

Mt. Tabor GNA Advisory Group
Meeting #2 Summary - DRAFT
Western Seminary - Chapel Basement
March 2, 2005

Committee Members Present: Chuck Arnst, Ron Bates, Sharie Dietz, Mike Foster, Gay Greger, Cathy Kuehnl, Paul Leistner, Teresa Miller, Sharie Moss, Mary Mowrey, Sue Parish, Gina Patriarca, and Michael Schindel,
Committee Staff: Diane Redd, David Yamashita
Facilitator: Elaine Cogan
Notes: Keely Edmonson

Acronyms

PP&R = Portland Parks & Recreation
OLA = Off-Leash Area

The meeting was called to order at 7pm by Elaine Cogan. She welcomed everyone back to the second meeting and explained that last week's meeting was cancelled to allow David Yamashita more time to put together different options for the OLA at Mt. Tabor. Notes from the previous meeting were sent in advance. Paul Leistner asked that the summary reflect his suggestion to look at all issues related to management, as well as design, as a way to organize the committee's discussion. The correction will be made to page seven of the Meeting #1 Summary.

Boundary Options/Design Options

David posted aerial photos showing the following:

- Option A:** (5 acres) Existing boundary – no change.
- Option B:** (5.7 acres) Keeps existing boundary and adds open grassy area to the east. New area is more open, but still shaded and sloping.
- Option C:** (4 acres) Pulls the eastern boundary back to the mid-point (approximately SE 68th) to provide for a future connection from 68th up to Reservoir. 1 and pedestrian and bicycle access without conflicting with the off-leash area. Adds a relatively flat area and some sloping nursery area to the west.
- Option D:** (6 acres) Brings the eastern boundary in 100 ft. and adds relatively flat area and some sloping nursery area to the west.

David summarized how well each of the options met the criteria discussed at the last meeting (attached). He added that the committee should assume that all four options would

have the basic amenities, such as a place to post information, gates, appropriate fencing, etc.

Michael Schindel asked for clarification of what it means to have a gate, and Mary Mowrey asked what the fencing would look like. David answered by telling the committee that the gate would be necessary for access to the OLA on the west side because the area would be completely fenced. The type of fencing will depend on budget. Paul noted that the Neighborhood Association has recommended for years that temporary fencing be used during a site's trial period, and that the investment in permanent fencing wait until the site is made permanent. Gay Greger said that this would certainly be the case for this project.

Sharie Dietz asked if there is a budget for this project. Gay answered that the estimate for this site is \$40,000, including temporary field fencing installation. Sharie Moss asked about utilizing the fencing that still exists in former OLA at Mt. Tabor. Gay said she was unaware of that fencing and said she would find out about its status and appropriateness for reuse.

Michael asked if there would be a designated parking area available. Several ideas were discussed. Committee members agreed that further review is needed to identify the most appropriate parking options. Sharie D. told the committee that people would want to park as close to the entrance of the OLA as possible. Therefore, parking could be controlled to some extent based on where the gates are located.

Teresa Miller asked about the issue of runoff. David said that bioswales would be incorporated in the design as appropriate. He also noted that the biggest erosion and runoff concerns are in sloping, wet, or grassy areas. The problem is much less on the trail portion of the OLA. The extension option to the west has less slope than the extension option to the east and does not drain directly toward neighboring residences.

Mike said he likes the different options proposed, but wonders what concerns the neighbors would have on the west side.

Gina Patriarca said she likes Option D the most and that dog owners would not like having half the path taken away, as shown in Option C.

Chuck Arnst favored Option D also, and asked about the possibility of adding parking further up, where there is a flat area. David agreed that it is possible to make that area the more desirable place to congregate by adding a kiosk and seating, which would be desirable regardless of the option selected.

Sue Parish said that adequate signage is very important. She has been visiting the park and talking to people with dogs a great deal in the past couple of weeks, and has found that many dog owners are still unclear as to where the OLA is. Some people open their car doors and allow dogs to dart across the street (off leash) into the OLA. This is very dangerous for the dogs. Elaine reminded the committee that enforcement is one of the

management issues that will be discussed at the next meeting

Michael favors Option C because of the path usage. He said that Option C would adequately address a lot of problems, especially issues of people vs. dogs on the trail.

