



Meeting Minutes

Riverwalk Planning, Design and Construction Committee

Tuesday, November 5, 2024

7:30 AM

NEU

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Erickson called the November 5, 2024 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; Pat Kennedy; Bill Novack; Tiffani Picco; Johnna Shields; Mike Sullivan; and Carl Wohlt

Absent: Hannah Brauer; Mary Gibson; and Ian Holzhauer

Also Present: Tim Ball, Gary R. Weber and Associates, Inc. (GRWA); Kendra Davis, North Central College (NCC) student; Rebecca DeLarme, City staff; Mike DiCristina, Naperville Park District; Brian Dusak, Engineering Resource Associates, Inc. (ERA); Ellory Graff, NCC student; Rick Hitchcock, former Riverwalk Commission Chairman; Mary Hamill, Accessible Community Task Force (ACTF); Alyssa Pipken Heimbach, NCC student; Anna Larsen, NCC student; Dr. Maud Makoni, NCC Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy; Peggy Motta, Naperville Park District; and Stephanie Penick, Naperville Riverwalk Foundation

C. PUBLIC FORUM:

Hitchcock noted that he met with Ball recently to review the plans that were discussed at last month's PDC Committee meeting regarding the South Extension Progress Update. He shared the following three recommendations for the South Gateway project: 1) the opportunity to manipulate the ground plane in the areas where it is flat by the parkway and keep it undulating; 2) including additional trees (even small diameter ones), especially close to the river bank, and using a native pallet along the shoreline but letting the grass move just like the sidewalk toward the parkway; and 3) adding an additional section of stone wall between the substation and Martin Avenue.

Sullivan provided additional information about the South Gateway project

for the guests in attendance. Cuff echoed Hitchcock's request for more trees, noting the importance of screening for the residents.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Minutes - Jan Erickson

Approve minutes from the October 1, 2024 Planning, Design and Construction Committee meeting

Attachments: [24PDCMinutes1001](#)

A motion to approve the October 1, 2024 Planning, Design and Construction Committee meeting minutes was made by Shields and seconded by Picco. MOTION CARRIED with Bartlett and Erickson abstaining

2. Park District Enhancement Projects - Tiffani Picco

Review and discuss the enhancement projects to the Riverwalk proposed by the Naperville Park District

Attachments: [Proposed Riverwalk Enhancement Projects](#)

Picco reviewed the enhancement projects proposed for the Riverwalk that were included in the agenda packet. She noted that in addition to maintaining what we already have, Park District staff are focusing on what could be improved.

The first project would be in the Harmony Park area, where they would like to replace turf with native vegetation along the fence line, similar to the Prairie Nature Garden. This will also include the island bed to the east of Harmony Park where they will be removing invasive plants, replacing yews with decorative landscape plants, restoring two benches, and opening the view to the Paddleboat Quarry.

The second project is on the east side of the Dandelion Fountain by the stairs next to the covered bridge. They would like to remove the overgrown grasses and Russian sage that have taken over the bed and add in perennials to match the surrounding landscape. They would like to tie in a pocket of annual flowers near the light pole that will tie in with both sides of the pathway going toward the Veterans Plaza area. This would not only help to showcase the area but also provide a much better backdrop for photos of the fountain and the bridge.

The third project would be a landscape refresh by Main Street and the Horse Trough Fountain. The existing Siberian elm tree is declining and needs to be removed for safety concerns. It is scheduled for removal in fall

of 2024 and will be replaced with a new shade tree(s). The maple tree, redbud and Japanese tree lilacs will remain and they will work to improve the understory. It should improve the visual from across the river and make the entrance to the Riverwalk at Main Street more visually appealing.

Picco noted that the Naperville Riverwalk Foundation has offered to help fund these enhancement projects. The group expressed their appreciation to Picco and the Park District staff for the leadership with these projects and the stewardship of the Riverwalk. The group also thanked the Naperville Riverwalk Foundation for their support of these enhancements. Motta encouraged the group to explore the many projects taking shape that weren't included in this report.

E. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Riverwalk Accessibility Assessment by North Central College Occupational Therapy Students - Bill Novack

Receive and discuss the accessibility assessment of the Naperville Riverwalk prepared by the occupational therapy students from North Central College

Attachments: [Accessibility Assessment of the Naperville Riverwalk](#)

The occupational therapy students from North Central College conducted an accessibility assessment of the Naperville Riverwalk and provided a letter addressed to the Riverwalk Commission that was included with the agenda packet.

Dr. Makoni, Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy, acknowledged Novack for the opportunity to be a part of the meeting and explained the reasons for the assessment which, in addition to the professional development of the students, also creates an understanding of experiences for persons with physical and/or visual disabilities. She discussed the assessment provided by last year's class and noted their excitement with the implementation of several of their recommendations. She thanked the group and encouraged the continued cooperation.

Alyssa Pipken Heimbach spoke on behalf of the students in attendance. Their mobility assessment was conducted on September 16th and a printout of five total recommendations was distributed. They are noted as follows:

- 1) More Seating Options Along the Riverwalk:
 - Additional benches along the Riverwalk will provide more resting spots for individuals with limited mobility, seniors, and those with disabilities
 - Encourages longer stays and greater enjoyment of the space

- for all, regardless of one's physical ability
 - Can be expensive based on the quantity but will enhance safety and comfortability
- 2) Repairs to Weathered Brick & Concrete:
- Patching up locations on the Riverwalk where there are cracks and uneven surfaces will help to provide a smoother and safer path for all individuals
 - Reduces the risk of tripping and falls, especially for those using walkers and wheelchairs
 - More expensive but can be combined with other city projects to make more efficient
- 3) Additional Lighting on Overhead Signs:
- Adding additional lighting systems will help to improve visibility at night, especially for those with low vision
 - Caution signs allow time to adjust for safety
 - Reduces tripping hazards, provides notice of oncoming width of walkway, and potential oncoming hazards
 - Inexpensive to implement
- 4) Bumper Curb/Longer Railing:
- Addition of a bumper curb or extension of railing at the main ramp entrance
 - These additions would ensure the safety of accessible equipment users if they were to lose control of themselves or speed of their accessible equipment, preventing them from falling into the river
- 5) Education through Warning Signage:
- Adding these signs to exit/entrance areas
 - These signs would provide education to those with disabilities on what to expect and how to adapt to mobilization on the Riverwalk
 - Inexpensive to implement

Heimbach noted that after a recent meeting with Novack, they would be discussing two of the more feasible recommendations at this meeting which were 1) More Seating Options; and 4) Bumper Curb/Longer Railing (at lower walkway at entrance near Main Street).

She thanked the group for the changes that have already been made and reminded the group of the letter that was included in the agenda packet.

Kennedy thanked the group for these recommendations and the added value this provides to the overall Riverwalk experience. Discussion followed and it was noted that funds could be used from PA022 to advance these recommendations. The group discussed the one bench previously

added in the scalloped area of the lower walkway near the Amphitheater and the second potential location that was identified by Park District staff. Consensus from the group was that the additional bench should be added. Novack noted that the additional railing or bumper curb could be discussed for possible implementation next year.

Erickson acknowledged Mary Hamill, ACTF, and expressed appreciation for her perspective and involvement in making the Riverwalk a better experience for all.

Erickson inquired about the Access Now mobile app with the group advising they put in a rating for the Naperville Riverwalk.

Dr. Makoni advised there were thirty-eight total students from their class with many projects going on assisting with other areas of downtown Naperville including parking lots, parking garages, and train station access. Additional letters have been sent to the City of Naperville.

Novack thanked Dr. Makoni and the students for their engagement with the Naperville Riverwalk.

F. MEETING SCHEDULE:

Riverwalk Commission, November 13, 2024, 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Center NEU, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

Riverwalk Planning, Design & Construction, December 3, 2024, 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Center NEU, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

Riverwalk Commission, December 11, 2024, 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Center NEU, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

**Riverwalk Planning, Design & Construction, December 31, 2024, 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Center NEU, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

G. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Kennedy and seconded by Cowen. The meeting adjourned at 8:04 a.m. MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted by
Rebecca DeLarme, City Staff