



Fountain Hills/Pacific Meadows Homeowners Association Place Game Workshop

Kiewit Middle School

Aug. 21, 2008

Introduction

The Fountain Hills/Pacific Meadows Neighborhood Association partnered with Omaha by Design to host a Place Game workshop the evening of Aug. 21 at Kiewit Middle School. Association members and local residents were invited to participate. Thirteen people attended.

Segments Evaluated

Three segments of the FH/PM Homeowners Association were selected for evaluation: the island entrances, the north end of Pacific Meadows Park and the south end of Pacific Meadows Park.

Evaluation Tools

Workshop participants were asked to evaluate their segment of the FH/PM Homeowners Association according to the four criteria outlined below, which rank responses on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree."

Comfort and image

- Attractive
- Feels safe
- Clean/well maintained
- Comfortable places to sit

Access and linkage

- Identifiable from a distance
- Walkable
- Accessible by transit
- Clean information/signage

Uses and activities

- Good mix of activities
- Frequent community events
- Busy area
- Economic vitality

Sociability

- People in groups

- Evidence of volunteerism
- Sense of pride and ownership
- Children and seniors present

Workshop participants also were instructed to ask persons who were in the place being evaluated what they liked about it and what they would do to improve it.

General Observations

The streets and public spaces of the Fountain Hills/Pacific Meadows Homeowners Association reflect a strong sense of neighborhood pride. Homes, lawns and gardens are well kept, and residents seem genuinely interested in making their corner of the city a better place for people of all ages.

In terms of the four criteria outlined above, workshop participants ranked the neighborhood's access and linkage as its best asset with an average score of 3.28. Comfort and image was a close second with an average score of 3.2, followed by sociability at 3.19, and uses and activities at 2.91.

This group values the area's mature trees, physical layout, open spaces and accessibility by foot, bike and car. Concerns fall into two general categories – maintenance of existing amenities/areas and the need for new amenities to boost the uses and activities component of the area's public spaces.

In terms of the island entrances, suggestions for improvement ranged from adding solar lights to developing a low-maintenance landscaping plan that would be applied to each island. This plan, which needs some type of "pizzazz" component, would create a strong visual identity for the association and build upon the strong sense of neighborhood pride already present.

In terms of Pacific Meadows Park, suggestions for short-term improvements ranged from purchasing new, anchored trash cans to involving local garden clubs in beautifying and maintaining portions of the park to adding "doggie waste" stations along the trail. Suggestions for long-term improvements focused on adding new equipment to the park, "rehabilitating" the existing tennis and basketball courts, and leveling the soccer field.

One of the more innovative ideas that surfaced in both the short-term and long-term suggestions for improvement categories was establishing fitness stations along the trail. Another innovative idea was dividing the trail into walking and biking sides - much like the pedestrian section of the Brooklyn Bridge in NYC - to address the concerns of park users re: fast-moving cyclists through the trail section of the park (this idea failed to attract any votes, however).

Next Steps

The next stage in the placemaking process is holding a Place Definition workshop. In this workshop, a small group of stakeholders takes the ideas generated from the Place Game process and begins to develop a plan that will help transform them into reality.

For more information about the Place Definition process or to schedule a workshop, contact Teresa Gleason at 402.554.4011 or teresa@omahabydesign.org.

Short-Term Improvements

- Lights – solar? (island) 2
- Clean up the island and the school 2
- Tree trimming (island) 1
- New trash cans, anchored (n. park)
- New, maintenance free picnic tables (n. park) 2
- Remove grills (n. park) 1
- Publicize garden clubs (n. park) 3
- Doggie bags (n. park)
- Neighborhood Watch (n. park)
- Place barriers at entrances (planters)
- More soccer goals (s. park)
- Clean up the back trail area (s. park) 1
- Seating (s. park)
- Line dividing the trail for walkers and riders (s. park)
- Exercise stations along the trail (s. park) 1
- Doggie waste stations (s. park)

Long-Term Improvements

- Low-maintenance landscape plan (islands) 2
- Build neighborhood image, need for “pizzazz” (islands) 1
- Water fountain (n. park)
- New equipment - shelter, play area, tennis (n. park) 3
- Fitness trail (n. park) 1
- Parking (n. park)
- Remove tennis courts/basketball court (n. park) 2
- Full basketball court (n. park)
- Public art (s. park)
- Water fountain (s. park)
- Fix tennis courts and basketball courts (s. park) 2
- Frisbee course (s. park)
- Gazebo (s. park)
- Fence by back area and trees by soccer area
- Level soccer area (s. park)
- Restrooms (s. park)

GROUP 1 – island entrances

What do you like best about this place?

- Mature trees
- Sign
- Lights
- Some of the planting
- Island shape
- Flower beds

What is the biggest problem with this place?

- Lack of maintenance
- Lack of consistency between islands
- Not welcoming

- Sidewalks cracked and broken, restricted by evergreens (156th St. entrance)
- Bland/sterile
- Age of trees
- Snowplow damage
- Lack of plant variety

List three things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot.

- Lights – solar?
- Clean up the island and the school
- Tree trimming

What three changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

- Low-maintenance landscape plan
- Build neighborhood image, need for “pizzazz”

Comments from users of the place.

Not available.

What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed activities? Please be as specific as possible.

- City
- Schools (UNO, MCC)
- High school volunteers
- Boy Scouts
- Keep Omaha Beautiful

GROUP 2 – Pacific Meadows Park (north end)

What do you like best about this place?

- Trail
- Variety of activities
- Open space
- Accessibility
- Volunteers

What is the biggest problem with this place?

- Maintenance
- Outdated facilities
- Teenagers at night
- Tennis courts
- Edging around play area
- Sand burrs
- Soccer parking
- Pavilion and play area

List three things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot.

- New trash cans, anchored
- New, maintenance free picnic tables
- Remove grills
- Publicize garden clubs
- Doggie bags

- Neighborhood Watch
- Place barriers at entrances (planters)

What three changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

- Water fountain
- New equipment (shelter, play area, tennis)
- Fitness trail
- Parking
- Remove tennis courts/basketball court
- Full basketball court

Comments from users of the place.

- Likes the trail
- Tennis courts need resurfacing

What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed activities? Please be as specific as possible.

- S&W Fence
- Eric Crouch's company for equipment
- Millard North service project
- St. Wenceslaus
- Lawn companies in the neighborhood
- Dave Fulton (communications guru)
- Gary Mazour (financial wizard)

GROUP 3 – Pacific Meadows Park (south end)

What do you like best about this place?

- Open
- Well maintained
- Room to play
- Sledding hill
- Safe, due to many activities
- Trail
- Established trees
- Attractive layout
- Accessibility
- Close parking

What is the biggest problem with this place?

- Storm damage on back trail
- Fast bikers
- Trees on sled area
- Tennis court maintenance
- Balls go into trees
- Unlevel play areas
- No water fountain or restroom
- Lack of trail maintenance

List three things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot.

- More soccer goals
- Clean up the back trail area

- Seating
- Line dividing the trail for walkers and riders
- Exercise stations along the trail
- Doggie waste stations

What three changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

- Public art
- Water fountain
- Fix tennis courts and basketball courts
- Frisbee course
- Gazebo
- Fence by back area and trees by soccer area
- Level soccer area
- Restrooms

Comments from users of the place.

- Open, multi-use
- Fence by back trees
- Big kids slide
- Refinish tennis courts
- If more activities take place, south parking needs to be expanded.

What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed activities? Please be as specific as possible.

- Soccer clubs
- S&W Fence
- City
- Schools (Kiewit Middle School)
- Papio trails
- Neighborhood associations