



Meeting Minutes

Riverwalk Planning, Design and Construction Committee

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

7:30 AM

NEU

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Erickson called the February 4, 2025 Naperville Riverwalk Planning, Design and Construction (PDC) Committee meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. The meeting was held in the Naperville Employee University (NEU) at the Municipal Center, located at 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL.

B. ROLL CALL:

Present: Pam Bartlett; Grant Cowen; John Cuff; Jan Erickson, Chair; Seth Michael; Bill Novack; Tiffani Picco; Johnna Shields; and Carl Wohlt

Absent: Hannah Brauer; Mary Gibson; Ian Holzhauer; and Mike Sullivan

Also Present: Tim Ball, Gary R. Weber and Associates, Inc. (GRWA); Mike Cluchey, Engineering Resource Associates, Inc. (ERA); Rebecca DeLarme, City staff; Mike DiCristina, Naperville Park District; Brian Dusak, ERA; Peggy Motta, Naperville Park District; Stephanie Penick, Naperville Riverwalk Foundation; Efren Perez, Naperville Park District; Marilyn Schweitzer, resident; and Mary Lou Wehrli, resident

C. PUBLIC FORUM:

None.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Minutes - Jan Erickson

Approve minutes from the December 3, 2024 Planning, Design and Construction Committee meeting

Attachments: [24PDCMinutes1203](#)

A motion to approve the December 3, 2024 Planning, Design and Construction Committee meeting minutes was made by Cuff and seconded by Shields. MOTION CARRIED

2. Park District Enhancement Projects - Tiffani Picco

Receive and provide input on the 2025 Naperville Park District Riverwalk Projects

Attachments: [2025 Naperville Park District Riverwalk Projects](#)

Included in the agenda packet were landscape improvement projects proposed by the Park District for three locations on the Naperville Riverwalk. Schweitzer commented that she liked the overall plans and questioned the use of English ivy as it is considered invasive in some locations. She noted that Virginia creeper is sometimes used as an alternative.

Wehrli concurred with Schweitzer's comments and suggested a larger dominant tree at the Main Street location that would provide for more shade and make more of a statement to nature. Wehrli also suggested that the removal of branches underneath the Main Street bridge be addressed. Erickson and Picco thanked Schweitzer and Wehrli for their comments.

Picco introduced Perez, who has worked on the Riverwalk for twenty-four years and was very involved with the designs of the enhancement projects with DiCristina, Kathy Coyle and Picco. She reviewed each of the following projects in detail with the group:

Harmony Park Area Landscape

Concept: Plant 25 new trees (including overstory and understory) between the quarry fence and the Riverwalk path (none added to the quarry side of the fence) with a variety of sizes and features. Replace turf with native vegetation (similar seed mix to the Prairie Nature Garden) and also spread seed on the quarry side of the fence. The Park District will plant yews in a row directly behind the instruments and can shape them in a wave fashion. The Park District will add outcropping stones to buffer the slope behind the instruments and provide a visual barrier between the yews and native vegetation.

Remove yews in the island to the east and replace with decorative landscape plants. Restore 2 existing benches near the island bed. Enhance woodland perennial plantings surrounding the Art Davis bench on the south side of the path. Woody invasive plants on the slope of the quarry and declining or dead trees were removed in fall 2024, opening the view from Harmony Park. New plantings to be installed in May.

Landscape Refresh East of Dandelion Fountain

Concept: Remove existing grasses, Russian sage, and juniper surrounding the memorial Oak Tree and replace with a variety of visually appealing perennial plants. Leave room along the path at the top of the stairs to tie in an annual bed to coordinate with the existing bed further

east. Also update the landscape bed on the Jackson Avenue side of the path, east of the Dandelion Fountain to match this new design. The new look will be cleaner from both the Dandelion Fountain view as well as the Water Street side of the river. The work will be performed in the Spring of 2025.

