

Minutes of the March 9, 2011 Meeting of the McDuffie-Twin Parks Neighborhood Association

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM at the Art Center Design College, 5000 Marble Avenue NE. There were 38 attendees, including four board members. It was chaired by the Vice President, Bill Hoch. Also present were Barry Simon, secretary, Maya Gallegos, treasurer, and Carol Morris, member-at-large. City councilor, Mike Cook, was also present for most of the meeting.

The meeting began with introductions.

Twin Parks: Should we move forward on the Twin Parks project?

This is a summary of the comments expressed:

- Concern about traffic and usage
- Sheila ter Bruggen offered the possibility of her governmental department being able to do a traffic study if needed.
- Barry read comments from two emails, one in support and one opposed.
- Bill Hoch expressed the opinion that based on his experience working with Parks & Rec on other areas' parks, it was highly unlikely that anything would happen and so moving forward was not feasible.

The question was called and a vote was taken to the attendees: 1 in favor and 32 opposed. Then the Board voted with 0 in favor and all opposed. The Twin Parks project will not move forward.

Hidden Park:

This is a summary of the comments expressed in a general discussion of what to do with Hidden Park:

- There is a general sense among residents who border on Hidden Park that it has been neglected, although some neighbors like its rougher quality. Some commented on the different character of various area parks with Hidden Park being a bit more rough and wild, unlike Twin Park's clean, open space and Bataan Park's well-manicured look.
- Do not want to increase the usage of the park because of parking concerns. Having more traffic won't make it a better park.
- One resident described Hidden Park as an "off-leash park."
- One long time resident on the park said the real problem is the design of the sprinkler system, suggesting the current one be dug up and replaced with one that distributes water more uniformly, instead of the current one which, when it works, leaves some areas dry while forming mud puddles in other areas. "If we do one thing for Hidden Park, a new sprinkler system." He also suggested that bringing in some dirt to fill pot holes would be a good idea.
- One resident who lives on the park suggested putting in pedestrian friendly lighting as opposed to stadium lighting. A long time resident said that such lighting used to be in the park but it was vandalized. However, he suggested that this happened during a time when there was a lot more vandalism in the park, something there is less of today. Another resident suggested fixing the broken lights in the park.
- There were many comments regarding dogs running off-leash and the dog poop left behind. One resident suggested more garbage cans and another said there are already cans there. Another resident who lives on the park said that neighbors put out plastic bags for dog owners to use to clean up after their pet.

- Some residents do not use the park because of the number of dogs that are running around in it. One long term resident never brought her children to the park as they were growing up because of the dogs and poop. Another resident said she always brought her children to the park.
- There was a concern for water usage in maintaining the park.
- There was a suggestion to restructure the park, creating pathways with gardens, xeriscaping, places to relax, meditate and just walk.
- Another resident said she feels safe going into the park at night and would hate to see it become different than it currently is.
- Some attendees like the character of the park as it exists now. Some are attracted by Hidden Park's "softness." Fearful of what hard surfaces like crushed gravel and xeriscaping might do to the park.
- One resident on the park did not want a track or walking path placed on the outside perimeter of the park because it feels as if the people are walking in their backyards because they are so close to the houses' fences.
- There were comments regarding graffiti. People were told they could call 311 when they see graffiti and the city would address it. Another resident said she had called 311 in the past and got very little response.
- Barry again read from the two e-mails. One was from a resident who lives on the park and likes the idea of a pathway on the perimeter if it dealt effectively with the tree roots that stick up all over the park. She also commented on how, when the sprinkler system failed in the summer of 2010, residents watered the trees from their own water supplies. Once the system was fixed, the grass was left uncut and so residents started mowing it. It took a long time for the city to get the park on a regular maintenance schedule.
- The other email stated, "The city cannot afford to provide more "play" areas for adults to jog and workout at the hands of already over-taxed residents. Let's spend money wisely! Building adult "playgrounds" and adding street obstructions is NOT a prudent use of funds. This agenda item shouts of special interest."

Mike Cook commented that he was unaware of the state of Hidden Park. He stated he has funds to take care of the maintenance and more, although he believes Parks & Rec should be using their funds for maintenance. He said he will check with Parks & Rec to see what the problem is. Bill Hoch volunteered to give him a list of the maintenance issues and Cook said that once he has spoken with Barbara Baca of Parks & Rec, he would report back to Bill.

Meanwhile, seven residents have volunteered to be on the Hidden Park's committee in order to plan its future.

Traffic

This is a summary of the comments expressed on the question of what to do about traffic and traffic calming:

- Sheila ter Bruggen suggested that rather than starting directly on a specific project to address traffic concerns, a Traffic Committee should be formed in order to address the situation with an overall design plan.
- The question of using speed bumps came up and Sheila again addressed the desire for an overall plan rather than band-aid projects that address a specific street or corner.
- Several issues regarding a traffic study were brought up: how would cars be counted, at what times, would the study merely address the number of cars or would it provide suggestions on traffic calming and, most of all, how would it be paid for.

- One resident said she has seen how, for example, speed bumps will be put on one street and then the traffic moves over to the street without the bumps. In short, someone else will suffer because of a solution. She also mentioned that where she currently lives she feels safe walking but can see how other areas may have more traffic and safety issues.
- One resident observed that our streets are so wide they invite speeding.
- Sheila offered to present again the presentation she did before on ways to modify our neighborhood in order to make it friendlier to the residents.
- Barry read the comments from the two emails. One resident was totally against any kind of traffic calming, writing, “Does our neighborhood really need to compete with surrounding areas by touting bigger, better and more annoying speed bumps, more closed streets and perhaps a silly round-about or two?” The other email told the story of cars roaring around their corner and one car, in particular, that rounded the corner too fast, crashed into a wall and ended up in a neighbor’s yard.

Mike Cook talked about the fact that the traffic department makes modifications difficult to achieve. Plus, residents have different opinions about these traffic calming strategies that add to the reluctance of the department to do anything.

A Traffic Committee was formed that will begin to look at an overall traffic plan for our neighborhood association.

Modifications to the By-Laws

It was determined that this can only be done at the general meeting in September. And so these modifications were tabled until then.

Finally, a committee was formed to create area captains. They would be overseeing specific areas of our Neighborhood Association, coordinating neighbors, and informing them of important information. Beverly Dale who is the block captain for Marble Avenue will help “train” these new captains. At this moment we have one volunteer.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM. The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 8, 2011, and will be held at the Art Center Design College, 5000 Marble Avenue NE.