

Meeting Minutes

Project	Culver City Vets/Botts Parks Feasibility Study	Project No.	2327
Subject	3 rd Community Meeting	Date	Feb. 13, 2024
Participants	Vice Mayor Dan O'Brien Adam Ferguson, PRCS Sr.Mgmt. Analyst Adam.Ferguson@culvercity.org Ted Stevens, PRCS Director Jesse Mays, Assistant City Manager Dorian Jackson, PRCS Melanie Morales, PRCS	Jim Favaro, Johnson Favaro Steve Johnson, Johnson Favaro Kathy Williams, Johnson Favaro Dila Erten, Johnson Favaro Mariana Díaz, Johnson Favaro	
Meeting Location	Veterans Memorial Center Building - Rotunda Room	Meeting Date / Time	02/08/24, 6-9 pm

Meeting Purpose: To receive input from community-at-large their feedback and thoughts on Veterans Memorial Park and Bill Botts Fields proposed options

Introduction / Presentation

The purpose of the feasibility study is to provide a long-term plan to establish parameters and identify ambitious goals for Veterans and Bill Botts parks. (Powerpoint presented by Jim Favaro)

Items Presented:

- Review of project stakeholders and interest groups that have provided insights to-date
- Existing information on the two parks
- Site usage analysis for both parks, and SF comparison between existing and proposed site usage
- Building usage analysis for buildings at Vets Memorial Complex and SF comparison between existing and proposed building usage
- Possible site usage options for Vets Memorial Complex
- Proposed site plans, floor plans and renderings for both parks

At the conclusion of the presentation, a Comments and Questions session was held.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK/QUESTIONS

- Speaker #1, Resident:
 - The parks are nice the way they are.
 - What's being proposed are concrete monsters with lots of concrete. Why is an amphitheater being proposed? It has environmental impacts; we can't afford \$500M projects; can't we keep it the way it is? Personally want to see nature, instead you have built large buildings and reduced the park; the shuttle to park is not a good idea; there will be noise pollution and traffic
 - Nothing wrong with these parks except to fix the restrooms.

This report constitutes our understanding of matters discussed and conclusions reached. Other participants are requested to review these items and advise the originator in writing of any errors or omissions. If discrepancies are not brought to our attention within seven days, the report will be assumed as accurate and complete.

- Speaker #2, Non-resident, Adult Softball Player: Like that facilities will stay open during construction
 - 5000 seat auditorium at Bill Botts will require parking
 - Will fields at Vets stay open while building at Bill Botts? Response: Yes
- Speaker #3, Emily Michka representing Adult Softball: We play at night, 3-4x week
 - You stated a field is not a park. This contradicts your comment about amphitheater as an open space for residents
 - For Vets, with existing field there's still enough park space; Would there be a way to merge the two (existing and new)?
 - Keep one ball field at Vets at least - you don't need a fence for fields; only a backstop.
- Speaker #4, Marci Baun, Plunge Swimmer:
 - How much more will it cost to put pools on the roof? Why not basketball courts on the roof instead? Doesn't want to see money spent that way
 - Too much concrete, it will be hot at the pool. Would prefer trees by the pool - connected to nature, likes to see canopy of trees.
 - What's presented seems like a lot of green space; doesn't actually see people using the park
 - Kickball, slow pitch and other sports also use a backstop
 - A recent city rain collection project wasn't built well – already broken; likewise concerns here
- Speaker #5: Robert Kurtz, Culver City Senior Softball Rep; has 100 members:
 - League doesn't feel our needs are met, major league softball has 1000 members
 - Understand why you want to separate parks and fields
 - There's no accommodation for other than little league up at Botts; they only use 2 fields at this time, which seems to be sufficient for the current population
 - Little league can have bigger fields so they can be shared with adults
 - We're unhappy that adult softball isn't accommodated at Botts – a softball field could be there instead of 2 of the little league fields
- Speaker #6: Abigail, Senior Softball Player: Would like to confirm that fields would not be moved until new fields are in place.
 - Would like the fields at Bill Botts to look inward and not outward so that it creates common open space in the middle
- Speaker #7, Diana Hrabowecki, Culver City Resident & Plunge Swimmer
 - In the presentation, missing stakeholder: a resident to uses the pool
 - Before we invest money in infrastructure, instead we should try maintaining what we have – there's an obvious management issue, issues with living wage for plunge staff need to be addressed
- Speaker #8, Alicia Ide, Culver City Arts Foundation Rep.:
 - Current parks are not adequate in any way. Johnson Favaro has magically incorporated a lot of requests from all stakeholders – Very please with the arts and historical society's section of the project
 - Concerned that plans don't incorporate a permanent gallery space – Hoping that it is a part of the parks master plan and is accommodated at a location
 - Need more smaller/intimate outdoor meeting spaces
 - The foundation believes the buildings and park spaces themselves can/should be works of art
 - Makes a plea to City to not put art at the end, but include along the way
 - The foundation wants to help in terms of funding / advocacy
 - City should consider increased costs of managing these new facilities

