

Mt. Tabor GNA Advisory Group
Meeting # 5 Summary
Western Seminary - Chapel Basement
March 30, 2005

Committee Members Present: Chuck Arnst, Sharie Dietz, Gay Greger, Terre Haberland, Ron Hall, Kathy Kuehnl, Paul Leistner, Shannon Loch, Teresa Miller, Sharie Moss, Gina Patriarca, Michael Schnidal. (Lannie Mower sat in for Mary Mowery).

Unable to attend: Ron Bates, Mike Foster, Mary Mowery

Committee Staff: Diane Redd

Facilitator: Elaine Cogan

The meeting was called to order by Elaine Cogan. She thanked Diane Redd for putting together the "Mt. Tabor Off-Leash Area Issues/Concerns - Topics for Discussion" handout. Gay Greger apologized for misspelling Shannon Loch's name in the last meeting summary. Ron Bates was not in attendance, but Elaine paraphrased an email he sent to her to share his thoughts for the meeting:

Ron supports a modified expansion on the west end. He feels the boundary should be moved in 200 ft. on the east end to accommodate the neighbors. He agreed with the rules discussed at the last meeting and feels that a kiosk is necessary. He felt that lights with timers would be nice, and the timeframe of 7-9 PM is good.

East & West End Boundary Discussion:

Elaine started the meeting by asking the committee to discuss the west end modifications and gates. Ron Hall reviewed his suggestion for the west side - which expanded the current area to the west, including the hard surface open area but not expanding into the current nursery. He said he thought that the committee had ruled out the peninsula area at the last meeting. All agreed. He explained that he would like the boundary to include the loop path.

Terre Haberland felt that less is more. She mentioned the findings of the master plan, but said her concerns were primarily related to impacts on the environment and neighbors. She suggested enclosing the off-leash area as it stands now and not extend it to the west. She also felt that parking might be accommodated in the peninsula area. Haberland has heard people who live off Lincoln express discomfort regarding potential traffic impacts.

Chuck Arnst is also concerned with environmental issues but believes that the more condensed the OLA is, the worse impact it will have on

environmental wear and tear. Shannon Loch agreed with Chuck that the more dispersed the area, the better.

Gina Patriarca told the committee that if they want an unsuccessful OLA, then they should go ahead and reduce it in size. She said that because she had concerns about the neighbor's comments regarding noise disruptions, she brought a video camera to the area to check it out over the past week. She and Michael Kinney (also a C-SPOT member) split the duty of area surveillance over three days in early morning and post-work hours. She acknowledged that the weather was rather stormy, but said that the only instance of a barking dog found was a dog from the neighborhood, not in the OLA. They also found that there was very little use of the OLA during these times. Terre Haberland commented that Gina doesn't live in the neighborhood and might not be as aware as the neighborhood is to the noise by only visiting a few times.

Michael Schnidal agreed with Gina's earlier point - that if dog owners are not happy with the rules, it will result in non-compliance. He noted that Mt. Tabor is a regional park and although it is nice that the Parks Dept. is working with the neighborhood, everyone should keep in mind that this park serves the entire city and not just the neighborhood.

Kathy Kuehnl asked whether or not the map hanging on the wall reflected the 100-ft. boundary reduction on the east side. Gay explained that it showed the current boundaries, with no expansion or reduction on either side. Kathy then said that, in her opinion, the boundary should remain where it is but should be fenced.

Paul Leistner said that the committee should consider the potential benefits of moving the boundary back from the east 100-200 ft. He felt the greatest benefit to the neighbors would be the fence itself - that moving the boundary back would have marginal additional benefit. Gina agreed, saying that off-leash users who are not following the rules now will not follow them any better if the boundary is moved back.

Sharie Dietz agreed to keeping the boundary as is, but fenced. Gay stated that at fenced sites, people are pretty good about keeping their dogs on-leash until they get to the fence and open the gate. The fact that there is a fence and gate should discourage people from letting their dogs run directly from their cars. There was discussion about the access trail as well. The general feeling was that if it directed people up to the road on the west side of the parking pull-out, it could make a big difference for immediate neighbors. Now, the trail begins right at the park's eastern property line.

Elaine summed up as follows: the committee would like to utilize barriers

(fences, hedges, gates), to influence behavior of the off-leash users. All agreed. Sue Parish suggested fencing the boundary near Warner Pacific College as well as the areas being discussed.

Susan Carter Anderson spoke up from the audience by saying that she agreed fencing was an important factor. However, she felt that lighting was not as important and that the money spent on lighting would take away from the money that could be spent on management of the area.

Elaine Cogan reminded the committee that any additions/changes to the OLA would be done for a year trial period.

Chuck Arnst stated that he would like for the design of the OLA to complement Mt. Tabor Park's natural setting. Teresa Miller added that the more the fence can be set into the natural canopy, the more obscure the OLA will become. Her concern is that people already have a difficult time locating the OLA. Members of the committee agreed that good signage will be critical.

