

Mason Mill Park – Master Plan MEETING SUMMARY

SUBJECT: Mason Mill Park Master Plan - First Public Meeting
DATE: September 25, 2008
PLACE: DeKalb Recreation Center, Mason Mill Park
PRESENT: DeKalb County: John Anderson, Marvin Billips
MACTEC: Ron Huffman, Charlie Phillips, Jon Hart, Nadine Levy (UpBuild Design)

The following items were discussed at the first public meeting for the Mason Mill Park Master Plan. The discussion points are organized by major items with individual comments, suggestions, and concerns listed with bullets.

Tennis Center

- need handicapped (ADA) access to upper level of building
- need to keep all courts
- existing bleachers (pyramid-style structure) is good for viewing matches
- complex is well used/desired (Local, National and International competitions have been held at this facility)
- restroom facilities need to be upgraded
- age of structure is beginning to show
- add practice wall(s)
- need food concession facility
- court lighting needs to be adjusted to USTA standards
- consider replacing the “pyramid” and utilizing the resultant space for new facilities
- need to provide recycling facilities
- maintenance issues need to be considered, especially trash that doesn’t get picked up
- there is too much parking
- consider removing some of the parking and re-utilize the resulting space; it is rare that the parking lot fills to capacity

Dog Park

- add more benches and water fountains
- stormwater drainage is a problem – the surface of the dog park is consistently wet
- add paved path as long as possible with

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- add trash cans
- make park accessible to dogs without requiring leashes, i.e. “free range” dog park

Walking Trails - connectivity

- soften existing Path development
- access into park should be “gentle”
- access from Desmond Drive to the rest of Mason Mill Park needs to be provided
- the park needs to provide access for both pedestrians and bicyclists
- bathroom facilities throughout the park
- more planting for beautification is needed throughout the park
- reestablish historic access points into the park
- prefer to see character of the park retain a “nature preserve” quality, i.e. not highly developed
- better connectivity between Library and the recreation center e.g. “Village Green” in Smyrna
- more handicapped-accessible parking and restrooms are needed in the Life Enrichment Center
- conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles exist at the upper level access to the recreation center
- need to consider senior users: speed of traffic along McConnell Drive is unsafe
- who are the potential future users of the park? what is the demographics for this area?
- need more active recreation opportunities to attract younger park users
- to accommodate more younger families and children
- need more access to more areas of the park
- consider maintaining the division (via Train Track) between active and passive parts of the park
- maintain Community Garden
- need to provide connectivity with Milton park
- more serviceable bridge
- How close can we build to the railroad? [CSX has a 100 foot wide right-of-way, 50 feet wide each side of the train tracks]
- drainage from existing areas currently runs thru gullies - the potential exists for increased erosion
- need replanting around the new PATH corridor
- need to complete connection (from Melton Park to Mason Mill Park)

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- PATH allows safe way for children to bicycle (and parents)
- existing track around field is very narrow, consider a measured walking trail
- Connectivity across the RR tracks is needed

Waterworks

- needs to be refurbished
- area surrounding the water works is a National Register of Historic Places district
- relate water works to contemporary issues: water conservation
- history of water works could be displayed with exhibits
- “Water Museum” could be a theme for the renovation
- Need to consider safety
- There are standing water issues at the site
- Erosion has occurred on some of the paths in this area
- consider marked paths
- needs to be assessable
- interpretation/conservation are good themes for this area
- consider educational opportunities

Natural Areas

- Consider re-building the dam (historic water works) and providing a pond in the park.
- Need to treasure Mason Mill Park as a forest preserve
- Need to Consider educational opportunities
- need to preserve the forest
- native species, including fungus and mushrooms, need to be protected
- need permanent protection of existing trees
- promote more healthy lifestyle
- need to preserve the beaver pond area
- add an observation deck for viewing the beaver pond

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- What is the frequency of flooding?
- need to make stream buffers larger than county standard

Off Road Bicycling

- Off-road bicyclists are currently utilizing the park
- not a mausoleum
- must account for all generations when planning for the park
- need to consider the site's pre-history/archeology

Other comments:

- A playground is needed
- Need to consider opportunities for age blending – e.g. playground near garden
- There is an effort in the area to develop a new senior center in the Toco Hills area. A Community Development Block Grant will fund this effort. The building is currently too small for the desired programs.
- The park needs to have the flexibility to utilize multiple age groups.