

New Castle City Playground Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2024 – 5:30 p.m.
1 Municipal Boulevard, New Castle, DE

Members Present: Suzanne Swift, Chair
Andre Jerry
Judy Guttenplan
Brian Mattaway
Nermin Zubaca

Absent: Matthew Eide

Ms. Swift called the Playground Sub-committee meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

A motion to begin the meeting was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2024, meeting as amended was made, seconded and unanimously passed.

Playground Equipment Update

Battery Park Playground

- Crush-and-Run – Ms. Swift reported that in order to reduce costs she contacted a construction company regarding crush-and-run and based on the amount of material required for the playground, they will submit a cost; however, during that conversation, they offered to provide one truckload gratis. Ms. Swift will contact other construction companies to see if she can obtain more donated crush-and-run. The cost of crush-and-run, taking out the mulch and putting in the stone is approximately \$70,000-\$80,000.
- Surfacing – The parks that Mr. Jerry and Ms. Swift inspected both had problems with the rubberized surfacing. Ms. Swift asked Scott Lean at Kompan for the names of several parks whose surfacing is between 7-10 years old. Mr. Lean suggested using circles of the surfacing of a different color in high-impact areas (i.e., slides, swings, etc.) and when that area gets worn, only the circle needs to be replaced.
- Graffiti – Kompan recommended Sensitive Surface Graffiti Remover made by Graffiti Removal, Inc. This product takes off graffiti, and Ms. Swift opined that the equipment could be coated so graffiti does not stick. She recommended that the sub-committee look into obtaining funding to purchase this product.
- Equipment Warranty – Ms. Swift stated that the equipment warranty is actually 3-5 years, and not 10 years as she had reported in the April meeting.

Grants

- DNREC – The DNREC application was submitted. Ms. Tantilillo will let the sub-committee know when she hears back from them.

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- The ARPA grant was not awarded to the sub-committee. Ms. Swift sent out an inquiry for feedback on what they could have done differently or better.
- Fundraiser – Phee Price of the city Outreach Committee is interested in holding a Bicycle Parade in town to raise funds for the playground. Ms. Swift opined this will bring the community together and show the grant committees that the sub-committee is being supported by the community. Mr. Mattaway noted that another concept for fundraising that was suggested is a “swing-a-thon”.

(Stenographer’s Note: Mr. Zubaca joined the meeting and Ms. Swift brought him up to date on the discussion.)

Landscaping

Ms. Swift sent Carol Kaspin a list of the trees and plants that were recommended by the Forestry people. Ms. Swift and Kaspin inspected the site and Ms. Kaspin assisted in situating where all the trees and benches should go. Two quotes from nurseries are required to apply for the Forestry grant. Ms. Swift will meet with Ana Wik next week and will meet with the University of Delaware students in early June. Ms. Swift stated that volunteer hours will be used as the match for the grant and all members should track their hours.

Ms. Kaspin recommended a novel idea for shade by creating a triangular form with benches on three sides and a tree in the center to provide shade and observation points for parents. A discussion of the best locations for shade trees inside the playground versus outside the playground ensued.

Ms. Kaspin suggested Maple trees and Crepe Myrtle trees. During discussion Ms. Swift stated that the area of the playground cannot be expanded.

Mr. Mattaway noted that Alice Jarvis has a tremendous amount of drift wood that she is willing to donate.

City Funding

Mr. Zubaca stated that he submitted a request to City Council for \$250,000 for Phase 2 of the Battery Park playground and \$100,000 for neighborhood playgrounds during the last Budget Workshop. A concern was raised during the Workshop about the amount being requested and Mr. Zubaca will resubmit a lower request to City Council at the next Budget Workshop. Mr. Zubaca suggested that the members attend the Workshop or listen to it on Zoom. He added that it appeared three Council members did not feel it was an appropriate amount.

Sub-committee Member Comments

Restrooms in Battery Park – Mr. Mattawa noted that Mr. Zubaca was very forceful in his position during a discussion of restrooms in Battery Park, and thanked him for his efforts. He also thanked Ms. Tantillo for putting port-a-potties in the park. A discussion of reopening the restrooms in Battery Park ensued during which Mr. Zubaca noted that the City Administrator has been working with the Trust to reopen the restrooms and there have been discussions of security measures to deter vandalism.

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Forestry Grant – Ms. Swift noted that the Forestry Grant is a \$5,000 matching grant. Volunteer hours can be used in lieu of a cash match. A discussion of whether a resolution (*motion*) is required to apply for the grant ensued.

Mr. Mattaway stated that the sub-committee should make a formal request that the City apply for the \$5,000 Forestry grant. Mr. Zubaca concurred.

Ms. Guttenplan noted that there are dollar amounts associated with all of their professional hours and she will find out from Head Start if there is something that they can all sign to put an hourly dollar amount to their time in connection with the in-kind volunteer hours for the grant. Mr. Zubaca suggested that this be clarified before the sub-committee approaches the City for any actions.

Ms. Swift made a motion to recommend applying to the \$5,000 Forestry Grant with a \$5,000 in-kind match. The motion was seconded and unanimously carried.

Mr. Zubaca noted that he and Mr. Mattaway had a productive conversation with the Trustees during which they indicated they would be willing to contribute to a matching grant and suggested that the sub-committee also ask the City if they are also willing to contribute to a matching grant.

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Swift called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion was unanimously passed, and the meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer