant, Public Relations and Outreach Specialist

John Whilden, Project Manager

**PROJECT:** Centerway Park Enhancements Project

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## **Presentation Format**

During the initial stages of a Playground Renovation or Park Enhancement Project, staff host a public meeting to introduce the project to the local community impacted by the work, and to solicit feedback. Typically, this would be an in-person meeting. However, due to the COVID-19 safety protocols, the Centerway Park Enhancement public meeting was held virtually utilizing the Microsoft Teams Live format. Community members were also provided with a call-in phone line where they could listen to the audio of the presentation\*\*

The presentation included live video and audio, and attendees of the virtual event could type questions and comments into a chat box at any time during the presentation. Kathy Dearstine and John Whilden presented an overview of the project, followed by a discussion session. Questions and comments submitted by participants were read out loud by Kathy Dearstine, and then either answered or fielded to John Whilden to verbally respond. The full audio and video of the meeting was recorded and is now posted on the project website. Typed comments and questions received during the meeting are documented below.

Park staff assisting with the production of the event included Melissa Chotiner, Patricia McManus, Shannon Olson and Erin Pant.

## **Presentation Content**

Presenters Kathy Dearstine and John Whilden discussed the following topics during the presentation:

- Centerway Local Park location and existing conditions
- Project scope of work and budget
- The value of play
- Inspection, maintenance and renovation of Montgomery County playgrounds
- Montgomery County's Playground Renovation Program
- Criteria to prioritize playground renovations
- Safety guidelines and standards followed by Montgomery County Parks
- The design and construction process for a playground renovation project
- Typical components of a playground renovation project
- Playground equipment examples for children ages 2-5 and 5-12 years old
- Parking lot improvements
- Picnic shelter improvements and examples
- Accessible routes between park amenities
- Project timeline
- Next steps for the project
- Methods for community members to provide additional feedback, including the Open Town Hall survey (link provided), or by contacting Project Manager, John Whilden, directly (contact information provided)

## **Meeting Discussion**

The virtual meeting was attended by six participants who asked questions and provided comments on the following three topics:

### Playgrounds

During the presentation, participants were provided an overview of playground equipment and asked to provide feedback on their preferences for: types of equipment and play, colors, themes, and existing playgrounds they found engaging. A participant commented that they would like to see a nature-themed playground. In addition, a participant asked if there would be an accessible route to the playground. An accessible route will be provided to the playground from the parking lot and existing path.

### Picnic Shelter

Examples of picnic shelters were presented, each constructed of different material and in a different style. Participants were asked to provide feedback on whether they used the existing shelter, what types of activities they used it for, and what style of new shelter they preferred. A participant commented that they preferred a shelter with a gable roof and constructed of stone columns or a timber frame.

### General Project and Park Information

There was a question about the total number of trash and recycling receptacles for the project. The project will include at least one of each receptacle for the picnic shelter. Both will be accessible. Additional trash receptacles will be included at the renovated playground and accessible portable restroom.

A question was asked about regular police patrols in the park during and after park hours. The frequency of police patrols in the park will be determined by Park Police and local law enforcement. The Park Police may be contacted at 301.949.8010.

### **Next Steps**

It is worth noting that two community members--one prior to, and one after, the meeting--raised concerns about Centerway Local Park becoming the site of a new middle school. Montgomery Parks will investigate any plans by the County Board of Education to determine how to proceed with the project.

In the interim, Parks will continue collecting additional feedback from the community and the project's Open Town Hall survey. Based on all feedback received, concepts for the playground renovation will be developed and presented this fall. Inclusive opportunities will be provided for community members to provide feedback on the project.

\*\* As an added measure of inclusion for those who might not have access to or wish to not use a computer, Parks also provided a separate call-in line as a listen-only option. Unfortunately, there was an error in the advertised information required for the call-in option. Montgomery Parks apologizes for the mistake and any impediment this may have had on a community members ability to participate.