

Hyde Park residents offer suggestions for Fairmount Greenway

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Staff Reporter

With three enlarged images of the Fairmount corridor at their disposal, Hyde Park residents offered their suggestions on Feb. 24 about which areas should be made into open recreational green spaces along the path.

The Southwest Boston Community Development Corporation (SWBCDC), which is partnering with a number of other CDCs from Dorchester and Mattapan, as part of the Fairmount Greenway Task Force, hosted the event, along with the local community group, "All Things Hyde Park."

Mike Feloney, the director of the SWBCDC, said the consulting firm of Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge received plenty of input from the community.

"They were trying to get a sense of what would people want to get out of the greenway, in terms of the types of uses, whether there were destinations within Hyde Park that should be really accessible off the greenway so that maybe we could create some bike or pedestrian access highlighted off the greenway," he said.

In 2008, the Fairmount Collaborative was awarded a grant to

create a greenway to connect neighborhoods and areas of the city. The green spaces consist of walking pathways and parks, and could be used as areas for picnics and gardens, as well as areas for outdoor activities.

Originally, the collaborative was able to identify 50 properties for development, which were then narrowed down to 15. These 15 locations were presented in a community forum in March of last year, where eight were selected. Those eight were presented at the Feb. 24 meeting, but most of the time was spent hearing suggestions from the audience.

Four main issues were brought up at the meeting. First, the residents in attendance wanted to ensure that the greenway would allow for pedestrian access, as well as bicycling use.

"Initially bikers were talking about how great it would be, and then other people had concerns about whether this was going to be a bike path or if this was going to be for everyone," said Christopher Knoper, community organizer for the SWBCDC. "We really reiterated the point that this path was really for everyone, and

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we wanted to explore studies that have been used to make sure that there isn't that tension between the two types of uses or any other uses as well."

The second point of emphasis from the residents was the desire to have connections to and from the Neponset River.

Third, those in attendance mentioned a possible connection to other points of interest in the area and other open spaces, such as Reservation Road, the Stony Brook Reservation and Camp Meigs.

Finally, the idea of a neighborhood identity and theme for Hyde Park's portion of the greenway was discussed.

Feloney said the proposed themes generally fell into one of three categories. Some ideas were related to the manufacturing history of the neighborhood, in relation to the Neponset, as well as other sources of employment, such as the paper mill and other major manufacturers.

Another theme centered on the arts scene in Hyde Park. "This has more of a current connotation in terms of how Hyde Park has become a destination for artists," said Feloney.

The final category was about the green environmental open spaces that are scattered throughout Hyde Park.

Other areas that residents circled on the enlarged maps included connections to the business district along Fairmount Avenue as well as the charter school and Hyde Park High School.

"They got a lot of great feedback," said Knoper.

CSS will incorporate some of the ideas from the meeting into their next presentation. There will be at least two more Greenway meetings to map out which areas will ultimately get redeveloped.