

This is a summary of comments collected during the April 11th, 2015 City of Capitola public meeting discussing proposed park improvements to Rispin Mansion Site. The meeting was held in the Community Room at Capitola City Hall with approximately forty (40) local citizens, including several City of Capitola (City) officials, in attendance.

Steve Jesberg, City of Capitola Director of Public Works, opened the meeting with introductions of the project team. The office of Michael Arnone + Associates Landscape Architecture (MA+A) then lead the meeting, beginning with a recap of the public input received at the previous public meeting held February 7th.

Notes from this previous meeting had been collated and sent on March 2, 2015 to all participants whom provided an email address. These notes were also posted on the City website under the tabs in the following order: City Government, Public Works, Resources, Rispin Park Project (<http://www.cityofcapitola.org/publicworks/page/rispin-mansion-park-project>). At the April meeting, attendees were again asked to provide an email address if they wished to receive the meeting notes and notification of when the City Council will hear discussion on this project.

In summary of the February meeting, the outcome was an overwhelming approval of the project and group consensus to keep improvements to the historic components 'true' to the era in which these features were built. Yet, the group acknowledged the necessity of modifying these features to function within the realities of today; the design of the park must deter vandalism, provide universal access and minimize water use. Furthermore, the proposal to incorporate new amenities such as a bocce ball court and amphitheater into the project was met with enthusiasm from the group.

After bringing the meeting participants up to date, a forty-five minute presentation was given by MA+A. Using Powerpoint, each proposed improvement was shown in detail and from various perspectives. Michael Arnone clearly explained each aspect of the project; repairs and modifications to the historical features, along with images of proposed amenities of game tables and amphitheater. Following the presentation was approximately forty-five minutes of group discussion. The narrative here captures a snap-shot of the main discussion points.

Moving across the proposed park from the south to north, Michael presented drafted details for re-creating each historic element along with photographs available of the original features. In showing these original photographs Michael also pointed specific attributes of each historic feature where there is uncertainty of the original form. Therefore, each of the historic garden elements are as close an approximation to the original as can be discerned from the available photographs.

Each garden feature was shown in detailed CAD drawings along with the original photographs. It was explained which forms could be salvaged, such as the remaining

fountain structure and which elements will be re-created from existing samples, such as the balustrade and stairs. Most of the more prominent features such as the fountain, sundial and arbor will be recreated from photographs and site analysis.

Departing from the turf grass interior to the garden's perimeter walkways (shown in archive photographs but no longer present today), the proposal is for use of low water-use and native plantings and walk-on ground-cover and, possibly, a public art component. In support of this, local interest groups such as the native plant society and art council have expressed a desire to assist within their respective expertise.

From the northern end of the garden, two pathways were shown leading from the historic 'rose' arbor to the lower elevation at the base of the mansion, one for universal access, the other with stairs. One participant suggested combining these uses to just the ramp and to find a solution to deter skateboarders from this pathway.

The presentation then showed concept images for the proposed wall along Wharf Road. At the first meeting, proponents of lowering the wall stated that increased visibility will deter criminal activity while those that prefer the existing wall height feel it creates a sense of tranquility. The proposed wall design showed consideration of each viewpoint; with a lowered masonry wall topped by a decorative metal fence adjacent to the most active garden area while retaining the existing wall height along the Conservation Area of the park. This topic once again prompted more discussion than other proposed changes to the garden with the same basis for each viewpoint, reduced criminal activity versus a boundary that adds to the peaceful sense in the garden.

Additionally, one participant cited the published studies, "Social Life of Small Urban Spaces", by sociologist Steve White. These studies find an imperative in a strong relation between the street and adjacent public-use areas as necessary to become successful as public spaces. The participant pointed out that the higher wall cuts off any relationship with the street and the location of the proposed game tables and amphitheater at the lower terrace also lacked any relationship with the street.

Although the opinions on wall height varied, there was full agreement that increased surveillance of the site, through security cameras and patrol, would mitigate unwanted activity. Prior to creating designs for the wall, MA+A had conferred with the City's police chief whom supports the lower wall to allow increased surveillance during patrols.

In presenting ideas for the reflecting pool, the solution again showed consideration of public input from the first meeting. The concept suggests materials true to the 1920s in a mosaic-tile design along with a central sculptural feature within the basin. With acknowledgment of 2015 water conservation measures, the water source is suggested to be captured rain water held below a false floor which then re-circulates into the basin.

Although the historic reflecting pool drew much discussion at the first meeting, the current design solution was well received with only one dissenting opinion to keep the

existing depth of the pool. It was noted that the cost of proposed improvements may go beyond the grant allocation and may require additional funding to complete in the future.

As the bocce court proposed at the previous meeting wasn't shown in the plans, Michael explained that the initial location near the old bathhouse, on the lower terrace, is too small for a regulation size court. Again participants were strongly advocating a bocce court, therefore MA+A will reevaluate space within the upper terrace garden area and attempt to locate a full-size court.

Questions arose about general safety, site lighting, surveillance cameras, and additional fencing. MA+A replied that location, type of lighting and hours of operation have not been determined yet. It was explained that fencing will restrict access to the mansion during night hours (hours to be determined) but the pathways through the upper terrace that connect the existing public ramp and the new entrance to the Rispin Park will be open and not restricted at night.