- Speaker #9, Alexey Steele, Culver City Resident & 1st Artist Laureate:
 - Thank you, City for initiating this work and sharing an open process with all groups – thank you for the conversation
 - Culver City has an intrinsic combination of arts/creativity and sports and is important to this City
 - We are in a place of crisis with arts / the community being gentrified out of our lives, losing galleries and artistic make-up of city. There's a need for proper municipal art galleries
 - Completely understand the difficulties of accommodating all of these facilities/requests
- Speaker #10, Dan Goldstein, Culver City Resident:
 - Has questions about the amphitheater and baseball: doesn't think anybody likes the amphitheater idea. Feels that it cuts the idea of community
 - Suggests eliminating 2 little league fields and doing a softball field instead
- Speaker #11, Jim Dodenhoff, Culver City Resident
 - Thank you for sober but provocative work.
 - Lighting at fields – City should consider using LED/solar lighting is important rather than being run by diesel
 - There should be a climate action plan. Parks must be sustainable, and should be observed from a climate action lens
 - You've shown us that a park is complex but I think it should also be sustainable
 - I love the plan, but consider a microgrid; the parks for double use: add an emergency shelter function; incorporate bidirectional EV chargers
 - What about the traffic?
- Speaker #12, Culver City Resident
 - Agree that park needs to be upgraded
 - Plan should scale back a lot, way too expensive – fix the parks and have mercy on us
- Speaker #13, Culver City resident:
 - Not what we want and not what we need – scandalous to have insanely big plans given the condition of our schools, to propose this over-the-top plan
 - Questions what's wrong with Frost Auditorium, that would cause need for more theater space
 - Baseball community is massively overrepresented and this outcome is driven by that
 - We do not want a Hollywood Bowl at Botts
- Speaker #14, Bill Katz, Culver City Resident:
 - Need to consider Needs vs Cost
 - Most people in survey said they want improvements, not to re-build facilities; you aren't listening
 - There will be a tax increase if the bonds pass, perhaps \$2,000– how this will affect affordability? There is nothing that says a landlord can't pass this directly on to rental tenants
- Speaker #15, Musician and Artist and Softball Player
 - More intimate spaces for art, music and comedy
 - Vets Park is the perfect place for softball. 'It is an American tradition'
 - Diamonds are important for kickball and others in Culver City
- Speaker #16, Doug Stanger, Culver City Resident:
 - #1 priority – level/fix Botts, it's dangerous right now. Every year they fill it but it sinks
 - #2 priority – Plunge, add a second pool. Swimming team has to fight to get time for practice

- Speaker #17, Steve, Paddle Tennis Player
 - Do not touch Paddle Tennis Park – it’s the first paddle tennis park in America; it has bleachers for 100 people
 - We are not going to believe you and we’re going to join with the baseball people
 - The Wende is creeping over and taking things away: VFW Building, Community Gardens, Boy Scouts, and we are not going to stand for it
 - Take the paddle tennis park off the table or we will start a war
- Speaker #18, Culver City Resident, since 1976
 - Schools are falling apart and should be priority
 - Spending a fortune at the expense of my child; disappointed on what taxes will pay for
 - Furious that you spend time on this stuff; no need for parks and spending money on them
- Speaker #19, Culver City Resident, lives across the street
 - Attended multiple meetings and Appreciates the changes across the meetings
 - Hoping we can disguise the parking structure
 - We need good art facilities for this City– we are ‘the Heart of Screenland USA’
 - We want to keep softball at Vets, keep it in the park
 - Do not move the pools, keep them on Overland. Add more pools, make larger
 - Can make revenue out of these facilities – Performing ARts
 - Love the exhibition space on the third floor for Historical Society; We need a dedicated space for “museum”
 - Need more space for archives / city history
- Speaker #20, Culver City Resident
 - In support of the project, thanks for bring conversation to us
 - I’m an advocate for Kids; am a part of Culver City FC
 - As long as the Parks can accommodate all our interests, I’m all for it
 - Some stakeholders haven’t been brought to the table, and should
- Speaker #21, Resident with Culver City FC
 - I’m rooting for the art folks, California Art Club and here for the kids
 - Feels like some stakeholders have been left out; we need dedicated soccer fields and to nurture the growing soccer program
- Speaker #22, Culver City Resident since 1976
 - Presentation is spectacular, but this is too much for this small city
 - We don’t have anything for disabled bodies and elders; need to have adaptive parks and playgrounds and prioritize the schools
- Speaker #23, Culver City Resident:
 - There’s only one soccer field and its not a real field. It’s upsetting – need 3 full size soccer fields with lights; for older youth and adults
 - The right stakeholders have not been brought to the table
- Speaker #24, Mark Galanty, Culver City Resident
 - The park should stay open. Proposla of a big building with parking structure and pool is closing off the park
 - Pool should be moved back to Overland
- Speaker #25, John
 - In the words of a 94 year old friend, Mr. Mousa, Sports should be inclusive and not exclusive
 - Pickleball/Paddle Tennis/ Spec ball/smash courts should all be shared courts

