

September 8, 2009

Susanne K. Friedman
Seattle Parks & Recreation
800 Maynard Ave S.
Seattle, WA 98134-1336

Dear Susanne:

The 12th Avenue/Squire Park community is excited about the impending development of the James Court Park. As a result, the 12th Avenue James Court Park Committee met last week to discuss this project and our hopes for its future development. We are looking forward to your presentation at the 12th Avenue Neighborhood Meeting and hope that you will be able to clarify some of the questions we have about the project timeline, budget and development process.

To follow are some of the general questions we hope that you can address when we meet with you:

- What is the overall project timeline?
- Has the site been acquired by the Parks Department yet? If so, how much did it cost?
- What is the total budget for this park (design and construction) and the sources that will be paying for each?
- Has a designer been chosen for the park yet? (If so, we would like an active role with the designer in conceptual design of the park.)
- What is the status of the effort to acquire another piece of property for a another park for the 12th Avenue area?

Bill Zosel, a 12th Avenue Neighborhood Plan Steward, mentioned that Parks routinely works with community committees to ensure that projects represent the open space desires of a neighborhood. As a result, we undertook a small brainstorming session around “community values” for this project (and examples to achieve them) and hope that this list can serve as a foundation for the Design Program of this important community space.

James Court Park Community Brainstorming (in no particular order – subject to additions)

1. Activate the park.

- a. Chess tables.
- b. Sculptural climbing art for children/toddlers (not swings and/or full play set).

- c. Outdoor ping-pong table or bocce court --- the idea is to incorporate a feature that is scarce in the neighborhood but attractive to many people.
 - d. Incorporate a small structure that might have multiple functions.
 - e. Bike parking.
 - f. Flexible seating that encourages ‘passive recreation,’ reading, and conversation.
- 2. Work with neighboring property owners to increase “eyes on the park”.**
- a. Suggest opening the north façade of Watertown with garage door.
 - b. Work with the Seneca Group to ensure that the façade facing the park is visually open and welcoming (more residential and restaurant retail windows facing south).
 - c. Consider methods to “soften” the adjacent alley and increase its contribution to the park, while not vacating the alley and not eliminating its usefulness as a periodic route for vehicle travel.
- 3. Differentiate this park from the adjacent Seattle University/Seneca Group development.**
- a. Explore the possibility of utilizing a new designer for this park.
 - b. Embrace a “funky” and unique design for this space that is visibly different from (yet connected to) the open space in the SU/Seneca development across the street.
 - c. Utilize non-standard and high quality paving material in the park (not just poured concrete).
 - d. Investigate the feasibility of a built structure in the park that would serve as a “flexible community space” for performances, demonstrations, greenhouse uses, etc.
 - e. Utilize lighting as an artistic element.
 - f. Involve an artist or artists in the design of the park and integrate art into its design, not as an “add-on” element.
- 4. Address crime and safety issues through park design.**
- a. Investigate using an artistic fence, with a welcoming gateway, around the perimeter to act as an implied barrier (possibly locked 11pm-7am).
 - b. Create an open and inviting space with no hidden dark areas for people to linger.
 - c. Utilize special paving material and/or speed bumps across the alley between Watertown and the park and across James Court to the SU/Seneca project to slow traffic around the park.
- 5. Focus on the park before the woonerf.**
- a. Ensure that the pocket park is prioritized for development and construction before plans for a woonerf are embraced.
 - b. If a woonerf is embraced, ensure that SU/Seneca share in the financial burden of its development.
 - c. Evaluate further the impact of the woonerf for the neighbors on the south side of the street.
- 6. Use native plants, natural drainage and creative landscaping.**
- a. Create a “bird sanctuary” here through the use of drought tolerant and native species plants.
 - b. Plant a large specimen tree in the park, and/or large specimen bamboo to create a distinctive feature.
 - c. “Shield” the single-family house adjacent to the park.
 - d. Use naturally draining swales on James Court and 12th, or in the park itself.

We look forward to partnering with the Seattle Parks Department on this important project for the 12th Avenue Urban Village. As you know, this area of the City is seriously lacking public open

space, and we are very excited about the prospect of creating a park that represents the whole community and serves residents, businesses, students and visitors alike.

Please feel free to contact Bill Zosel if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

James Court Park Committee

Jessie Atkinson

Annie Han

Rob Humble

Dan Mihalyo

John Oliver Perry

Sonja Richter

Cari Simson

Ellen Sollod

Frank Suhich

Bill Whipple

Bill Zosel