

Meeting
Monroe Park Advisory Council
Wednesday, April 12, 2006
Landmark Theater, Lounge B

Meeting called to order at 4 PM, Pat Daniels, Chair, presiding.

Attendees: see sign-in sheet. Larry Miller was unable to attend as he had been called to a budget meeting this afternoon.

Notes from the previous meeting were accepted as previously circulated.

Ron Worley, presented his drawings to the Council for approval. He proposed presenting one board to the UDC and Planning Commission showing the Phase 1, Roadway Removal. This phase is being driven by the timetable for using potential fill from the VCU building site across Belvidere. The removed roadways will be filled with dirt and planted with grass. Missing curb areas would be replaced with cement curbs. Motion made to leave the roadway from Pine running south west toward Laurel intact, and narrow it to a pedestrian path when the pathways are resurfaced. Motion was seconded and passed.

Ron presented his proposal for Phase 2: converting the remaining roadways to pedestrian paths. First step would be to use a backhoe with a 4-foot bucket to dig a 2-foot deep trench along the roadway side of the existing granite curb on both sides of the roadway. This four-foot area would ultimately become an area for planting beds interspersed with additional seating. These new beds would be flush with the grass on the opposite side of the curb. Ron also suggested as a potential resurfacing material a patterned, colored asphalt paving material. The members of the council asked about other alternatives as well. Ron agreed that before a final road to pathway plan is developed, he would provide the council a matrix for alternative surfacing materials that would include cost per square foot (materials and installation), longevity, ease of maintenance, actual width and length of paths, drainage requirements, underlayment requirements, and any other factors that would have an impact on the ultimate decision.

Ron advised the council that in his experience with the UDC, our proposal to remove roadways would not get very far in the approval process without some sense of a long-term direction or plan. He has, therefore, developed a conceptual long-term plan that includes stronger definition of corner plazas, Checkers House improvements to accommodate food service, expanding the circular plaza around the fountain, creation of an open turf area for recreation as well as for an outdoor performance venue, improving perimeter sidewalks, selected tree removal and pruning, and lighting improvements. While the council was unable to come to agreement on the details of the plan, they agreed that the plan could be shared with the Urban Design Committee as a conceptual plan with the details to be determined later and to be phased in as funding allows.

Ron advised that he would file the application to be on the agenda of the UDC by April 24, 2006, the deadline, submitting 30 copies of all required materials. The item would

then be on the May 8 agenda for the UDC. He will present the plans but encouraged as many council members as possible to attend the meeting in support of the proposals.

A motion was made and seconded to take out the circular area of asphalt around the Wickham statue in addition to the areas defined on the initial plan. The motion to add that area for removal in Phase One did NOT carry, with a vote of 4 abstentions, 1 nay, and 4 ayes.

Todd Woodson reminded the council that the resolution rededicating Monroe Park in honor of James Monroe will be introduced at City Council on Monday, April 24. All council members are encouraged to attend. Pat Daniels and Janice Nuckolls are unable to attend; they will be out-of-town. Alice Massie, co-chair of the Council, will check her calendar to see if she can attend.

Planting plan for the fountain area was approved during the March meeting with the substitution of a non-invasive variety of liriope. Elinor Kuhn, of the Friends of Monroe Park, reported that planting will commence once the irrigation system is operational. Further, she advised that Larry Miller expects the meter to be installed by the end of this week. Further, Elinor has been in contact with Shipp and Wilson and they will schedule as soon as the system around the fountain is operational. Elinor reminded the Council that this is the busy time for landscapers and she will have to see how quickly Shipp and Wilson resources can be redirected to the effort.

Elinor raised the issue of the huge water meter box, which has already been damaged/vandalized. She suggested that a fence in keeping with the fence around the fountain may be appropriate. She has requested a grant from the Woman's Club. She also suggested that we ask art students at VCU to paint the box in an effort to prevent graffiti. NO action was taken on either recommendation.

Thanks are sent to the Friends of Monroe Park for their clean-up efforts on April 8 as part of the joint FDA/FWC Spring Fling in the parks Clean-Up!

Meeting Adjourned.