

New Castle City Playground Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2024 – 5:30 p.m.
1 Municipal Boulevard, New Castle, DE

Members Present: Suzanne Swift, Chair
Andre Jerry
Judy Guttenplan
Nermin Zubaca

Absent: Brian Mattaway
Matthew Eide

Ms. Swift called the Playground sub-committee meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

A motion to begin the meeting was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2024, meeting as amended was made, seconded and unanimously passed.

Playground Equipment Update

Swing Height – Ms. Swift reported that the baby swings were 2” off the Federal approved minimum standard, and that has been fixed.

Swing Damage – Ms. Swift reported a safety bar that was damaged to Mr. Delgado and Kompan. Kompan is sending a replacement kit and advised that if it happens again they will replace the entire unit. Mr. Zubaca asked if the sub-committee could consider replacing the piece with something different if it becomes damaged again instead of having Kompan replace the same unit.

Rubberized Surface – Recreation Resources requested the cost based on removing the zip line from the estimate. The zip line will remain mulch.

- \$28,520 – Remove and dispose of existing playground mulch
- \$40,000 – Supply and install crush-and-run stone base for poured-in-place rubber surfacing
- \$293,340 –50% color/50% black Rubber Surface. Ms. Swift stated that the sub-committee should inspect the surfacing at locations where Recreation Resources has installed this particular type of surface.

Ms. Swift reported that the rubber surface will get hot (up to 140°F) and shading will be critical. Shading systems will be researched. Ms. Swift contacted Anna Wik, landscape architect, relative to making the natural surrounding a capstone project for University of Delaware students.

Leach School – Ms. Swift reported that representatives from the Leach School will tentatively visit parents, teachers and students to give feedback on what the sub-committee has done in Phase 1 and to look at Phase 2 and offer input.

Colonial School District – Mr. Zubaca asked Jeffrey Menzer, Colonial School District Superintendent, to attend the City Council meeting to discuss how the school district approached surfacing playgrounds and funding.

Mulch vs Rubberized Surface – Ms. Swift reported that the cost of mulch is \$12,090 for 600 yards.

AARP – Oncor will be submitting a grant to AARP for benches and shading. Ms. Swift asked Mr. Tom Clayton of the Trustees and the Senior Center to each supply a Letter of Support. Mr. Zubaca will speak with the City Solicitor to determine the best approach for either the City or a member of City Council to supply a Letter of Support as well.

City Budget – Mr. Zubaca reported that no new line items can be added to the FY 2023-24 City Budget; however, he will bring up funding for the playground when the FY 2024-25 City Budget is discussed.

Neighborhood Playgrounds Update

Buttonwood – Mr. Zubaca reported that Buttonwood qualifies to apply for a grant under the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. Ms. Swift opined that a resident of Buttonwood is needed to help. Mr. Zubaca noted that Mayor Leary and Councilperson Mattaway will be hosting an outreach program in Buttonwood in March, and suggested that Representative Cooke could provide a recommendation as well.

Bull Hill – Ms. Swift reported that Mr. Eide has made no further progress finding a member of the neighborhood to help with a neighborhood playground. She suggested that another member of the sub-committee assist Mr. Eide.

Dobbinsville – Mr. Zubaca suggested reaching out to Victor Bryson for help with passing the word to neighbors.

Ms. Swift opined that it would be best if a team of 2-3 from each neighborhood to work with the sub-committee could be established.

Miscellaneous

Outstanding Tasks – Mr. Jerry suggested assigning sub-committee or Oncor members to help with outstanding tasks. Ms. Swift opined that working on one project at a time is more manageable than trying to work on multiple neighborhood playgrounds at once. Mr. Zubaca opined that it could be more cost effective to work on multiple neighborhoods at the same time.

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Swift called for a motion to adjourn.

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A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion was unanimously passed, and the meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer