

Greenway Leadership Council Meeting
June 25, 2009
8:00 – 10:00 AM
Channel Point Conference Center

Attendance

Leadership Council: Mike Cantalupa, Dawn Chavez, Chris Colbert, Francine Gannon, Dave Queeley, Dave Seeley, Ann Thornburg

Greenway Conservancy Staff: Steve Anderson, Nancy Brennan, Priscilla Bradley, Linda Jonash, Alexandra Lee, Linda Jonash

Guests: Matt Conti, Peter Gori, Shirley Kressel, John McQueen, Tom Nally, Tom Palmer, Bob Turner, Vivien Li

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Ann Thornburg welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Greenway Leadership Council. Each person in the room introduced himself/herself.

The meeting was called for the purpose of reviewing the Greenway Conservancy's draft of proposed Park Use Guidelines and Fee Schedule for Public Programs, Special Events and General Use. The guidelines were published on the website three weeks ago and an email sent to 70 individuals, organizations and community groups for comment. To date we have received no comments, but we will expand the list and encourage individuals to use the site and the comment mechanism. Having comments in advance of meetings is helpful so that individual GLC members can review and think about them ahead of time. The GLC will continue to look for new ways to reach out to all the communities and organizations and seek input and ideas.

Because the GLC was delayed in forming, there is a critical need to have the guidelines approved before summer has passed. The GLC agreed to review and make comments on the guidelines, ask for comments from other meeting attendees and vote on the guidelines. Because these must be submitted to the Board for a July vote, the GLC decided to vote at this meeting and submit the result to the Board with observations. As a matter of policy, the GLC will generally strive for a less hurried process in reviewing and providing recommendations.

II. Review of Organizational Work of GLC

The GLC held an organizational meeting on June 24 to discuss administrative and other items. Among the topics discussed were community outreach and how the council could expand ways to seek input, get people to the parks and encourage participation in matters affecting the Greenway; administrative issues such as meetings and how members work together; governance issues such as how to define and disclose conflicts of interest.

III. Summer 2009 Programs

Director of Public Programs and Education Alexandra Lee presented the 2009 schedule of weekly and monthly programs and the organizations who are program partners. Most

programs are created and presented predominantly by individuals and groups, and are sponsored by the Conservancy, non-profit or commercial organizations. She also reported on several educational outreach efforts that are bringing students from many different schools and groups to the Greenway, among them the Perkins School for the Blind, the Josiah Quincy School and the Boys and Girls Clubs. In addition the Green and Grow Program begins this summer with two interns, followed by a first “class” of seven to eight apprentices in the fall.

Also, the Conservancy is producing a visitor map and guide to the Greenway that will include other attractions and amenities close to the Greenway.

Ann Thornburg noted that she would like this kind of information shared at every meeting so that the GLC can be well informed about plans and programs.

Executive Director Nancy Brennan noted that, like most organizations in the uncertain economic climate, the Conservancy is attempting to do more with less. We are trying to develop a funding structure that makes the important educational and public programming outlined in our business plan work. Our belief is that collaboration between the Conservancy and the wide variety of organizations will make these parks an enriching public experience.

Public Use Guidelines

The draft Public Use Guidelines were written to be clear and user-friendly for organizations and community groups who want to use the Greenway for an activity, and to balance encouraging active public use with responsible care of the lawns and horticultural collections.

The process to date has been:

- The Conservancy asked Boston Parks for their regulations and used them as a template.
- We looked at linear parks around the country and reviewed their guidelines.
- We developed an initial draft, then sent them to the both the City and DCR for review, and made subsequent revisions.
- We posted the draft on the Conservancy’s website and sent links to 70 heads of neighborhood groups, resident associations, representative individuals from the public and private sectors, and non-profit groups, asking them to both give us any comments they had, and to distribute the draft to their membership/friends/neighbors.

Once approved, the resulting Guidelines will be reviewed again at the end of this season and also at the end of 2010.

Alexandra Lee explained the application process and the fee structure to cover Conservancy administrative costs.

The next steps are to

- revise the guidelines to incorporate observations from this meeting,
- post the revised guidelines on the website and invite further public comments

The Conservancy Board will receive the revised guidelines and observations and vote on them at their July meeting.

Ann Thornburg then asked for comments from the GLC and the meeting attendees. A synopsis is included on the attached sheet.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Greenway Leadership Council VOTED to approve in concept the draft Park Use Guidelines and Fee Structure for Public Programming, Special Events and General Use with observations to be incorporated and submitted to the Conservancy Board of Directors.

Ann Thornburg thanked the GLC and other attendees for their thoughtful input, lively discussion and active participation.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 AM.

Attachment

June 25, 2009 Public Meeting Park Use Guidelines and Fee Structure Questions and Comments

Note: These are notes, not verbatim comments; they are shortened and paraphrased and in no particular order. Responses by the Conservancy to each of the questions or comments were not completely recorded with the questions.

Mike Cantalupa: It looks like the fees are duration-based. Is there consideration for expanded events and greater fees – when people need to use more than one park?

Dawn Chavez: How have you addressed the walks (like Breast Cancer, Life is Good) that have already taken place? Will they be part of the fee schedule? (The answer is yes.)