During his presentation, Michael also discussed comments received from the architectural historian, Leslie Dill of Archives and Architecture. She has requested specificity in the terms used on the drawings to distinguish between restoration, repair and new construction for each component. She also stated a preference that new furnishings, such as benches, not attempt to replicate styles of that era whereby a clear distinction is made between the historical elements and those that are new.

The following is a summation of comments garnered at the April 10th meeting categorized into those that are project specific such as the historical elements and pathways and a second category of general improvements to consider.

New Ramp and Pedestrian Walk

- Several participants are concerned that skateboarders will use the ramp and that selection of the surface treatment should be chosen to deter this use.
- One participant suggested that pedestrians can use ramp, saving space and money in combining the two uses (at the Arbor).

Masonry Wall (along Wharf Road)

- One participant suggested use of plantings along the base of the wall to deter people from hiding or sleeping in this area.
- Continued concern from (2) two participants that lowering the wall will alter the sense of tranquility inside the park.

Reflecting Pool -

- The majority of participants were agreeable to the suggested design, while one participant disliked the metal sculpture and one participant preferred the pool to remain at the existing (original) depth.

Amphitheater -

- There was almost unanimous agreement that the amphitheater will benefit the community as a multi-use gathering spot to host such events as environmental education and light entertainment.
- One participant stated the amphitheater was placed in the Conservation Area and must be relocated.

Bocce Court -

- Four participants voiced strong support for a bocce court with one participant felt the court must be of regulation size. No one voiced opposition to the court or the suggestion that it be located within the upper terrace of the historic garden.

Lighting -

- One participant suggested using lighting to light trees at night.
- One participant asked if the lighting would remain on all night.

General -

- One participant requested to incorporating 'Nature Play' into the new site amenities. MA+A will research this.
- One participant inquired if restrooms may be part of this project. Steve Jesberg stated the restrooms at Peery park may be re-opened.
- One participant felt strongly that *Asclepius spp.* (Milkweed) should be included in the native plant garden to support butterfly population growth.
- One participant felt there should be signage to delineate the Conservation Area.
- Several participants asked for fencing to restrict night-time foot traffic into the neighborhood at the opposite bank for the Soquel Creek.
- There was a suggestion to change to the bathhouse to a useful amenity, such as a concession area.
- There were several suggestions to paint the mansion windows to suggest a 'real' window, such as images of people and possibly in the artistic style of Trompe l'oeil paintings.



LEGEND

1. UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE TO PARK
2. RENOVATED WHARF ROAD ENTRY, WALL AND STEPS
3. AMPHITHEATER
4. RENOVATED GRAND STAIRCASE AND BALUSTRADE
5. RENOVATED FOUNTAIN, REFLECTION POOL AND WALKWAY
6. WATER WISE AND NATIVE GARDEN PLANTING AREA
7. RENOVATED SUNDIAL AND SCULPTURE GARDEN
8. DANCE STEPS
9. HISTORIC GARDEN PLANTING AREA
10. EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE
11. RENOVATED WELL/WATER TANK BUILDING FOR RAIN WATER HARVESTING FOR POOL
12. IMPROVED STRIPING AND CROSSWALKS AT CLARES/WHARF ROAD INTERSECTION
13. MURAL ON CONCRETE WALL OF ORDER OF POOR CLARES BUILDING
14. REMOVABLE BOLLARDS AT PARK ENTRY
15. RENOVATED ARBOR IN NEW LOCATION
16. RENOVATED WALL ALONG WHARF ROAD

- | | | | |
|--|------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | BENCH | | DRINKING FOUNTAIN |
| | WASTE RECEPTACLE | | BIKE BOLLARD |
| | PICNIC TABLE | | SECURITY FENCE-DECORATIVE METAL |
| | GAME TABLE | | SECURITY FENCE |

Rispin Park Illustrative Site Plan

Scale: 1" = 16'-0" April 11, 2015

Since I am off to see my granddaughter in Portland, I am unable to attend the workshop today and I have asked Mike to read this as my input to the process. I've asked Mike to please convey my sincere support of his design. I don't know what he's come up with on paper, but I trust his judgement

implicitly, especially after our hour-long walk through at Rispin one morning a couple of weeks ago.

I really like the concept of the wall having wrought-iron openings and low walls with iron on top, while maintaining the classic entry features. The expanded walkways will look good as 'sand-blasted' concrete or similar treatment with brick accents at the entry, sundial (?) & Outlook Balustrade & fountain(?).

I especially hope we can do the water feature/ water catchment concept Mike discussed for the fountain and I urge having the lower fountain basin fill, but as he suggested, not have the water go into the pond. And the idea of raising the level of the bottom of the pond is brilliant! Especially with the

surface being covered with tiles done by local artists/residents/children, perhaps commemorating Rispin and early Capitola, butterflies and other local lore.

One thing I asked about, which we didn't have an answer to at the time, is site amenities, like bathrooms? Are they being added into the park features? Otherwise, it's trekking across the street to the library bathroom or the bushes?

Have fun today. What a wonderful opportunity!!!

Cheers,

Barbara Bernie"