

KENDRICK PARK DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, June 16, 2011 – 7:00 PM
Town Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Peg Roberts, Christina Mata, Marilyn Rodzwell, Alan Snow, and Hope Crolius
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Liz Rosenberg, Peter Blier and Susan Sheldon
STAFF PRESENT:	Sandy Pooler, Finance Director Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner (KPDAC Member)
OTHERS PRESENT:	Steve Cecil and David O'Connor of The Cecil Group

1. **Announcements** – none
2. **Minutes** – none reviewed
3. **Working Session to receive and discuss The Cecil Group's final report documents and plans for schematic design and preliminary cost estimates for Kendrick Park**

Ms. Brestrup announced that the contract with The Cecil Group ends on June 17, 2011. They are here to present their final report, including recommendations on phasing and funding. They have presented the town with a disc and drawings along with multiple copies of the report.

Mr. Cecil explained that the schematic plan shows fewer benches than had been previously shown. The plan shows some trees being removed and more trees added. The Cecil Group has taken a photographic inventory of the trees. "The plan has saved everything that a reasonable person would say to save", said Mr. O'Connor.

Mr. O'Connor noted that some of the proposed trees are native species and some have a relationship with Japan. The plantings will provide an educational opportunity and will be treated similarly to an arboretum. The Existing Conditions Plan has the number of trees that are on the tree inventory. It shows which trees are proposed for removal.

The project cost estimate includes architectural fees, engineering and survey work. It excludes the police detail during construction and a clerk of the works. The cost estimate is based on 2013 costs. Some of the costs are given in unit costs, some are lump sum and some are allowances. The cost estimate does not include the price of putting the overhead wires underground. The price for such work "can vary enormously" said Mr. Cecil. This work can be part of the infrastructure costs for work around the park. Mr. O'Connor said that the design work for putting the utilities underground needs to be added to the cost estimate. The group discussed putting in conduit at the time that the park work is done to accommodate future "undergrounding" of the utilities. The conduit for putting the overhead wires underground is not included in the cost estimate.

Mr. Cecil recommends that the town obtain funding for the streetscape and infrastructure work separately from the funding for the park design and construction. The work in the public way, including parking, sidewalks and lighting can be considered part of the town's infrastructure. The work can be linked to the development of the Gateway Project and the town's overall system of improvements. It can be linked to civic and economic development.

Mr. Cecil said that getting state funding for infrastructure work may be easier to obtain in the short run than getting funding to build the park. Mr. O'Connor noted that the conduit for the underground utilities can go in the street.

Mr. O'Connor noted that the cost estimate can go up or down depending on the choice of materials – i.e., whether the town chooses asphalt or concrete for the sidewalks. Granite is competitive with concrete for curbing, he said, because granite has a longer life and doesn't need to be replaced.

The group discussed funding sources. The infrastructure work would improve links to UMass and the Gateway Project, Mr. Cecil noted.

The group discussed phasing. Grading and loaming and seeding could be done first to create the park with no pavement being done in the first phase. Later on pavement can be added as it becomes affordable. This will have the effect of showing progress to the public, without having to build the entire park at once. The "baseline" park structure, including grading, loaming and seeding and pavement could be constructed and amenities could be added later as time goes on and money is donated. These amenities would include the playground, benches and entry posts and structures.

Mr. Cecil recommended that the town send a letter to the legislature supporting changing the CPA funding requirements, to allow land that was not purchased with CPA funds to be improved with CPA funds. He suggested contacting our local representatives regarding funding for the park.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund might be a source of funding.

For the infrastructure work MassWorks, a new state program that combines existing state funding into one program, has \$50,000,000 per year for infrastructure projects. The applications are due around September 1st. This park could be part of a compact, transit-oriented, sustainable development on the edge of the downtown. Mr. Cecil recommended that the town look at the MassWorks program soon. He suggested expanding the idea of the park to include the area around the park when we think about funding sources.

Alan Snow and Hope Crolius brought a draft of a letter to the committee regarding roadway improvements, park improvements and removal of trees. They were reacting strongly to the number of trees that were removed as part of the roadway work at Atkins Corner. The Shade Tree Committee is concerned and does not want this type of thing to happen at Kendrick Park.

There was discussion about losing part of the park to roadway widening along Triangle Street. The Committee members expressed concern about the widening and recommended that it should be minimized because it would impact the design. The consultants agreed.

There was lengthy discussion about the issue of tree removal in Kendrick Park.

Mr. Cecil and Mr. O'Connor explained that they had looked closely at the existing trees and had taken them into account when preparing the design plans for the park. The Park Program is clear in stating that some trees will need to be removed in order to accomplish the design but that many more trees will be added. The Committee had agreed to the Park Program. Mr. Cecil said that "To the extent that the existing trees contribute to the park's design they should be kept". The park should contain a collection of trees that is meaningful for Amherst. Mr. Cecil noted that there is no accurate survey showing the location of trees. Once the actual locations are established, decisions can be made about retaining or removing certain trees.

Ms. Mata left at 8:30 p.m.

Mr. Snow stated that the intention is not to alter the plan. The intention is to do an evaluation of the plan with regard to the existing trees and to make sure that everything is done to the benefit of the trees.

Mr. O'Connor stated that there is no irrigation system designed into the plan. There will be a series of "yard hydrants" set 300 feet apart so that all areas of the park can be reached with a 150 foot hose. Some watering can be done by hand. Plant should be established within three years, making watering less necessary after that time.

Mr. Cecil said that there will be a need for ongoing stewardship of the park. He recommended establishing a "Friends of Kendrick Park" to accept donations and to provide funding for the park's maintenance.

Ms. Rodzwell noted that the Landscape Subcommittee of the Kendrick Park Committee had recommended against perennials in the park because of the issue of maintenance.

Mr. Cecil noted that the Friends of Post Office Square in Boston has an endowment that is funded by the 5-story parking garage nearby. It is very successful in maintaining Post Office Square. He also referred to a successful "Friends" group in Falmouth. He said that we should budget about \$3,000 per acre per year for maintenance.

4. **New Business** – none
5. **Future Meetings** – none scheduled
6. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Ms. Roberts commented that she was impressed with The Cecil Group's engagement with the project and their ability to listen.

Respectfully submitted:

Christine M. Brestrup, Senior Planner