Dave Seeley: Organized Athletic Events --Who is making the call on whether an activity is okay or not (for example, the difference between two teenagers throwing a ball hard vs. a young boy and dad playing catch)? In the City Parks or Leventhal Park, there are rangers there on the spot for any infraction of the rules. It seems like you have to have a Conservancy person on site. Or you will have to limit events based on staff, right?

Note response from City Parks Commissioner Toni Pollak: The signage issue is critical because police or rangers cannot enforce the rules unless they are posted. There is also always a need for an onsite staff person or persons, particularly during setup and break down but also during events. For the City, these are regular staff who are paid overtime.

Chris Colbert: For corporate events, you could look at it as a fee or as a sponsorship opportunity.

Dave Queeley: Should we consider lowering the price for non-profits and have businesses pay a premium, particularly for larger events? We really want to encourage many organizations to participate, from all over the city and elsewhere.

Francine Gannon: With the exception of the carousel, everything is free, is that right? Is that the intent? What if someone wants have an event and charge for an event? (Conservancy response: These are free events that do not exclude anyone who wants to participate. We would not allow an event for which there is a charge, or that blocks anyone from participating.)

Note from Toni Pollak: When the City parks have a large free event, we encourage a generous contribution, but do not yet charge fees.

Tom Palmer: For those events for which you are looking for funding, how much would each of these cost?

Peter Gori: Have you found the performance panels useful?

John McQueen: We need more music, especially acoustic music, that would appeal to a broad audience and more public art. There is a lot of support for this. A group like the Mass College of Art might be very helpful. Perhaps there are groups from the college that would be willing to come and perform during the summer.

Vivien Li: Very impressed with the variety and types of performances you have brought to the Greenway. Thanked the Conservancy for putting the Park Use Guidelines on line and offered these suggestions:

1. In the guiding principles, you need to reinforce that the parks belong to everyone and are open to all. That the Greenway is not a place where accessibility to what is happening will be closed off. Private weddings, events will not be allowed because they restrict access. We should emphasize the democratic nature of these places.
2. Skateboarding, bicycles – need to add a phrase about why it's not allowed – the conflict between pedestrians and riders, the public safety element.
3. Dog Policy – Need to strengthen the language from “encouraged” to “required”.
Note: Dawn Chavez suggested that you don't need any phrase because that kind of phrase is not used in any of the other items.
4. Is there a fee for service that the City would provide because of public safety?
5. Restrooms: Need to change phrasing to “if the event applicant desires”.
6. Don't include the \$250 fee for failing to remove equipment on time in the Park Use Guidelines, but in the fee schedule.
7. MassPort may also be a good source of input for what we are trying to do.

John McQueen: There's a real need for wayfinding maps and notices of what to do where.

Francine Gannon: Could you have an event board that lists what's going on when in each of the parks?

Dave Seeley: Hearing about the requests you have had makes me wonder if we are getting only a small percentage of what is out there for sponsorships.

Matt Conti: The document reads as if it is encouraging event. Is this the goal? The impact on the neighborhoods needs to be considered, both in the number and types of events. He encourages the GLC to limit the number of events. You have to retain and lift up the ability to say “no”. There is a feeling that the City permit process is out of control. You can see that if you are going to have a lot of activity, it will affect

businesses in the North End and encourage them to do events that are not loud and disruptive. Make sure that there are no roped off events. Also make sure there are decibel limits. The fee schedule for for-profits is much too low, would like to see it at a \$10,000 minimum.

Shirley Kressel: Is very concerned that the Greenway is becoming a venue instead of a public park. Fees will give the Conservancy incentives to have more events, more sponsored events. There has been \$10million of public money put into this before anything happened. Where is that money? She does not want branding, list of sponsors. This leads to trading of favors, not by the Conservancy but by others behind the scenes. Trades make for favors as a result of these trades. Showing kids corporate logos makes them benefactors that imply we couldn't have these activities and parks without them. She wants them to be open space rather than corporate parks. She would like the Conservancy to step back and consider what the public realm really means. The GLC should take it back to being a public park.

Ann Thornburg: Wants to bring more people to the parks who haven't yet seen them, may not even know where they are. We should find ways to do this.

Dave Seeley: Thinks we should hold Shirley's ideals as a standard and make sure we do not try to always fund the parks through sponsorships. We also should be mindful that sponsorships are not ideal and should strive for truly public use, public good in every venue.

Shirley Kressel: Her own research says that it would cost \$500,000 to \$1 million to care and manage this very park. It is absolutely incredible that we feel the need to find this kind of money to manage something that should cost less than a million.

Peter Gori: Suggestion for bicycle language is "Please dismount and walk your bike." Also thought it would be worth considering giving local and Commonwealth groups some preferential treatment when they want to bring events and activities to the parks. On another matter, the placards in the windows of vendors are okay but we might want to consider getting a batch of "Vendor – Greenway" magnetic signs that are really easily seen. Would use the word "recommended", not "preferred" event planners.

Francine Gannon: Consider bike racks in various places along the Greenway.

Tom Palmer: I don't think need should drive what you do (in terms of sponsorships, etc.) But we live in a market society and generally they work better than government organizations. He thinks that kids are a lot smarter (about branding and marketing) than Shirley does.