

Special Joint Meeting of the Carbondale City Council and Carbondale Park District (Tuesday, January 21, 2025)

Generated by Jennifer R Sorrell on Wednesday, January 22, 2025

Councilmembers present

Councilmember Jeff Doherty, Councilmember LaCaje Hill, Councilmember Clare Killman, Councilmember Adam Loos, Councilmember Nancy Maxwell, and Mayor Carolin Harvey

Councilmembers absent

Councilmember Ginger Rye Sanders

Meeting called to order at 6:32 PM

1. Roll Call

Procedural: 1.1 **Roll Call for Each Body**

2. Public Comments

Procedural: 2.1 **Public Comments**

3. Parks Master Plan Presentation

Discussion, Information, Reports: 3.1 **Presentation and Discussion Relating to the Parks Master Plan, Costs for Implementation of Phases, and an Intergovernmental Agreement**

Mary Jeanne Hutchison from Hutchinson Solutions, Andrew Franke and Jonathan Corbett from Planning Design Studios presented the plan that has been under development for just over a year. The presentation addressed the highlights of the plan development and findings. The master plan is intended to be a flexible, living document to help guide the next 10 years and to identify key goals that may be achieved by the bodies. The parks and open spaces are clearly important to the community.

Utilizing six of the parks for examples, suggestions included:

Attucks Park - reconfiguring football fields, adding new basketball courts, new playground already in progress, and connecting to Green Earth Preserve

Parrish Park – adding a parking area, placement of a pedestrian-activated crossing, adding a multi-use multi-sport court, connecting trails, and a new Recreation Center upon demolition of old center

Hickory Lodge – improving the entrance, developing an event lawn, adding a strolling garden, developing a path to Bleyer Field, demolition of an old building is in progress, and a new community garden

Bleyer Field – developing a new lake to offset stormwater, addition of a new playground, pickle ball courts, and multi-use sports field, rebuilding the basketball court, and walking trails

Doug Lee Park / Superblock - improving walking connectivity, additional park features, adding sidewalks, a playground and pavilion, and an accessible central quad with concessions

Founders Park – the park is a good location for a skate park, bicycle pump track, playground and rock-climbing wall, and a ninja course

Andrew Franke provided a cost estimate for all would be \$19,941,184, including eleven parks

and open spaces.

The various identified projects were divided into three phases: priority, short-term, and long-term projects. The cost estimates and phasing in each category were reviewed in brief.

Council asked about what multiplier was utilized for projected costs, why the middle school fields were not included with in the study, asked to identify where paths were needed at the SuperBlock, inquired about risk for a city-owned skate park, how many residents were surveyed in the data collection section and where the survey was made available, asked about the walking track on Bleyer Field, and asked if the Council would be asked to adopt or endorse the plan.

Park Board asked about what would be recommended for the traffic crossing at Parrish Park.

Dawn Roberts offered an alternate suggestion to the pond, noted that the multiple uses for Founders Park may not leave enough space for each to be fully developed to size and use, advocated for a stand-alone skate park, and commented on a former BMX park at Evergreen Park.

Lee Fronabarger asked if the plan slides be available on the respective websites.

Jeff Davis inquired about the difference of costs versus projected costs on page 107.

Donald Monty observed that a basketball court at Founders Park at one time got heavy use and noted that the Park District owns property that extends to Giant City Road, but suggested looking at the practicalities in developing another road that would run to Giant City Road.

Laurel Toussaint remarked on the biodiverse habitats in the region; noted adopted plans that were not incorporated, as well as plans for nature enthusiasts and accessibility improvements. She commented on the possibility of a naturescape playground and emphasized the impacts of invasive species.

Tom Connelley suggested the placement of a road with direct access to Giant City Road for the SuperBlock.

Sarah Heyer asked if the Sustainability Plan and pollinator pledge were incorporated into the plan and if permeable surfaces had been considered for parking lots.

Carmen Suarez and Trey Anderson expressed their thanks to citizens who have participated in the process.

Councilmember Killman thanked the professionals who imbued the development of the plan with their knowledge; thanked citizens for the participation; and stated that she was looking forward to an opportunity to collaborate with the Park District

Councilmember Doherty noted that the City has recently awarded a contract for the construction of a concession building at the SuperBlock.

Councilmember Loos noted there were good things in the plan and some specificity about what should be done and stated that he was glad for the incorporation of walking plans. He then commented on typos and wrong information in the plan; references to misnamed places; deficiencies in the report such as restroom facilities; lack of financial analysis of the two entities and their ability to fund the recommendations; lack of accounting of investments going on currently; that the recommendations seem to be unrelated to the feedback received; that the plan seems to lack an understanding of the community and how the parks are utilized currently; opposition to eliminating any basketball courts at Bleyer Field; and his skepticism of utilizing Founders Park exclusively for a skate park, as family use is needed there.

4. Adjournment

Procedural: 4.1 **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the two bodies, the meeting was declared adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Jennifer R. Sorrell, City Clerk

Date