



APACHE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

April 17, 2014

Apache Park Neighborhood Plan Steering Committee Meeting #4

Date: April 09, 2014

Time: 4:00PM – 5:30PM

Location: St. Stephen Catholic Church/Our Lady of Destiny School

Attendees

Pericles Georgopoulos | Ginkgo Planning and Design, Inc.
Scott Goldstein | Teska Associates
Davorka Kirincic | City of Des Plaines
Scott Mangum | City of Des Plaines
Don Miletic | Des Plaines Park District
Pablo Montes | Resident
Jose Munoz | Resident
Jayesh Patel | Pine Park Homeowners Association
Derek Peebles | City of Des Plaines
Father Noel Reyes | St. Stephen Catholic Church
George Sakas | City of Des Plaines
Linda Traina | Des Plaines Park District
Heidy Valenzuela | Teska Associates, Inc.
Berenice Vallecillos | Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Introduction

Scott Mangum (City of Des Plaines) welcomed everyone to the final Steering Committee meeting and thanked everyone for their participation, stating that if the plan is recommended to City Council, the goal is for the Council to pass a resolution in support of the plan in late May.

Review of Apache Park Neighborhood Plan

Scott Goldstein (Teska Associates, Inc.) reviewed the Apache Park Neighborhood Plan's process and major themes. The process included various forms of community outreach including Steering Committee meetings, public meetings, interviews, surveys, and a bilingual phone app and website. Surveys indicated that community members used local recreational opportunities (parks, library, downtown Des Plaines) for relaxing, playing and cultural events, but felt improvements were needed to enhance the area and specifically Apache Park.

Review of Implementation Plan

Goldstein began the review of the draft Strategies Chapter with highlighting the vision statement and input that was provided at the January 15th public meeting.

PROJECT LED BY:

Teska Associates, Inc. and
Ginkgo Planning & Design, Inc.





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Strategy 1 – Foster relationships and communication among residents, businesses, and community resources.

- The plan starts out with communication because all efforts toward neighborhood revitalization begin with creating a stronger community of neighbors.
- The core of increased communication include transforming this planning effort into a new neighborhood association as well as a homeowners association in “The Star” area.
- More work also needs to be done to work with businesses in the area to build communication and support for neighborhood improvements.

Strategy 2 – Enhance the design and programming for Apache Park to be a resource and safe space for all residents.

- A revised design for the park was shown based on comments at the public meeting, including a centralized fitness area and keeping the existing playground equipment.
- A walkway/multi-use path with a row of trees is being proposed as a buffer from Apache Park to the multifamily housing located north of it.
- The Des Plaines Park District and the City of Des Plaines are interested in submitting an Open Space Land Acquisition and Development grant for park improvements.

Strategy 3 – Stabilize and improve housing stock.

- Most of the conversations regarding housing have revolved around garbage location and pick-up, disorganized parking within “The Star”, and property maintenance of the multifamily homes surrounding Apache Park.
- The solutions to some of the housing concerns are not necessarily very expensive (e.g. re-locating garbage bins, restriping parking lots, etc...), but are complicated because of overlapping property lines and easements.
- Other options for property maintenance and improvement (besides an HOA), include hosting community workshops on home landscape improvements in the multifamily developments surrounding the park.
- The implementation plan encourages property owners to apply the City’s existing housing programs.
- Fixing the parking lot of “The Star” will be a challenge due to the multiple easements and overlapping property lines.
- Creating walkways that connect to the rest of the neighborhood and serve as a clear connection to Apache Park.
- Improvement of private spaces in the multifamily developments surrounding Apache Park: remove chain link fences and add low bushes or low wood/iron fences in their place.
- Add subtle lighting to pedestrian walkways in the multifamily developments surrounding Apache Park to enhance public safety.

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Strategy 4 – Address public safety through improvements to public and private spaces.

- A lighting plan was created from public meeting and steering committee input to enhance public safety and increase visibility (14 locations where public lights are being recommended).
- It was recommended that four public lights be added from Everett Avenue to Howard Avenue along Mannheim Road to assist pedestrians at night.
- Members agreed that the biggest challenges the multifamily developments faced were property maintenance and code enforcement.

Strategy 5 – Improve educational and recreational programming and use of open spaces to enhance community well-being.

- St. Stephen Catholic Church is a strong anchor in the community and is used for various events. The church can use an additional indoor space that can be used as a multi-purpose room for youth in the area. A community center is a long-term and expensive project that would require capital and operating costs. Other improvements suggested include a new playground, adding parking, and continuing to improve the courtyard's landscaping.
- Work with Plainfield Elementary School to provide regular after-school programming for students with parents that work after-school hours and/or hold multiple jobs.

Strategy 6 – Improve connectivity between neighborhood assets and surrounding areas.

- Transportation recommendations include improving pedestrian and bike crossings at key intersections, and connecting Apache Park to Lake Park and Arndt Park.

Discussion of Recommendations to City Council

The Steering Committee voted unanimously to approve the plan recommend it to the City Council.

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