



CITY OF ATLANTA

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TIM KEANE
Commissioner

Office of Design

STAFF REPORT June 14, 2017

Agenda Item: Application for a Review and Comment (RC-17-260) for site work and new park facilities at 869 Joseph E Boone Blvd (Boone Park West). Property is zoned C-1 / Beltline

Applicant: Jill Kelleher
3445 Peachtree Rd.

Facts: This proposal is for a new park fronting Joseph E Boone Blvd., Proctor St., and Oliver St.

Analysis: The following code sections apply to this application:
Per Section 6-4043 of the Atlanta City Code:

- (7) The commission shall review the alteration, demolition, movement or construction of any structure, site or building which involves the use of capital expenditures by the City of Atlanta or capital expenditures by other public agencies or authorities which are required to submit plans for review by the city.

The proposal before the Commission would transform several large vacant parcels along Joseph E. Bonne Blvd., Proctor St., and Oliver St. into a new park. This project is the result of a planning process involving the community that began in 2010 with a green infrastructure vision plan for the area. The new park would include infrastructure which would allow both passive and active recreation. The property in question is one of the lowest lying properties in the upper watershed of Proctor Creek which has led to flooding events on the site which resulted in the demolition of the apartments which were previously located on this site. Storm water storage and rain gardens are proposed to mitigate the effects of runoff and flooding. The project will tie into the planned green street project along Joseph E Boone Blvd.

From the plans provided, it appears that no existing buildings will be demolished to accommodate the proposed park. The block in question contains two intact historic double shotgun homes on Oliver St., along with several extant historic residential and commercial structures on Proctor St. and Joseph E Lowery Blvd. along with non-historic infill. Staff suggests the Applicant clarify whether any future plans will include the removal of any vacant historic structures.

From the hardscape details provided, Staff finds that pervious concrete is proposed, but it is unclear to what extent it will be used in the proposed sidewalks and paths. Staff recommends the Applicant clarify to what extent pervious concrete will be used in the hardscape of the proposed park.

The project description notes infrastructure and programming that would support an outdoor classroom experience. While Staff notes several areas that could possibly serve this function, the exact location(s) for this use are unclear. Staff suggests the Applicant discuss their plans regarding the outdoor classroom experience infrastructure and the supporting programming.

Staff Recommendation: The Staff recommends that the Commission confirm that all the comments of the Commission and Staff have been delivered at the Commission meeting on the application for a Application for a Review and Comment (RC-17-260) for site work and new park facilities at **869 Joseph E Boone Blvd (Boone Park West)**.



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Agenda Item: Review and Comment (RC-17-270) for site work and new construction at **800 Cherokee Avenue (Grant Park)** - Property is zoned R-5.

Applicant: Alvin Dodson, City of Atlanta Office of Parks Design
233 Peachtree Street

Facts: The site work and new construction are located on the east side of Grant Park, along Boulevard between the Confederate and Ormewood Avenue intersections. While the heart of the project is a 1,000 vehicle parking deck, the project also includes a 2.5 acre green space, adjacent restaurant space, boardwalk viewing area, and bandstand on top of the parking deck; an enhanced storm water facility (and park amenity) to the west, a new/ enhanced entry to Zoo Atlanta from Boulevard, a plaza fountain, and a redesigned open space / “Lower Bowl” to the west. In addition, an enhanced section of the existing tiered parking lots remains to the south of the new parking deck (referred to as the “Upper Bowl”) that accommodates buses and an additional waiting area for Zoo Atlanta and park users.

Analysis: The following code sections apply to this application:

Per Section 6-4043 of the Atlanta City Code:

- (4) The commission shall review the proposed location and design of any proposed park and any plan or proposal for the relocation or significant change, alteration or addition to any existing park.
- (5) The commission shall review the proposed location and design of buildings, bridges, viaducts, elevated ways, streets, highways, gates, fences, railings, lamp standards, and other structure or fixtures to be erected or placed on land belonging to the city, or on any private or public property which extends over or upon any property or right-of-way owned or controlled by the city.

