

Greeley Park Advisory Committee
Mines Fall Conference Room
848 West Hollis Street

Date: April 8, 2026

Call to Order: 5:05PM

Attendees: Stephanie Ballentine, Vicki Donchess, Alyson Galipeau, Kathy Lodi, Susan McNamee, Kerry Miller, Fran Murphy, Richard Smart
Alderman Patricia Klee, Superintendent Bryan Conant, Director Lisa Fauteax

Guest: Director Matt Sullivan, Community Development

Approval of March Minutes with corrections of start time.

Public Comment: no public comment

Director Matt Sullivan discussed a Strategy for Developing a Park Master Plan

- A comprehensive, long-term Master Plan is a good strategy to create a cohesive vision for the park and prepare for future projects. This approach is more effective than a project-by-project basis. Example given - historically significant parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted.
- Before engaging consultants or creating an RFP, the committee must conduct pre-planning to define shared goals, objectives, and a clear vision for the park's future in five, ten, and thirty-year increments. This initial step is crucial for creating a relevant scope of work and presenting a solid case to the Board of Aldermen and the Board of Public Works.
- The initial input for a Master Plan should aim for a "pie in the sky" vision without being limited by current costs. The plan can be refined later and should include a list of prioritized projects organized by timeline (short, medium, long-term) and feasibility.
- The plan should provide a high-level, conceptual vision (e.g., "provide bicycle racks") rather than granular details (e.g., exact placement of a bike rack), leaving specific execution to the Department of Public Works (DPW).
- The Master Plan should serve as a "plan of record" for about ten years and align with the broader city Master Plan.

Stakeholder and Public Engagement

- Engaging stakeholders is critical. The committee must bring the Board of Aldermen and the Board of Public Works along throughout the process to avoid rejection of the final plan. Input from staff who manage the park, such as from Public Works, is also essential to understand maintenance considerations and existing plans.

- Public buy-in is crucial. It was suggested to engage the public early through “listening sessions” to understand their needs and vision. A second round of public engagement could then be used to prioritize refined projects.
- While all public feedback should be recorded, implementation isn’t guaranteed and will depend on practicality and alignment with the park’s core mission.

Utilizing Outside Consultants

- The use of outside consultants, like landscape design services, was suggested to help with the master planning process. Consultants can bring objective expertise, facilitate conversations, mediate different viewpoints, and help visualize the final plan.
- The city has successfully used outside expertise for other master planning projects. However, the primary downside is the high cost, and there’s a perceived risk of “losing control” if the committee’s initial vision is unclear.
- The choice of consultant will depend on available capital. While the city has a “stable” of trusted consultants, high-end firms are likely unaffordable.

Defining Park Sections and Vision

- A proposed approach is to consider the park in distinct sections for analysis (e.g., Public Works footprint, community gardens, picnic area, stone house, fields, boat ramp, Manchester Street side). The committee plans to use a large map at the next meeting to agree on section names and numbering.
- For each section, the group would identify existing issues, elements to preserve, and future opportunities. It was noted that different areas have different levels of flexibility for change.
- Discussion ensued re maintaining the original intent and design of the Park, ruling out ideas like a “water park.”
- The park has exciting potential, particularly its underutilized relationship with the river and its active recreational spaces.
- The committee also discussed broader factors, including the future of buildings after Public Works moves, revenue-generating possibilities (lighted fields currently generate \$50/hr), and the impact of the adjacent Beazer Superfund site, which has led to a portion of the park being fenced off.
- It was noted that all planning should be done in the context of the original intent for the park - to be “A Place to Rest and Enjoy Nature”.

Funding and Next Steps

- Funding sources discussed include the city’s capital budget, potential grants, and private-public partnerships. The city’s grant writer could be a resource.

- A concern was raised that one-hour monthly meetings would lead to slow progress. The committee agreed to extend the next meeting to 90 minutes, with a proposal to hold two-hour meetings every other month to maintain momentum.

Consider for next Meeting

1. Director Sullivan will send sample park plans to the committee for review before the next meeting.
2. Prepare a large map of the park for the next meeting to define and label its sections.
3. The agenda for the May 13th meeting will include reviewing plans and getting input from Public Works.
4. Develop a strategy for involving the Board of Public Works and the Board of Aldermen throughout the planning process.
5. The committee may consult with Pamela Cobb, the city's grant writer, regarding funding opportunities.
6. The committee will discuss fundraising ideas and will clarify legal guidelines for city-led fundraising efforts.
7. Get information on the annual revenue generated from park facilities like the band shell and fields.

Next Meeting will be on May 13, 2026.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:15PM

Submitted by Stephanie Ballentine