Elaine asked how many people supported adjusting the eastern boundary to just inside the tree line, rerouting the access trail so it follows the terrain but begins on the west side of the parking area and ensuring that all this is done in a way that is compatible with the natural look of the park. Ten people supported this approach, three were opposed. Discussion moved back to the western boundary. Michael Schnidal said that he would like to see the western boundary fenced so that it included the loop. At this point, Nancy Norby came up to identify the location of the pathway loop.

Terre Haberland said that she is against the idea of any sort of exercise area on the west side. She feels that the current boundaries are enough.

Shannon Loch would like to see the forested loop included and the overall character of the park preserved. She did not want to see any lighting be put in. She reminded members of the committee that there is actually a high bird population that lives in the area - especially owls.

Ron Hall said that his understanding is that dog owners want to have the path included in the OLA. He felt it would be good to have a fence on the west side to include the loop.

Some options for fencing on the west side were discussed. The ideal location for the fence (at the "pinch point" back within the wooded area) would require relocation of a portion of the loop trail. It was shown by a dotted line on the map. If relocating the trail is unrealistic, the group agreed that the fence line could be moved slightly to the west (shown on

the map with a straight line.) Gay said she would be happy to come back to the next meeting with some basic costs to help the committee prioritize elements of their recommendation.

Gates

Gate locations were discussed, and the group agreed that they would like to recommend 6 gates along the fenced boundary of the OLA: one on the west, two on the north, one on the east, and two on the south. The committee agreed that the fenced boundary gates are first priority.

Sandra Lucas spoke up from the audience to ask whether she would have a right to ask people to get their dogs away from her when she walked through the area. Gay explained that while other users would have a right to walk through the area, it would be designated as an off-leash area and people should expect to encounter off-leash dogs when they enter the area. Sandra said she felt that once a fence goes in, she will not be able to access the upper park using the path because dogs would jump on her and her kids. She said it would force them to walk up the road. She also had concerns about the path being taken away from Franklin High School runners. Ron Hall responded that his daughter attends Franklin and runs cross-country, and he does not feel as though this would cause problems for them because there are several other routes to access the park.

Gates at the park entrances off the dead-end streets on the east side had been discussed at previous meetings. Rather than putting in gates at this time, it was agreed that signs should be placed at these entrances, reading something like: "Now entering the Children's Play Area. Your dog must be on-leash." The need for gates at these locations should be revisited at the end of the trail period.

Lighting

Elaine Cogan said that at the last meeting, she was hearing that the committee wanted a light and asked for further discussion on the topic. Gina Patriarca said that in the winter, the lighting is needed. Paul Leistner added that a light could be used as a management tool, since after dark people tend to congregate near the light. Terre stated that the addition of lighting could either mean 1) more activity, which would result in more wear and tear, or 2) would help reinforce the set hours, therefore limiting the wear and tear.

Options for lighting were discussed, including adding light down into the area from the PGE pole across from Res. I and adding a light inside the open area on the west end.

Lannie said that it would be good to hold off on the lighting until there is more money. Sharie Moss reminded the committee that one of the

complaints for the east side neighbors was that people congregated near the houses where spillover lighting came from. Michael responded that since there is no existing power, addition of a light could take up the entire budget for the OLA. Kathy said that as a woman, she feels safer with a light.

Shannon Loch posed the question - "How do you pick up dog poop if it is dark out?" She would entertain lighting as a second phase. Shannon also suggested fundraising for a light installation and added that perhaps C-SPOT would be willing to help.

Audience member William Parish pointed out that there is a PGE pole near Warner Pacific that could potentially be used to route power.

It was agreed that investing in lighting was probably not a first priority during the trial period - and certainly wouldn't be needed immediately. Gay agreed to try to come back with some general costs for the next meeting.

Signage

Aside from onsite signage, it was suggested that PP&R provide directional signage to get to the OLA. Sharie Moss suggested small signs with arrows leading from the main access points to the OLA. These signs would be discreet, keeping with the quality of the park. Gay Greger let the committee know that PP&R is working on signage that should be easier to understand. She will be bringing the sample wording to the next meeting.

Sue Parish announced to the committee that Mark Cline, PP&R Park Ranger gave her forms that neighbors can complete for repeating offenders. Gay Greger said she would follow up with Mark regarding these forms and share more information with the committee at the next meeting.

The committee agreed that a kiosk should be placed centrally within the OLA to help bring people to this area. Gina Patriarca said she would not mind having the Plexiglas holders at the entrance until enough money is available for a nicer kiosk. Sharie Moss said she was afraid as all these amenities are added, the site may become too cluttered.

Gay Greger said she will bring back general costs for these amenities to the next meeting as well.

Next Meeting

At this time, Elaine asked the committee their preference on having two more meetings and finalize all recommendations, or to split up into sub-committees. The committee agreed that they would like to have their final recommendations put together within two weeks. They expressed concern that

splitting up into sub-committees would delay the process.

Gay volunteered to pull together some draft criteria for measuring the success of the off-leash area.

Gina Patriarca announced a clean up of the OLA at Mt. Tabor this Saturday starting at 10 AM. (Starting at the east end of the current OLA).