

Gardens on Spring Creek Master Plan Major Amendment Neighborhood Meeting #2 September 8, 2014

Project Applicants:

- Consultants: Craig Russell and John Beggs of Russell + Mills Studios
- Michelle Provaznik, Gardens on Spring Creek Manager

Questions and answers:

Q: Question; A: Answer; C: Comment

(Unless noted, answers provided are from the applicants)

Q: Where does Lilac Park go?

A: We're having discussions with Park Planning. We want to create an expression of a neighborhood pocket park and it would likely be more linear along the creek.

Q: Won't developing Lilac Park mean more people hanging out at Lilac Park during concerts?

A: There would be a separate planning and design process for Lilac Park.

C: Concern was expressed that reconfiguring Lilac Park would sacrifice the wildlife corridor for the benefit of an event venue.

Q: The Employment zone doesn't allow for this as a permitted use. Starting at a macro level – the amphitheater use is not permitted in the Employment zone district. Does this zone allow for an amphitheater?

A: (City staff) Staff looked at the use when this question came up after the first neighborhood meeting. The current use listed on the plan is a neighborhood park. The closest appropriate use for the whole center is a Community Facility, and the amphitheater would be permitted as part of the facility.

C: If it's a community facility, it has to be open to the community. This would be walled off and there would be an entrance fee – the definition of a community facility does not speak to that.

Q: Concerns with ability of pedestrians to cross Center Avenue. Will there be a signal/light at grade crossing?

A: Don't know yet, the City's traffic review might address this once the project is submitted for staff review.

Q: Are the Gardens on Spring Creek a part of the Park Department? Is this proposal from them?

A: It is a facility within the Parks Department and owned by them.

C: Why would Parks Department pick a small site for an amphitheater? I don't remember an amphitheater being a part of the mission/vision of the Gardens. The original approval was for 300 people, this is over 800% bigger. There are also already more than 6-8 events and they run later than 8 p.m.

A: We would end the performance music at 8 p.m. and these events would be done by 8:30.

Q: Will alcohol be served?

A: Still undecided. May be served, cannot be sold.

C: We want to see the Garden's budget, rate of return, etc. We want to see the numbers. We're worried that there will be a ton of events to make it work financially.

A: We're offering to cap the performance events.

C: Concern that fire truck/emergency vehicles can't get to great lawn.

A: (City staff) Poudre Fire Authority will be reviewing the access if the formal submittal comes in for review.

Q: The original plan projected sound away from the residents. Why does this not need to go to the Planning and Zoning Board?

A: (City staff) It's based on the original approval. Because the original approval was approved by a hearing officer, the major amendment also is reviewed by a hearing officer.

Q: An appeal stills goes to City Council even if it's not a Planning and Zoning Board project?

A: (City staff) Yes, and appeal of a hearing officer would go to City Council, same as if the Planning and Zoning Board reviewed the project.

Q: How will events be counted?

A: All performances would be hosted by the Gardens through the Lincoln Center, and we would be able to count and schedule the number of events.

C: Concern with a multi-day event only being counted as one event.

A: There would not be any multi-day performance events.

Q: Will there still be wildlife corridors?

A: (City staff) There is still a buffer requirement along the Spring Creek corridor and the Gardens would be required to provide an ecological study that staff will review with their formal submittal.

Q: Will there be sound mitigation between the crowd and the residents?

A: Yes, the sound walls are intended to buffer crowd noise and the music. (Applicant continues presentation showing where the proposed walls are located)

Q: What is the size of the walls and what will they look like?

Craig Russell continues the presentation showing the proposed wall design and buffer landscaping.

Q: How do they know there won't be more or longer events? What happens if they don't follow it?

A: (City staff) They would need to incorporate notes/requirements into the plans with a much tighter approval document. The enforcement would be through City zoning.

C: An event needs to be defined as one day, not multi-day. You should also include the max number of events per calendar year.

A: (Applicant) All events will be ticketed and we can control the timing of the events.

Q: How will security work and how far along trail will security be placed? Already concerns now, will be worse with 1,500 people dispersing.

A: This could be provided by off-duty police and park rangers. It's unclear what a reasonable distance would be. Security would make sure artists end on time.

C: This will be primarily foot and bike traffic, 1,500 people through the neighborhoods, concerned if people linger after an event is over.

Q: Can there be additional lighting along the trail?

A: There will be some additional lighting within the grounds but not more along the trail due to Parks Department policy on trail lighting.

Q: How did you decide on 1,500 people for an event?

A: Lincoln Center staff has advised that in order to get high quality ticketed events, this is the number to make it work.

C: Need to make sure it's clear that this proposal is bigger than the Lincoln Center venue.

Craig Russell continues with a presentation of the revised master plan and sound level exhibits, and an outline of the proposed event restrictions that will be in perpetuity with the project.

Q: The music already seems over the allowable noise level. I can hear it in my basement. What about when you include the crowd noise? That will push the noise levels louder.

A: Crowd noise is factored into the sound models.

Q: In "perpetuity" in the notes, what does that mean? When can it be changed?

A: (City Staff) There's no guarantee that a plan will not change and will remain the same "in perpetuity". If they proposed a change, it would need to go through a review process and new public hearing for any major change.

C: More concerns were expressed about how to enforce the plan and how to enforce conditions written on the plan.

Q: Would this be viable with a smaller venue (less than 1,500 people)?

A: We don't think so, and the event stage is pretty common with other botanical gardens around the country.

C: More concerns were expressed about the frequency of the events, and that 8 events per season could be more than 2 events per month. Concerns were expressed that 8 events seem like a lot for the surrounding neighborhoods.

C: Concerns were expressed about how loud 1,500 people would be before, after and during the performance and the role alcohol would play in increasing the crowd noise.

Q: How can sound walls be put into the flood plain? What would happen if it flooded like in 1997?

A: The stage and lawn area is part of the flood storage zone, not the conveyance zone. Also all of the removable structures must be cabled down.

Q: Why do the Gardens need to be self-sustaining? Other City services are not.

A: We are currently 50% self-funded.

Q: What about lowering the stage and lawn seating and putting it into a bowl?

A: We have lowered it about 3 feet, but there are ground water issues with lowering it further.

Q: What is the effect on noise levels if the sound wall and stage / lawn are moved further east?

A: The sound model shows only a small reduction in the sounds levels if the venue is moved east.

C: The property line is not the correct line where the sound levels should be measured. This should be the HOA line further east.

C: Other alternatives should be explored to generate revenue other than the performance venue.

Q: Will the mission / vision of the gardens be re-done? The venue seems to be a change philosophically.

With no more questions, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.