

## Rispin Mansion Park Community Workshop 1: Meeting Notes

This is a summary of the comments collected during the February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 public workshop discussing improvements to Rispin Mansion Garden located in the Community Room at Capitola City Hall. There were approximately thirty (30) local citizens as well as Capitola officials in attendance with Michael Arnone + Associates Landscape Architecture leading the workshop.

With the input gathered, there was overwhelming opinion from participants to keep improvements to the existing garden features true to the original design (style and materials) of the era. There was also collective agreement and positive response to two new potential amenities; a bocce court and amphitheater.

During the open discussion, there were two recurring topics on how the proposed improvements to garden's historical site features will be carried out.

One topic focused on changes to the wall and how wall height might affect both the security and impression of serenity at the park. Potential options for renovations to the existing wall were presented, including; a lowered wall height with a wrought iron fence on top and a lowered wall height with a decorative cap. Those in favor of the lowered wall expressed a need for improved security with more visibility into the park to deter vandalism. Those in favor of the existing wall height described it as a buffer from noise and dust while promoting a sense of peacefulness within the park and expressed interest in leaving the wall as it exists today.

A second topic discussed focused on the reflecting pool that was part of the original grounds of the Rispin Mansion. There was group consensus in staying 'true' to the era in which this feature was built while modifying for today's realities of vandalism and need for water conservation. Indeed, group consensus is indicated (as in the collated comments) for all existing features to hold true to the original era while allowing changes necessary to make the park functional and safe; such as universal access and deterrents to vandalism and other crime.

At the end of the meeting, there was an informal show of hands for either a lower wall height or to maintain the existing wall. The results are as follows; (12) twelve hands for lower wall and (6) six hands for the existing. Another show of hands for a dog park or not resulted in (6) six hands for no dog park and (0) zero hands in favor. Note: several participants left the meeting during the break between 12:45 -1:15 and prior to the show of hands.

All comments recorded during the meeting are here in a collated format. Although some comments overlap categories they are only entered once. Category headings here are the same as those used at the meeting on wall charts. Participant comments are as follows;

## **Concerns/ Issues:**

### Masonry Wall (along Wharf Road)

- Wall contributes to restfulness.
- Surface can be graffitied, perhaps use plantings to deter graffiti.
- If wall is removed there will be noise, dust and smell.
- If wall is removed, problems with foot-traffic to Nob Hill on recycle days' will increase.
- Wants wall to stay to maintain serenity.
- Concerned about car danger if wall is removed. (wall won't be removed, proposal is to lower)
- Open visibility is important (in response to wall lowering).
- Iron (tubular steel) is more vandal resistant against graffiti.
- Open visibility is important - (in response to benefit of wall removal).
- Use ivy or something to deter graffiti.
- Rent wall space to local artists as has been done in Atlanta, GA (maintain existing height)  
to combat graffiti problems on wall (in response to maintaining wall height).

### Reflecting Pond - Note: Reflecting pond is also referred to as "pool".

- Pool - Concern about skaters on the edge of pool.

### Historical elements -

- All changes should be reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHIPPO), including proposed changes to wall.

### Safety -

- Past experience with people hiding behind benches at bridge crossing, situate new benches to deter that opportunity.
- Homeless camping was reduced once the benches were gone.
- Scheduled surveillance is needed (understood to be police patrol).
- Policing by motorcycle (needed) to get to the middle of the park.
- Foot patrol is needed.
- Security cameras. (this security element was seconded)
- Security cameras should have recording ability.
- Should not be 'held hostage' by existing problems.

### General -

- Will park be open all night? (answer: hours will be dawn to dusk)
- (It seems) Graffiti shows up on weekends
- Consider use of Survey Monkey for greater community input (vote) on wall issues.

## **Amenities (Potential and Modification to Existing):**

### Masonry Wall (along Wharf Road)

- Prefers the solid wall (to the iron fence on top) but agrees with it lowered.
- Likes the iron fence on lowered wall, fits the era of mansion and helps security.
- Flat top (lowered) wall with a method to deter skaters (skate boarders).
- Likes low wall or hedge to avoid damage (to interior of park).
- Likes the 'see-through' fence.
- Leave wall and use lights and camera for better security.
- Metal could be like the fence at El Salto Resort in Capitola.

### Reflecting Pond -

- Pool - stay in keeping with 1920's era architectural elements; use mosaics in pool.
- Ideas of Mosaic on pool surface was seconded from another participant.
- Use re-circulated water.
- Water fountain (should be) operable.
- Restore the walk around the pond.
- Pool - possibly paint it (to resemble a reflection pond).
- (Stay) as much original as possible (like Balboa Park).
- Reflection pond can be 4" depth (water), but stay correct to period.
- Put water in pond as intended.
- Restore the bubbling fountain at the pond.

### Dog park -

- Wants functional uses, such as a dog park. Sized similar to Branciforte St. dog park.
- Doesn't think dog park fits.
- No dog park, to maintain serenity.

### Amphitheater -

- Amphitheater can be used for weddings and school study groups
- The amphitheater could dovetail with the children's library programs and activities.
- (participant) Likes the concept of amphitheater.

### Bocce -

- Support of bocce was the only purpose for participant being at the meeting.
- Several people seconded this amenity.

### General -

- All pathways should be accessible.
- (participant) Remembers in the 1950's the benches faced each other.

- Look at secondary stairwell (that's now buried).
- Plaques (interpretive signage(s) are good.
- Lighting on pathways is good.
- Research solar lighting.
- New amenities should be utilitarian.

**'Parked' Comments (future improvements and off-site concerns).**

- Sewerage smell (several people stated this condition will be corrected/repared this summer).
- Look for more grant money (for additional improvements to the site).
- The wall and tile (on wall) at Porter Street has no graffiti.
- City should continue to look for funding and finish restoring park (future phases).
- Local architectural historian will assist with State (SHIPPO) review of proposed improvements.
- Sell bricks to help finance (additional improvements).
- Sell commemorative bricks.

**Additional comments sent in via email:**

- A community member commented on the community garden at the corner of Capitola road and Wharf Road, "Even though the garden is right next to a busy road and has no fence or wall, it feels open, safe and instills a peaceful feeling to the visitor. "