

REPORT OF FIELDS PLANNING COMMITTEE

To the Moscow City Council

April 3, 2006

This report contains six (6) pages

Membership of the Committee:

<i>"Constituency"</i>	<i>Representative(s)</i>
Neighborhood	Gail Adele, Ree Brannon, Hans Kok, Bob Ries
Youth sports	Cade Konen, Kevin Gardes, Ben Twigg
Moscow School District	Bill Anderson
University of Idaho	Gerard Billington
Parks & Rec Commission	Damon Burton
Transportation Commission	Philip Cook
City Council	Linda Pall
JUB Engineers	Cory Baune

Charge of the Fields Planning Committee:

The call for the Committee's deliberations is to address the following issues for youth ball fields to be located on the City's property along West Palouse River Drive:

- Buffering and design
- Scale and number of fields
- Lighting
- Transportation and safety
- Public address system and signage

The Committee is to present its report to the Moscow City Council for consideration on April 3, 2006.

Process of the Fields Planning Committee:

The Committee convened on February 22. The Committee met six times, spending a total of twelve hours discussing the background, options, concerns, and issues regarding the development of a park including ball fields on West Palouse River Drive. Kay Keskinen, mediator, hired by the City of Moscow to assist the Committee in its deliberations, facilitated the meetings. The Committee sought additional information from Les MacDonald (Moscow Public Works Director), Dwight Curtis (Moscow Parks and Recreation Director), and Greg Morrison (Moscow Parks and Recreation Supervisor).

The following recommendations are the product of Committee deliberations, signed and approved by the Committee unanimously with one abstention.

Recommendation Summary:

The Fields Planning Committee agreed to the following plan for the City's property on West Palouse River Drive: a natural park setting containing seven youth sports ball fields, without field lighting or amplified sound, which will blend in with the existing arboretum and surrounding neighborhoods. The Fields Planning Committee does not support scheduled adult league and tournament sports activities at the park. This design is a compromise achieved by the Fields Planning Committee by weighing competing interests. The Fields Planning Committee expects the final master plan for this site to honor the park as spelled out in this agreement.

Recommendations of the Fields Planning Committee (the Committee):

The Committee recommends the following for the development of a park on West Palouse River Drive in Moscow:

1. Buffering and Design

- The Committee recommends incorporating playfields into a design that is natural, not urban or commercial. The final design will include park-like facilities and design elements wherever possible. The Committee also envisions a park that will be usable and accessible to the general public for a wide range of youth activities. This park should be a showcase of community park development for residents and visitors.
- The Committee recommends exploring configurations of the playfields that would place the baseball fields on the east end of the park and the soccer/multi-purpose fields on the west end of the park, which could serve to reduce visual impact to the UI arboretum. The Committee notes that this recommendation is secondary to its recommendation regarding number of fields (see #2 below), i.e., the Committee does not recommend modifying the current configuration if it results in fewer fields.
- The Committee recommends using temporary fencing for baseball outfields.
- The Committee strongly recommends that an off-street, multi-use path for non-motorized transportation and recreation be developed along the South Fork of the Palouse River, extending through the park and eastward.
- The Committee recommends that appropriate buffering be incorporated into the project that mitigates visual impacts to the existing and proposed neighboring land uses.
- The Committee recommends that restrooms, concession booth, storage areas, and related services be designed and located in a manner that is harmonious with the design of the site and its surroundings (e.g. the Arboretum).
- The Committee recommends that environmental impacts be minimized in constructing accessory structures. For example, the Committee recommends consideration of composting toilets on-site.

- The Committee recommends that batting cages and other practice facilities be located in such a way to be useful for their sports, but also to minimize negative effects on other park visitors and the surrounding area when not being used by sports participants.
- The Committee recommends that an efficient irrigation system design be used to minimize ground water use. Low water-use vegetation should be encouraged where possible. The Committee recommends that the Council actively pursue the use of reclaimed wastewater for irrigation purposes.

2. Scale and number of fields:

The Committee recommends a total of seven fields, including the following:

- Two Babe Ruth baseball fields
- Two Cal Ripken baseball fields (with permanent mounds and grass infields)
- Two regulation size soccer fields
- One multi-purpose (football, lacrosse, soccer, etc.) field

The Committee recommends that the first field to be constructed will be a Babe Ruth Baseball field.

3. Transportation and Safety

Palouse River Drive improvement and motor vehicle access

- The Committee recommends that the City continue to aggressively seek funding to complete improvements to Palouse River Drive from its intersection with US95 to the park and include park frontage if possible. Phasing may be unavoidable but safety developments need to coincide with park development as much as possible. Improvements should include adequate width travel lanes, bike lanes, planting strip, sidewalks (up to collector street standards). The City should consider a planted median in the road to slow traffic at the park entrance.
- The Committee requests that the Council allow appropriately phased improvements (street-widening, curbs and sidewalk) to West Palouse River Drive along the park frontage as the park is developed according to these recommendations.
- The Committee recommends that the needs of public transportation (i.e. bus service) be considered in park access and parking lot design. The Committee recommends including bus pullouts along Palouse River Drive and regulating or adding traffic control devices to reduce traffic through the Frontier neighborhood.
- The Committee recommends an appropriate number of parking spaces to minimize parking overflow on Palouse River Drive and nearby neighborhoods. Parking lot design should minimize conflict with turning, backing, and through movements. The Committee recommends constructing a pull-through design with one entry (on the west side) and one exit (on the east side), or acceptable alternative design, and having exiting vehicles turn right (toward US95) to discourage driving through the Frontier neighborhood.

- The Committee recommends a passenger loading/unloading area where drivers can conveniently drop off passengers without parking. This loading area should be constructed early in the park development.
- The Committee recommends following ADA surfacing standards and exploring the possibilities of permeable surface materials in the parking lot. Surfacing materials should be selected to minimize noise and dust to neighborhoods.

Pedestrian and bicycle access and use:

- The Committee's recommends:
 - Crosswalks from the adjacent neighborhoods to the park.
 - Avoiding access to the park that requires walking or riding through the parking lot.
 - Including an adequate number of bike racks on-site and including ADA compliant pathways on-site.
 - If possible, designing the public road bridge over the South Fork of the Palouse River on the east end of the park to avoid an at-grade road crossings for the non-motorized pathway extending eastward.
 - Generally, temporary measures that compromise safety should be avoided.
- The Committee recommends that the City continue to work on a bicycle and pedestrian Master Plan and link this part of Moscow with other areas of the City.

4. Lights and sound:

- The Committee recommends that no amplified sound be allowed on the site, either initially or at a future date.
- The Committee recommends no lighting of any of the playfields, either initially or at a future date.
- The Committee recommends that parking and pathway lighting be scaled to provide for safety and security with minimum impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods, University of Idaho Arboretum and Observatory.
- The Committee recommends reducing the duration of time on-site lighting is left on through timing devices.
- The Committee recommends street and parking lot lighting be consistent with the City's dark sky ordinance at the site.

5. Signage:

- The Committee recommends compatibility between the amount/style of signage and the park's natural theme and surroundings.
- The Committee recommends including interpretive signs for vegetation near the walking paths, especially on the west end of the park.
- The Committee notes that some of these features can be sponsored by contributors and appropriately acknowledged.

- A park entrance sign, similar to existing City parks signs, should be placed along Palouse River Drive. Advertising signs on fences, buildings or other structures, and any other free-standing signs, including regulatory and safety signs, should be compatible with the natural park design.

6. Future/Other:


- The Committee recommends creating a Taskforce, including neighbors of the site and representatives of local youth sports organizations, to oversee final planning and development of the park. Members of the Fields Planning Committee should be invited to serve on the Taskforce. This Taskforce should review professional landscape design plans prepared for the park.
- The Committee recommends the creation of a PRD Park Advisory Committee that will include neighbors, representatives of youth sports organizations, and Parks and Recreation officials, after the park is opened for organized sports. The Park Advisory Committee would meet periodically and recommend management actions related to the park. The Park Advisory Committee should serve as a mechanism to improve communication and build trust between various stakeholders of the park. The Park Advisory Committee should not be used nor perceived as a policing agency for park activities.
- The Committee recommends that the Council make the Palouse River Drive park and ball fields a high priority and pursue funding opportunities where available, including partnerships and volunteer opportunities.
- The Committee recommends that the Council look for ways to enhance and complement the park if and when development occurs to the south of the park, such as walking and biking paths to the park, from future neighborhoods.
- The Committee realizes that while this plan is finalized for the Palouse River Drive site, the City of Moscow will still need to aggressively pursue additional ball fields at other locations. The Committee recommends that the City consider the possibility of integrating a sports complex of lighted fields, for tournaments, with new commercial development where it will not impact an established residential neighborhood, and the University of Idaho Arboretum and Observatory.

Signed on March 27, 2006

Gail Adele



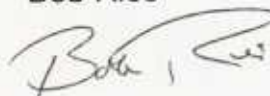
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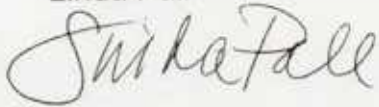
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