- Speaker #26, Nick, Culver City Resident & Landscape Architect, member of rock & mineral club
 - It's an impressive design and appreciates the consideration of mature trees
 - Vets Park deserves more than one big open space – asking landscape to be given more thought of design and program
- Speaker #27, Richie, Senior Softball Player / Major league softball
 - Ball play is important to the community at Vets Park, need to protect that
 - Give the kids a softball field, that is the only place that I can take my kids to
 - You have to get the priorities straight
- Speaker #28, Swimming and water polo
 - I did not hear enough about water polo for MS & HS
 - Like the idea of extending the pool
 - Where do kids swim while you are building the new pool? Response: Current pool wouldn't be removed until new one is built
- Speaker #29, Steve Fiskin, Advocate for senior softball
 - Great presentation, but I feel like you have taken softball away from us though
- Speaker #30, Andrew Lachman
 - Soccer fields can be used for other sports, such as lacrosse, and other
 - Love the multilevel indoor facilities, program should be stacked; all our current buildings now seem to be one floor
- Speaker #31, Denise Nea, 10 year Culver City Resident
 - Lots of good points made here
 - With coming sporting events, need to be able to monetize the parks, host cultural and arts events
 - Need to make things ADA compliant, adaptive for all ages, cradle to grave
 - Need a community benefit for non-profit uses and allow schools to use facilities
 - Need more soccer fields, places for Skating - roller and ice skating, to replace BBQ pits
 - Everything should be sustainable and to double as emergency facilities, and that all that is built is safe and done right, including all the proper studies: soils, liquefaction, etc.
 - Hopefully can raise funds for these performance venues
- Speaker #32, Jody Reichel, Culver City Resident
 - All for redoing current auditorium, new BOH and kitchen, but not convinced we need all the performing arts facilities
 - Do not move the pool – when you are in the current pool, you don't feel like you are in a facility
 - Do not want to lose beautiful trees around playground
- Speaker #33, Culver City High School Student
 - I don't like my school, it needs work.
 - Why screw up the parks, everyone likes them. Doesn't make any sense.
 - Where is all the nature? Why do you want to take that away?

PUBLIC FEEDBACK/QUESTIONS FROM ONLINE WEBEX ATTENDEES:

- Comment: Would be disappointed to see mature trees be taken out. Why take down mature trees at Culver Blvd. and plant smaller trees?

- Question: When/where will decisions be made and when will construction start?
Vice Mayor Response: Next steps are to determine funding and the community has to prioritize projects to move forward
- Question: How many people are attending in person at this meeting? Response: About 90 people
- Question: When/how will pickleball/ paddle tennis be addressed? Response: Paddle tennis at Paddle tennis park will stay
- Question: Will there be shade for aquatics? Response: Trees are feasible in tree wells at the pool deck
- Question: What are the plans for a children’s playground? Response: Children’s playgrounds are planned to be accommodated at both parks. As priorities emerge for design projects, design will ensue
- Comment: Thank you for the presentation. The 300-seat blackbox theater is useful. The 500-seat theater is good for rentals, and could be used for conferences
- Comment: A raised pool at the boulevard is a bad idea. The scale of buildings is too large.
- Comment: Picnic tables should be designed into the project

Closing Comments, Vice Mayor O’Brien

- The community has to vote to agree on a tax
- To people’s comments about the Schools’ needs – the school bond is on the March 5th ballot. No City parks bond is yet planned and they aren’t competing on the ballot
- Our next steps are to ask the community about your priorities and what you willing to pay in assessed values – it will be your choice.
- To the questions about joint-use of facilities between City Parks and CCUSD – there are discussions planned; the first is later this month, February 2024. Talks on this subject began a few years before the pandemic but stalled through it and are now re-starting.