David further explained Options C & D. C pulls the eastern boundary back to the center of the current site and expands to include the flat nursery storage area and more sloping planting area to the west. While walking the site over the last few weeks, he said he noticed that the open area on the east side of the OLA is very windy and can be much colder than the site on the west.

Gina said that people will miss the trail and that dog owners like to walk their dogs on trails. She feels that part of the beauty to the OLA at Mt. Tabor is the ability to walk your dog off-leash, on a trail.

Sharie M. reiterated that fencing would be necessary to make the area a success.

Sharie D. said that the options may be taking the current problems and shifting them to another area (to the west). She suggested notifying these neighbors and inviting them to our next meeting. Cathy Kuehnl added that people traditionally have walked up Harrison, etc. to access the park. She recalled that the former fenced OLA at Mt. Tabor was inundated in a very short period of time. Her concern is that the new OLA will be trampled too quickly. Paul said that this is a management issue and that there needs to be an agreed upon management plan for the site prior to its opening. Michael said that the grassy area outside of the trees should be rested and allowed to grow back.

Paul said that the committee should not agree to any one option until further details are available. The committee generally agreed to tentatively select one option, so we can move ahead, with the understanding we need further details. At this time, Elaine suggested the committee hear from the public on the presented options.

Public Comment – Design Option Specific:

Shannon Loch - lives on one of the streets that would be affected by the proposed west side options. The streets around there are very busy with traffic, especially during commuter hours. She said that neighbors on the west side of the park would most definitely be concerned. When the OLA becomes a fenced area, it will take away from the beauty of the park. The west end is every bit as sloped as the east. If we are going to put burdens on one set of neighbors, Shannon feels that we should put them on both – and thus reduce the overall impact. She suggested the budget should be adequate to deal with parking impacts & erosion and predicted that problems happening on the east side of the OLA would also happen on the west side. She added, however that the current off-leash area has been very popular and she feels it has been a great improvement to the park so far.

Nancy Norby – likes option D. The new access trails created by the Eagle Scouts has really helped people access the OLA from Harrison St. The current informal trail (in the center of the current OLA) shown in Option C is very steep - fine for young people, but very difficult on the older population. If the eastern boundary is pulled in to the west, it should come to where the new trail comes down into the area.

Joanne Arnst - On the eastside of the park, huge amounts of people end up congregating on the edge of the boundaries. That is what is causing the noise.

Gina added that people also congregate in the middle of the OLA.

Discussion:

Elaine asked for a show of hands for the four options. The majority of the committee favored option D.

It was agreed that the west area neighbors be invited to next week's meeting.

Mary asked about fence height. David answered that the average height is 4-5 feet. The fencing would also be screened with plantings for aesthetics and as a visual buffer.

Elaine said the issues identified at the last meeting have been sorted by topic area. The list was posted for the committee to review and Elaine asked if there were any additions. The committee added some issues to the list; agendas for upcoming meetings will be developed around these topics. (The complete list is included at the end of this summary.) Gay will invite the appropriate resource people from PP&R, etc. to address specific topics. Management will be a topic at the next meeting, so she will ask that representatives from Park Operations, Park Rangers, and Multnomah Co. Animal Services join us for the discussion.

Gay said that while enforcement has an important role, she would also like the group to give some thought to creative ways to encourage the behavioral changes that are needed.

A few suggestions from the committee were 1) a working stewardship group, and 2) enlisting C-SPOT's help.

Sharie D. said that having people with dogs talk to one another about rules is a lot better than non-dog owners approaching dog owners. Gina said the dog community needed to be built up again after the trial program discouraged so many people from following the rules. Mike agreed that leadership would be a good thing – perhaps having resource people onsite to answer questions. These people could work similarly to Friends of Mt. Tabor and perhaps wear orange vests so visitors know who they were. Enforcement could make a difference. Teresa added that the problem from the past is that people felt pushed out of the park. She thinks that people are less angry now and that these strategies might work.

At this point, Shannon from the audience spoke up to say that although some issues would be resolved through management; for other issues, it would not make a difference. She

added that the closer to the park the OLA can be, the better, and that people would congregate just inside the fence.

Another member of the audience asked for clarification as to whether the horseshoe area would be fenced off. His concern is that fencing would take away from the natural beauty of the park. David answered that fencing would be added to the horseshoe but would be installed inside the line of existing cherry trees. He added that the fencing would be downhill from street level on the upper portion of the horseshoe, so it would not be visible.

Sharie D. reiterated that she feels it is unfair to vote on any one option now that we are discussing moving the OLA to the west side of the park. Elaine responded by saying that this is not a vote, but there is a need to narrow down options – perhaps to just C & D. .

Diane Redd asked if the entrance gate were to be installed on the east side of the horseshoe, if it is likely that off-leash users would hang out there and talk. Several people in both the audience and on the committee responded with a “yes.” She went on to say that this would probably cause less traffic on the west side of the OLA and that we could manage where people congregate by where the access gate is located. David agreed and added that people also like to congregate in high points rather than low. For reference, he said that from the horseshoe to the nearest neighbors is about 330 feet (about the length of a football field.)

Shannon added that people are parking in their neighborhood on the west side now. Another member of the public said that a lot of problems could be taken care of by tripling or quadrupling the fines or asking people to pay some sort of permit fee. . Nancy added that the highest possible fine for off-leash is \$150.00.

Paul said that the Neighborhood Association has asked the police to be involved, and suggested that Officer Brandon McGuire be invited to the next meeting as well. He also said that there is a need for a mechanism to allow an authorized group to take down information and approach chronic violators. He has discussed this with Mark Warrington, PP&R Security Manager.

Before beginning public comment, Gay said that hours were another management tool and asked committee and audience members to be thinking about what hours make sense at this location.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 9, 2005 at the same time (7pm – 9pm) and location. The meeting will include continued discussion of the west side option and management issues. Neighbors to the west will be invited. Sharie D. and Shannon offered to distribute the invitation door to door.

Public Comment:

Sandra Lucas – asked everyone to realize how much the (illegal) off-leash use on the east side is affecting her. She brought pictures to show how close her house is to the trail accessing the OLA and the erosion being caused by dogs. The trail is located 70 ft. from her property line. If the trail were fenced, it would become the defacto entrance to the off-leash area and make her problems worse. Her daycare has been out of business for the past three months. The house at 7106 has been abandoned, so no one there is complaining. Moving the boundary 100 feet to the east would be awful. Her daughter doesn't sleep. When it is a nice day, no one gets any sleep, (because people are in the park at 5AM with their dogs). Noise control won't do anything; Animal Control won't do anything; and the City of Portland Police Bureau is so short staffed that a call on barking dogs is such a low priority that it is the last on their list of calls to respond to.

Elaine asked Sandra if she had any solutions to suggest. Sandra said yes – Management. Change the OLA to have respectable hours. She asked to define the rules about barking dogs – how many times do they need to bark before owners need to get them to stop? Don't move the OLA over to the west with bad hours, because the problems will be the same. She added that midnight is not a reasonable park hour. Police cannot even go and talk to people that are disrupting neighbors until after midnight.

Sue suggested changing the hours to 7am. She has been visiting the meadow outside the OLA with a camera and most people see her and “hot foot-it” back to the designated area.

Discussion Topics

DESIGN

- Trail
 - Use, users
 - Improvements
 - Accessibility
- Boundaries
- Accommodations for dogs of all sizes
- Amenities (benches, etc.)
- Slopes
- Lighting
- Signage
- Bioswale*

MANAGEMENT

- Parking
- Noise
- Hours
- Enforcement
 - Unleashed dogs on streets, private property
 - Patrols
 - Penalties
- Possible user stewardship
- Dog poop

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Erosion & Run-off*
- Loss of bird, animal habitat
- Park operation vehicles driving through area

OTHER

- Conflicts with bikers, runners, hikers, playground users
- Conflicts between leashed/unleashed dogs
- Possible contamination of private yards
- Make an amendment to the Master Plan that allows for this OLA*
- How to Measure & Monitor the OLA's Success*
- Cars speeding along roads*
- Historical status of Mt. Tabor & adding fencing*
- Neighborhood Impacts*

* issues added at the March 2nd meeting