

ROSE GARDEN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION Steering Committee
March 4, 2009

Mayor of Allentown, Ed Palowski, was in attendance for the first part of our meeting to introduce the Allentown Director of Department of Parks and Recreation, Greg Weitzel. Greg spoke to the Rose Garden Association steering committee for over an hour regarding new and exciting changes for the Cedar Creek Parkway.

There may be up to \$1.5 million in funds to spend for renovation for the projects. The Trexler Trust would appropriate 20%, State of Pennsylvania an added \$400,000.00, Lehigh County has a Green Futures Fund to draw from and The City of Allentown would put in an additional \$200,000.00.

There is ongoing planning to have walkways eventually in place for concurrent use between Trexler Park and Cedar Creek Park.

Points for PHASE I, made to change and enhance the existing Park which holds the beloved Rose Garden, include:

A "no mow" strategy using mixed grassed, flowers, trees and shrubs which in turn will be helpful to control flooding. This will be great environmentally and make the space a sustainable community park!

\$20,000.00 is being used for a commissioned study called "Mirror Ponds and Muhlenberg Lake". Masonry will be replaced in fixing existing walls of the Mirror Ponds which are going to be dredged of several feet of sludge. Species such as turtles and koi fish will be added to the ponds once they are repaired, cleaned and refilled.

Island beds with assorted plantings are in discussion as well.

The Ott Street Bridge is going to be transformed and fixed with a hopeful \$2 million federal appropriation fund being sought. This would be used to replace the old metal super-structure of the bridge along with its eroding sides.

Paved trails in place of existing gravel trails to be used for biking year round as well as walking when weather permits.

Taking out and replacing the existing Fitness Posts as they stay now for a LIFE TRAIL for 55+ population exercise system which would consist of light workouts performed around the loop of trails passing the pavilion; the program was developed at Penn State.

Physicians could be brought in for special seminars and health issues addressing the public on the park grounds; classes such as Tai Chi could be added.

A 6 foot wide asphalt walkway put in place to be used for wheel chairs, disabled citizens and seniors to walk to and from the pavilion.

3 new bridges built for existing ones - fashioned after the replaced one already in place.

Replacement of existing wooden rose trellises with composite vinyl made from recycled material. A colored finish could be used.

A new main garden trellis - open in style - with stone pillars or wooden ones; possibly done in the deco style like in Union Terrace.

The city has an arborist on duty now.

Since alarming statistics are out about child obesity (a 40% rate) a new playground is being planned for in Cedar Beach. This playground would be built out of flood's way and have a capacity of 567 kids, ideally planned for ages 5-12. Discussion included how kids are disconnected from physical activity due to thriving technology which tends to compete for time that could be well spent competing against one another in active games and fun sport activities! A new gym-style playground is going to be in placed called NEOS. It has musical and linear games up to 60 minutes in length that will encourage shared activity and exercise. SURFACE AMERICA will be furnishing the equipment; it has rubberized surfacing.

PHASE II plans include:

Muhlenberg Lake is the "hot potato" in planning. It has major concerns consisting of a large geese population that has polluted the water and close to the new playground that will be built. Liability for children is a huge factor the way it stands now. Thoughts are to drain it back, reshape it and link it to the existing stream which would make it environmentally friendly as well. Studies of what to do for the Lake will be heavy in cost and more than likely done by the Conservation District and the Army Corps of Engineers.

A "City Wide Trail Feasibility Study" needs to be conducted. For more information go to Greenways.com/Allentown

Conversation came up regarding a reformation of the Park and Recreation building on the ground to a restaurant! Taking the building down to its studs and adding decorative details to the stoneware; a new kitchen made available for possible events such as catering for weddings and different parties was brought to the table as well. Fun ideas such as al fresco dining, a coffee shop, or even healthy choice refreshments were mentioned, too!

Anyone interested to volunteer for assisting in filing and managing historical papers in the Park and Recreation building? Contact Greg Weitzel at: weitzel@allentowncity.org.

The main goal is to get our parks used and enjoyed by all!

---Submitted by Kathleen Forte