Community Input to closing comments

- There are other ways to fund the projects, perhaps through private companies that have come in Culver City such as Apple. Response: There are overlapping and competing interests with this strategy but we’re considering this.

Feasibility Project Next Steps

- City Council on March 11
- Review of Funding Options (Public/Private)
- Environmental review (CEQA)

Attachments:

1. Meeting Sign-In Sheets
2. Public Comments from Webex users, emails pre-and post-meeting
3. Presentation

END MINUTES

Deborah Gregory – 6:24pm

Q: Thank you for addressing some sustainability issues as you were going through the slides. It would be expected and appropriate that these important Civic buildings would be more sustainably built than the current Culver City Codes mandate. Reach codes like in Santa Monica or other proactive communities should be the norm for these two very large and prominent buildings. Biophilic principles, LEED platinum rated, WELL AP considerations are all greatly appreciated and valued integrations in the long term.

Deborah Gregory – 6:37pm

Q: More on Vets: 1 V. excited for this. 2 Disappointed in lge. qty. of parking planned for Vets based on current CC parking requirements. 3 outdoor basketball location seems forced in the ring plan design – and Overland lawn facing a busy road would have no direct pedestrian engagement – maybe shift Basketball court there which would be closer to interior basketball courts? 4 massing schemes with the tower remaining prominent in scale are more successful. 5 nature+trees+shade+water table replenished! TX

Deborah Gregory – 6:38pm

Q: BOTTS: opposed to removal of plants at back of baseball fields. noisy and disrespectful to nature.

Deborah Gregory – 6:46pm

Q: BOTTS cont: amphitheatre (and pickle ball) is sited towards nature area and will have lighting and sound impact to nature – move closer to road. Botts is overzealous in its desire to be people forward – it's desirable now in part because it's very accessible and not too crazy busy. Gem shows, etc need to be kept away from this nature-based site. 3/ spending a lot of money storing CARS. while I don't want to see them – no mention of reduced car allocations? enhanced biking/carpool/ car-free transit idea

Deborah Gregory – 6:53pm

Q: VETS: love the above ground pool and some of your more classic, designs are quite fabulous. Civic yet elegant and inviting! thank you.

Hi Adam,

My name is Jim Dodenhoff. My family and I are long-time residents of Culver City and we live in Lindberg Park. We are users of Veterans and Bill Botts Park. I've had an opportunity to review the presentation slides from the two previous public meetings relating to the Bill Botts Park and Veterans Park Re-Visioning and I'll be attending the February 8 meeting. I did, however, want to offer up a few comments and observations.

1. Level 4 of Bill Botts Park currently does not have permanent lights and, in fact, expensive and polluting diesel powered modular lighting units are used by sports groups to accommodate the need for sports space. I hope that all future plans for outdoor and indoor space contemplate the use of energy efficient lighting (e.g. LED's) powered by clean electricity. I didn't see any lighting in the renderings.
2. Is there an expected incremental increase or decrease of GHG emissions to be created by the proposed plans?
3. How do the proposed plans integrate and support the City's sustainability goals and objectives?
4. What are the anticipated traffic impacts of the proposed plans?
5. Is there a breakdown of estimated costs associated with the proposed plans and how will these costs be funded?
6. Are there plans to provide bi-directional EV Chargers for Bill Botts or Veterans Park?
7. Has there been any consideration for using the ample space set forth in these plants as an emergency shelter in the event of any natural disasters? I know the city has been considering an emergency shelter microgrid near the Senior Center? Should something similar be considered as part of these plans for Veterans Park and Bill Botts Park?

I appreciate the opportunity to offer these comments and observations and look forward to the meeting on February 8.

Regards,
Jim Dodenhoff

Sent: Sunday, February 11, 2024 1:17 PM

To: Ferguson, Adam <Adam.Ferguson@culvercity.org>

Subject: Vets and Bill Botts plans

Mr. Ferguson,

I am very much against eliminating the adult-size fields from Vets and Bill Botts. That would leave only Syd K park for adult softball play. That is not enough. I certainly support youth level baseball and softball, but there is also a very large community of adult softball players who would have no place to play if this plan is implemented.

It seems easier to me to leave the large fields at Vets and Botts, but add adjustments so that youth could also play on them. In other words, you can make a big field small, but you can't make a small field big.

Please reconsider.

Glen Janken

:

Adult softball player since 2002