

Joint Transportation Committee Meeting - 18 January 2023

DRAFT Notes

City Staff attendees: Cara Seiderman, Walter Goldberg, Rachel Tanenhaus

Committee member attendees: Amy Flax, Mark Boswell, Sandy Goldberg, Carl Rothenhaus, Robin Bonner, Deborah Galef, John Ellersick, Allison Harris, Brooke Williams, Eitan Normand, and Randy Stern

Public attendees: Barbara Rubel, Betty Saccoccio, Marc Levy, Heather Hoffman, Marie Saccoccio

Cara Seiderman of CDD provided background of events related to the Lechmere Canal Park refresh. Committee members reviewed materials describing the project area, path connectivity, quotations from Carol Johnson, the original designer of the park highlighting the importance of linking people from the neighborhood and the Charles River, and the inadequacy of the stone dust path which was used in the original construction due to cost cutting.

Committees reviewed the January 10, 2023 memorandum from New England Development (NED) explaining improvements:

- improved ramps
- reconstructing stairs for accessibility
- walkway surface: wire cut bricks and Stalock or bituminous concrete

Committees reviewed a presentation from NED describing all aspects of the park, including play area, gazebo, walking paths, railings, ramps, lighting, seating, tree and shrub plantings, and art.

Rachel Tanenhaus, Executive Director for the Commission for Persons with Disabilities provided comments about the Stalok material for the multi-use path. She pointed out that no paths that are intended to be four-season paths, use this material. Stone dust of any sort is not plowable. Stone dust will become slippery when wet, making it not accessible. She reminded committees that ADA is a civil rights law and facilities should serve the entire public. Ms. Tanenhaus noted that the proposed type of bricks (wire cut) would be sufficient although not ideal.

Committee members discussed many aspects of park and shared thoughts on surface choices, then discussed modifications to the original letter to the Planning Board. Key points that the Committee members concurred on were that the path surface must be a firm, year-round material, able to be plowed and accessed during the winter. Various options of bituminous concrete (asphalt) and regular concrete were discussed. Comments included: regular asphalt is really a dark gray after the initial installation and fades into the background; there is a path at Danehy park that has a more interesting surface ("Glassphalt"); asphalt can be color treated; several people liked the idea of a lighter color; concrete should also be considered; no matter what the material, NED needs to commit to year-found maintenance including snow clearance. There were several positive comments about the proposed lighting, the improved ramps and the added cargo bicycle parking. A question arose about whether water transportation was discussed; are the boat operations there now going to continue? Is there an opportunity for public boat transit? Mark Boswell noted the editions and offered to share with committee members for review before submitting to Planning Board.

Public comment was received.

Heather Hoffman of East Cambridge commented there was a false choice of surface materials offered by the developer. Marie Saccoccio commented that she was a lifelong resident and that the path has not been accessible during snow events in the past.