Landscape Refresh by Main Street and Horse Trough Fountain

Concept: The Siberian elm tree was removed in 2024. This is a good time to refresh the landscape in this whole area to make the “entrance” to the Riverwalk from Main Street more visually appealing as well as improve the view from the Water Street district across the river. The existing maple tree, redbud, and Japanese lilacs will remain, and Park District staff will work to improve the understory. A simplified landscape will include ninebark, Diervilla, false spirea, calamint, and a pocket of annual flowers near the sign. All plantings to occur in spring 2025.

Regarding Wehrli’s suggestion of adding a larger tree, Picco noted it would be difficult to remove the existing stump. They are considering starting with a small five-gallon sized tree to place in the roots so as the stump rots, the new tree will get bigger and take its place.

The group expressed their appreciation and Erickson thanked Picco and the Park District Staff for their thoughtfulness.

3. South Extension Project Update - Bill Novack

Review and provide input regarding the design of the community sign located along the South Extension of the Riverwalk

Attachments: [Community Sign Concept Drawing](#)

Schweitzer provided comments that were shared with the Riverwalk Commission and are included as an attachment to these minutes. Her suggestions included having the digital sign remain easily visible, not adding height in the area, not impacting the existing plaque, and not having elements around the sign that would obscure the sign if not carefully maintained. She suggested a softer design without hard edges or 90° angles, and possibly something reminiscent of the park district logo.

Wehrli commented that she would like the design to include “Naperville Riverwalk” to mirror other Riverwalk signs and as was depicted in the sign used by the consultants as the inspiration for the suggested trellis in the agenda attachment. She also noted the importance of this being the entry to the Riverwalk.

Ball advised that after meeting with the Park District, it was determined that the sign should remain in its current location. The consensus of the

group was to include "Naperville Riverwalk" but to make sure it would be visible. Discussion followed on the potential height of the proposed sign and the proximity to the existing power lines. Visibility for commuters and pedestrians was also discussed. Suggestions from the group included Illuminating the arch, including evergreens, making two layers with vines behind the sign, and use of the logo on the display screen. Ball reminded the group that the sidewalk next to the sign will be removed.

Dusak introduced Cluchey, who has been working closely with Ball on the grading and elevation changes. He reviewed the plan view of the north and south elevation and discussed the changes to the berm. The possibility of raising the existing wall was discussed with Dusak noting the distance to the existing power lines and Picco stressing the importance of not creating a place where someone could hide.

The consultants will bring back additional ideas based on these recommendations for further discussion at an upcoming PDC Committee meeting.

4. Grand Pavilion Parking Lot Improvements - Bill Novack

Receive the report from the Naperville Park District regarding their permeable parking lots and decide if the Grand Pavilion parking lot should be permeable or not

Attachments: [Naperville Park District Permeable Parking Lot Report](#)

Schweitzer commented that she liked the idea of a permeable paver lot in this location from an environmental perspective. She inquired about accessibility, noting that it could be difficult for some and asked if there were any complaints regarding accessibility at other permeable paver lots. Novack stated that if we were to proceed, it would be like the Morton Arboretum where normal pavers are installed near the accessible parking spaces.

Wehrli does not agree with putting permeable pavers in a floodplain, especially with the costs involved. She expressed that it would be more beneficial to the Park District's use for staging different events if there was a flat surface, easier to navigate for pedestrians, and allowing the water to go where it wants when it floods. Wohlt suggested using permeable pavers in the Centennial Beach parking area and noted Rick Hitchcock's comments about reimagining the lot for multi-use purposes. Motta suggested investing in bioswale or native vegetation in the area. Novack discussed the importance of public input and suggested having the Park District reach out to different groups who have rented the Grand Pavilion annually over the years for feedback. He would like to include this on a future PDC Committee agenda and later engage ERA

and GRWA to start looking at what can be done to address these needs.

