

GLC Open Forum
Wednesday November 10, 2010
Marriott Long Wharf
6:30 -8:30 PM

GLC Members: Ann Thornburg, Dave Seeley, Dave Queeley, Dan Nuzzo, Donna Freni, James Chan, Christian Scorzoni, Francine Gannon

RKG Staff: Nancy Brennan, Kate Miller, Jesse Brackenbury, Tom Smarr, Darryl Milton, Lisa Mykyta, Ellen Lempereur

Guest Panel: Bud Ris, Toni Pollak, Vivian Li

Minutes

Ann Thornburg welcomed everyone to the GLC open forum and presented briefly to set the tone of the meeting. Following her powerpoint presentation she called on the RKG staff to discuss in general terms the progress on the park over the last year in the areas of horticulture, programs and operations.

Tom Smarr was first to present on horticulture and highlighted several improvements including the moving forward with vermiculture and organic certification for staff, furthering maintenance improvements, working to train the Green and Grow apprentices and expanding the volunteer program.

Tom Fielded questions from the audience on issues ranging from dealing with the homeless population in the park, developing a winter maintenance plan, concerns with specific physical structures on the park and parcel 13 (AHP)

Kate Gilbert Miller presented on the RKG's program department, highlighting the many successful events that have taken place in the parks and the partnerships that allowed many of them to happen (Liberty Credit Union, Mix 92.5). Kate also discussed the Conservancy's use of social media to get the word out to the public and better connect them to the parks. The progress on winter programming and other creative off season programming was also discussed. Public art remains a key part of overall programming on the Greenway, Kate talked about the success of pieces like Botanica and the Big Hammock and the Conservancy's efforts to install new pieces over time.

Kate fielded questions ranging from social media, winter programming, fundraising, and took many suggestions on what the community want to see including ice skating, a winter market and more interactive public art pieces. Many of these suggestions were also mentioned in the GLC survey.

Ann Thornburg introduced Dave Seeley to present an overview of the survey results. Dave Seeley noted that there were over 140 responses to the survey which focused on questions such as how often do you visit the Greenway, what type of audience would you like to have programming for in the parks, which section(s) of the park would you like to see programmed more, which activities do you most enjoy, what types of live music would you prefer and how do you generally learn about Greenway activities.

Jesse Brackenbury updated those present on the status of several projects overseen by operations including installation of a cohesive way finding signage system, the addition of tables and chairs, WiFi and food vending.

Jesse Fielded questions including the prospect of a permanent café on the Greenway, what will the balance between green space and new structures/construction on the park be? Will there be additional bi-lingual services for events/community outreach. The issue of the safety of Botanica was also addressed. The question of bathrooms and additional lighting were also discussed with the members of the public.

The Conservancy team as a group manages such questions as will there be additional weekend programming? Are there plans to increase the volunteer program and will there be opportunities off hours and on weekends for this group? Are there plans for a pool on the Greenway? Has the Conservancy considered a holiday market or skating in the parks? Shirley Kressell again questioned the Green & Grow program

Bud Ris - The Aquarium is at the front door of the greenway. This park helps businesses thrive by increasing attendance at venues on the edges of the park. The horticulture is spectacular, new signage has greatly improved the usability of the park. Skateboard deterrents are a huge success, the fountains are amazing – would be great to increase the water pressure to really showcase their capability. The Conservancy should look for signature seasonal events in the park and look for ways to draw people down the length of the park.

Toni Pollak - Toni has been involved in the Greenway for almost 20 years. The park is fabulous and will continue to grow and evolve over time the same way the Boston Common has. The Greenway is unique in that being still a young park, it can do test marketing without the restrictions with using public funds. It will be important moving forward to find a balance of programs on the Greenway with events/programming that the City is doing. Long term planning is important – what will the park look like 40-50 years from now? The wide sidewalks provide an opportunity to continue to activate the edges along the Greenway to add to the activation of the park. More play equipment for children will also bring more activity to the park. Bike lanes should be studied to see if they can be incorporated in the park as well. The development of a Tanglewood shed for music/programming in bad weather is also important to consider. Running is so important in the City, warm up equipment and proposed routes on the Greenway would be great including charity walks/runs as well. Finally, new thematic gardens in the parks would be an innovative way to increase activity as well.

Vivian Li - Public art key component to Greenway's success – the big hammock and the process by which the community played a role in creating it was great! The addition of food vending is amazing Clover in particular! The Carousel is always a draw for the park and at \$3 a ride it is still a bargain. The addition of the planters in Chinatown added so much to that neighborhood. Would it be possible for the RKG to consider a "Beach" in the parks like they do in Paris and bring in sand, games, water feature? A winter festival in the parks like the city of Quebec does every year would be a great off season draw. The Conservancy should be thinking about ways to better connect the Greenway to the harbor and the waterfront neighborhoods. The RKG also needs to focus more marketing to folks who live outside the City but use the water taxi, blue line. How does the Harbor Islands Pavilion fit in with the park? Additional bathrooms will be critical as the park grows. The Conservancy should also revamp the MP3/audio tours. More trees need to be planted and promotional materials need to be reviewed to really sell the park, language and work choice is critical.