



MEETING DATE:

October 29, 2015

TIME:

5:30-7:30 PM

PLACE:

Fishers City Hall

1 Municipal Drive

Fishers, Indiana 46038

RESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Rich Block, Ronda Shrewsbury Weybright, Selina Stoller, Nate Lichti, Jimmy Dulin, Sharon Reed, Grace Bohlsen

Members Not Present: John Dierdorf, Emily Bowman

Others Present: Sue Harrison, Connie Nimmo, Tony Elliot, Adam Zaklikowski, Leah McGrath

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- The Steering Committee and co-chairs met on October 23 to discuss the status of each task force.
 - The meeting provided the co-chairs to clarification what the Steering Committee's expectations are.
 - All the task forces are on target, each having completed three meetings
 - Liaison between staff after each round of meetings ensures that we will flag any issues or differences of opinion between the committees. Staff will then discuss these issues with Leah McGrath, Deputy Mayor
- Parks and open spaces help the community maintain its value and improve the quality of life for residents.
 - The Parks Task Force is looking at open space as it relates to parks.
 - They believe it is important to think about the quality and function of the open space
 - They want open spaces to connect to parks whenever possible.
 - It will be important for this group to clearly differentiate between open space and parks.
 - Parks offer the community a chance to gather, participate in recreation and focus on wellness regardless of background or socio-economic status.
 - Fishers currently has approximately 6.7 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.
 - This ratio is in-line with national averages.
 - Fishers would like to increase this number to 6.75 within the coming years.
 - That goal is attained through development and acquisition.
 - Neighboring communities, such as Noblesville and Carmel, report higher ratios. This is due to the fact that those communities take into account golf courses, neighborhood open spaces and any publicly owned green space.
 - These statistics do not affect impact fees or funding as they are mainly used for publicity.
 - Fishers could inventory these types of green spaces to help quantify Fishers' portfolio of space.
 - Most neighborhood parks are 20 – 25 years old. Maintenance of parks can cause financial burdens. This makes the City hesitant to acquire those types of spaces.
 - HOAs don't always maintain their open space and are not held accountable as the City has no enforcement in place.
 - The City was able to acquire the Heritage Meadows park in an efforts to obtain right-of-way for trails. The equipment on the park posed great risk and liability, so the City tore it down. Fortunately, it was able to replace the playground through a grant. These kinds of grants are rare and hard to obtain.
 - "We want to balance the park system to provide the right mix of amenities to benefit our community." – Tony Elliot
 - Each City Park has a master concept plan to assess and predict needs.
 - Awareness of amenities is low.

- Branding will help identify areas as city parks.
 - An app would help direct residents to parks and give them routes via trails.
 - The trail system needs to be connected.
 - This would make city centers and pocket parks more welcoming.
 - Wayfinding is not existent on the trails.
 - Some homeowners may not initially buy-in to the idea of trails nearby their properties.
 - The Monon Trail raised property values and was extremely additive to the community.
 - Most parks funding comes from impact fees in the development process.
 - The current impact fee paid when a single family detached home is \$1,070. The Parks staff proposes the fee be raised to \$1,667 in 2015 per the mandatory five-year review. When development decreases in Fishers, funding will become limited.
 - A possible solution to generate revenue would be to give developers a payment in lieu of option. Developers could pay into a fund to develop and/or maintain nearby regional parks that serve more of the public. Noblesville currently offers this to developers.
 - Another possible solution to funding parks would be sponsorship opportunities.
- Open space requirements in the development process lack definition.
 - Most neighborhoods (which are developed with PUDs) have a minimum open space requirement of 20% of the property. The only time open space is not needed in a development is when there is 1.7 dwelling units per acre.
 - Higher density areas require more open space.
 - The percentage of open space required may not make sense in some areas, like the Nickel Plate District.
 - Open space provides storm water management and environmental preservation.
 - Generally, open spaces are an afterthought for developers. Open space may also be compromised as PUDs go through the primary and secondary platting.
 - Open spaces should be more thought out and a focal point for the neighborhood.
 - They can either have active or passive functions.
 - Saxony, Granden Hall and Sunblest (Holland Park) provide good examples of open space that work well in the residential context.
 - A possible solution to creating more thoughtful open space is to offer developers a menu of choices and amenities to best fit their development.
 - This menu would also include the payment in lieu of option if a park is nearby and open space doesn't quite fit in the neighborhood.
 - Linear parks and trails would also count as open space.
- Low Impact Development provides more eco-friendly options to developers.
 - LID will be offered on an opt-in basis in 2016.
 - Initial costs for LID may be limiting, as it requires knowledgeable landscapers and maintenance staff. However, non-LID development can also be costly to maintain overtime as retention ponds, etc. typically aren't taken care of.
 - The Preserve at Bear Creek in Carmel is a good example of a development that used LID. Initial concerns were that land would be lost using LID. They were able to use the topography of the land to create the subdivision without losing any lots.
 - LID gives developers and the community feature to market to potential homeowners.
 - LID is reliant on participation and stewardship from HOAs.
 - HOAs should be given maintenance schedules to ensure proper use of LID. The schedule would allow for inspections and enforcement, which encourages maintenance.
 - Management of HOAs vary within Fishers. Some pay dues, while others are voluntary. Some HOA leadership are community members, while others are managed by companies far from the community.
 - Possible solutions to maintain open space in communities and retain property value in older neighborhoods are to implement a tax levy for HOAs that fail to maintain or a buy-in/close-out fee for HOAs to generate revenue to maintain.
- Commercial standards also need review.
 - Connectivity and design can attract residents and visitors to the City.
 - Walkability can be used to assess the needs of open space.
 - Some commercial areas may call for open space and pocket parks.
 - Standards should only be implemented if they are targeted and additive to specific areas.

- Context needs to be given to areas that need commercial open space.
- Overlay districts could reinvent struggling areas and encourage reinvestment.
 - Areas for improvement include Allisonville Road, and 96th Street
 - Examples include the Arts and Design and old Meridian Districts in Carmel.
- What is the right mix of affordable housing in Fishers to keep it sustainable?
 - People can afford between three and five times their annual income.
 - College debt can prevent homeownership.
 - It is difficult to develop a new home under \$250,000.
 - Tax abatements could be offered to incentivize affordability.

ACTION ITEMS

- Revise draft goals based on discussion at previous meetings. – Staff

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- [Parks and Open Space in Residential Development](#)
- [Low Impact Development](#)
- [Draft Goals](#)
- [Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System](#)
- [Neighborhoods NOW Conference – HAND, Inc.](#)