Overall Comments

The Staff finds that the project’s overall design is a comprehensive, creative and integrated response to a variety of challenges in Grant Park. Changes to City parks, given that they are public amenities, must be sustainable, reflect the changing interests of the constituents they must serve (both local and regional), respond to changes in visitation and access patterns, and take into account other development activity around them, including changes in transportation patterns.

At the same time, it is not clear from the submission how the proposed project aligns with the goals and priorities of mastering planning efforts for Grant Park. The Staff finds that proposed projects in a

park should align with the goals and priorities that have been established for the park as those goals and objectives provide direction to future decision making regarding physical, programmatic, or management proposals that might arise for that park. The Staff finds that it would be helpful to know how this proposal reflects any goals or priorities that might have been defined during the master planning process and the community engagement process that would have gone along with that process.

Further, the Staff finds that it would also be helpful to know how this design will fully support and integrate into the shift of the Zoo Atlanta entrance away from Cherokee Avenue which is described in the most current Zoo Atlanta Master Plan.

Specific Comments

Given that the submitted design is at the “conceptual submittal” stage per the narrative, the Staff assumes that the components, materials, architectural elements, and site planning arrangements might change as the design is finalized. At the same time, the Staff has the following comments about the design at this stage.

Pedestrian Circulation

While there is no question that the elimination of vast surface parking lots along Boulevard enhances the pedestrian experience along Boulevard and into the park, the Staff is somewhat concerned that there is not a more direct pedestrian path from Boulevard to the entrance to Zoo Atlanta. It would appear that the only such path is to the south of the parking garage along the Ormewood Avenue extension. This route would require someone coming from the north to double back to get to the Zoo Atlanta entrance. Near the Confederate Drive entrance, it seems like a pedestrian would have to go through some part of the parking garage (using an elevator or stairs, for instance) to get down to the path that would take you to the Zoo Atlanta entrance.

Landscape, Plantings, and Fixtures

The Staff would recommend that all of the plantings that are proposed for the project consist of native or semi-native species and that they be arranged so that clear site lines are created into and from the park, particularly since the park slopes down from the street

The Staff would also recommend that the various fixtures in the proposal (light poles, trash cans, benches, signs, etc.) are from a standard City of Atlanta park “palette” to allow for easier maintenance and replacement, as well as to reinforce that this park is part of a comprehensive and unified City of Atlanta park system.

Signage and Interpretation

Given the scale and visual prominence of the proposed project and its potential as another destination in the park), the Staff finds that it presents an opportunity to education visitors about the park, its place in Atlanta history, and the thoughts that went into the proposal itself. In particular, this could be done at the “Boardwalk Viewing Platform” as it would provide a vantage point to see a substantial portion of the park.

Design of Vehicle Access

While the Staff appreciates the use of the green and activated roof of the parking deck and the visually compelling screening on the “exposed” sides of the deck, it is concerned about the visual treatment of the vehicle entrance across from Confederate Avenue. The eastern-facing portions of this entrance will be completely visible from Boulevard and Confederate Avenue and as such care must be taken to

avoid this entrance ramp looking like a typical entrance to a parking garage. Similarly, the Staff is concerned that as this vehicle entrance emerges from the pedestrian overpass, it too is highly exposed to the park to the west. This portion of the vehicle access should be highly screened or visually enhanced to make the exposed portions interesting architectural features rather than just a vehicle access point.

Restaurant and Bandstand Design

The Staff is somewhat concerned about the very contemporary design of the proposed restaurant space and bandstand. Even though these components will be located on a clearly contemporary and non-historic parking deck, they will be located directly across the street from single-family, historic houses. Though their scale is in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood, the dramatic roofs and materials do not. The Staff does not think that the restaurant space or bandstand should replicate or try to copy a historic commercial building, but the Staff does find that given their highly visible location there could be ways to provide a bit more of a balance between the historic fabric of the neighborhood and the overall contemporary theme of the proposal.

Conclusions

Overall, the Staff supports the creation of an enhanced parking deck within the foot print of the current parking lot that addresses access, adds amenities to the park, and improve the aesthetics of this portion of the park.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Commission deliver its comments to the Applicant at the Commission meeting regarding Review and Comment (RC-17-270) for site work and new construction at **800 Cherokee Avenue (Grant Park)** - Property is zoned R-5.