After further discussion, a motion was made by Novack and seconded by Cowen to not pursue using permeable pavers for the Grand Pavilion parking lot. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

E. NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business to discuss.

F. MEETING SCHEDULE:

Novack discussed the February 25, 2025 Naperville Riverwalk Presentation that will be given by Rick Hitchcock at 9:00 a.m. in Council Chambers. This meeting was originally scheduled as a presentation for Park District staff but will now include the Riverwalk Commission and any Municipal Center City employees that wish to attend. The presentation will be noticed as a Riverwalk Commission meeting to comply with the Open Meetings Act.

Riverwalk Commission, February 12, 2025, 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Center NEU, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

**Naperville Riverwalk Presentation, February 25, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
Council Chambers, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

Riverwalk Planning, Design & Construction, March 4, 2025, 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Center NEU, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

Riverwalk Commission, March 12, 2025, 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Center NEU, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

Riverwalk Planning, Design & Construction, April 1, 2025, 2025, 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Center NEU, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

G. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Wohlt and seconded by Bartlett. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 a.m. MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted by
Rebecca DeLarme, City Staff

Comments on the Community Sign Concept

Dear Riverwalk Commissioners and Riverwalk Planning, Design, and Construction Committee Members,

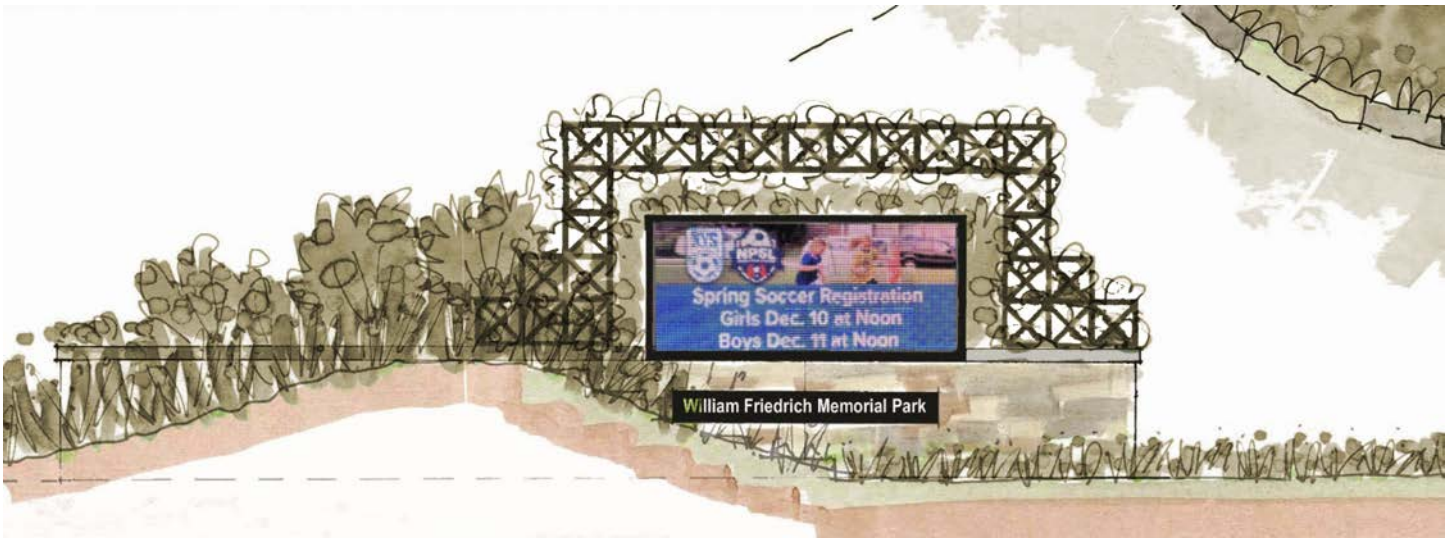
On the February 4, 2025 is a discussion of design of the community sign located along the South Extension of the Riverwalk. The proposal shows new landscaping, some berming, a trellis to surround the sign.

I realize it is difficult to make a digital sign look anything like, well, a digital sign, but I question the proposal. My thoughts are:

1. The digital sign must remain easily visible to vehicles and not have elements around it that may obscure the sign or distract drivers. Although climbing hydrangea need little pruning compared to other vining plants, it does produce wayward branches that could obscure the sign if not carefully maintained. Also, the proposed trellis is overpowering and utilitarian. It seems bulky and angular. I see no need for such added height. Also, the design will obscure the existing plaque mounted on the top of the wall.



2. I think how it will look year round, not just in summer. In winter, the utilitarian trellis will obtrude more. Please see the winter mock-up below.



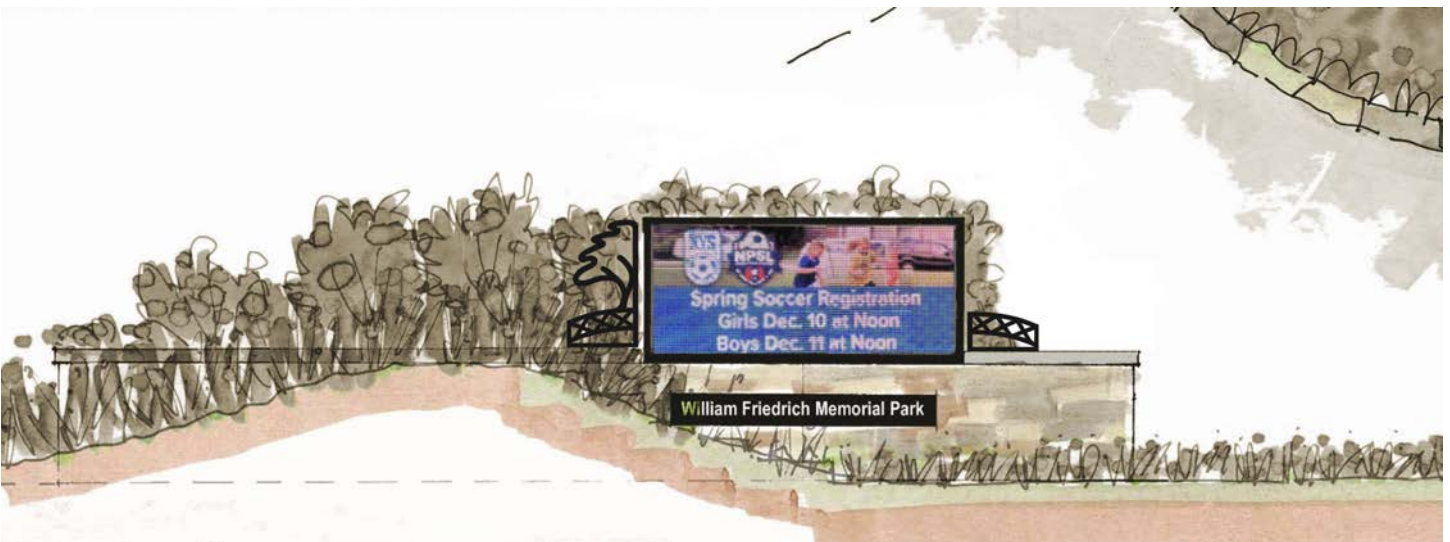
3. I'd prefer a softer design. Something without such hard edges and 90° angles. Something that does not add height. Something that does not interfere with plaque. Something that is low maintenance. Something that will not be so distracting to drivers who are trying to read the sign. Since it is Naperville Park District sign, one thought I had was to do something reminiscent of the park district logo. See below.



4. This is a mock-up of the summer view. Please note, it is not a trellis. It also does not prohibit having a tree as an alternate landscape concept planted in the "v" of the wall.



5. Below would be a mock-up of the winter view.



To be clear, I am not trying to sell anyone on my particular design. My point is to open the door for many design options that do not have the issues I see with the proposed trellis concept.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Marilyn L. Schweitzer

January 31, 2025