



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB 04/17/08
Item # 3

April 11, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Deputy Director, Department of Parks *MR*
Doug Alexander, Acting Chief, Park Development Division *DA*

FROM: Michael Ma, Acting Supervisor, Project Management Section *MM*
Ellen Masciocchi, Park Development Division *EM*

SUBJECT: Donation Project for Linda Weiner Memorial at the Bethesda Capital Crescent Trail Plaza

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve the proposed design of the Linda Weiner Memorial for construction at the Bethesda Capital Crescent Trail Plaza.

SUMMARY

This public-private partnership project is funded by a donation and proposes to renovate one of the busiest trailheads along the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) in Bethesda as a memorial to Linda Weiner. Ms. Weiner, who died of leukemia in 2004, was a former teacher at Sidwell Friends School.

The project will provide an attractive upgrade to the plaza by placing pavers over the existing asphalt, and replacing the water fountain, benches, brick planter veneer, and planter capstone. The existing kiosk remains.

Based on an artist's concept, architectural firm DCMM prepared the design plan of the memorial. This project will be implemented by the Commission's Central Maintenance staff in the summer of 2008.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Donation

In November 2004, a group of private donors contacted the Commission about their desire to fund a memorial on the Capital Crescent Trail. The donors met with staff to identify a potential location. On December 16, 2004, staff presented a recommendation to the Planning Board to approve the acceptance of a donation for a memorial at this location. The Planning Board approved acceptance of the donation, but asked staff to consider alternative locations along the trail that might have a greater need for improvement. The Commission accepted donations for the project through the Parks Foundation.

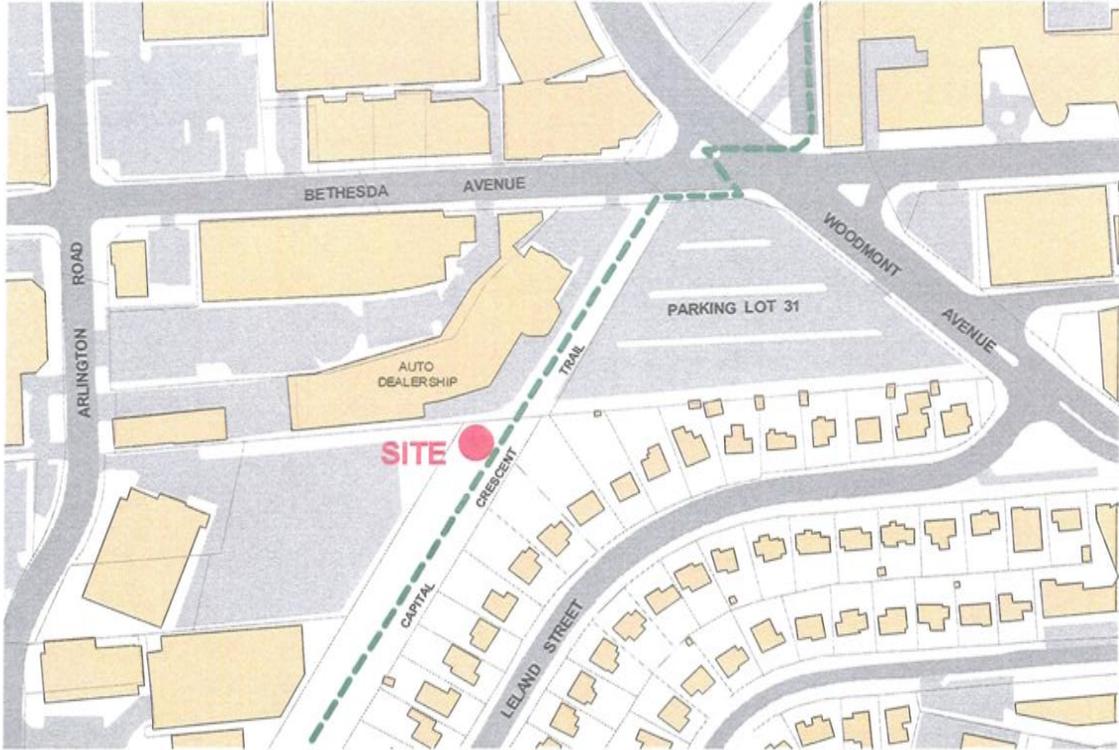
In 2005, Commission staff, working with the former Executive Director of the Parks Foundation, the Donor, and the Public Arts Trust interviewed artists and hired an artist, Pat Alexander, to design the project. A conceptual design was completed in June 2005.

The Foundation later contracted with an architectural firm, DCMM, for design services. On July 13, 2006, the Foundation presented a modified design scheme, prepared by DCMM, to the Board as a roundtable agenda item. The Board reiterated its concern for evaluating alternative sites without approving the design. The Foundation forwarded this scheme to the Department of Parks in February 2007 for staff review.

In May 2007, the Commission offered to manage and implement the project in place of the Foundation. In October 2007, the Foundation transferred the donor's contribution of \$60,000 (\$15,000 on 10/2/07 and \$45,000 on 10/25/07) to the Commission for this project. The Foundation is holding an additional \$15,000 donation made by the donors in January 2008. The donors are pursuing further donations from the developer for Parking Lot 31. Therefore, the budget for the project is expected to reach \$90,000 although the Commission has only \$60,000 for this project as of today.

Site Description

Based on a consensus at the community meeting, staff recommends the memorial project be sited at the existing trailhead along the CCT located near Bethesda Avenue and public Parking Lot 31 in the Bethesda Central Business District. This section of the CCT is approximately 3.2 miles in length and stretches from Bethesda Avenue to the District of Columbia line. The existing trailhead consists of an asphalt plaza with a brick planter and sandstone capstone. There is a water fountain, kiosk and benches around the plaza. Minimal landscaping surrounds the plaza.



Vicinity Map



View of the Plaza toward Bethesda Avenue



View of the Plaza toward South



Planter in the Plaza

Proposed Design

The design plan proposes to cover the existing asphalt plaza with light-colored field pavers and bands of dark-colored accent pavers. The existing brick planter will have a new brick façade and the capstone will be replaced. A stone memorial, approximately 3' by 3' by 2.5', will be attached to the front center of the planter wall and will carry an inscription to read as follows:

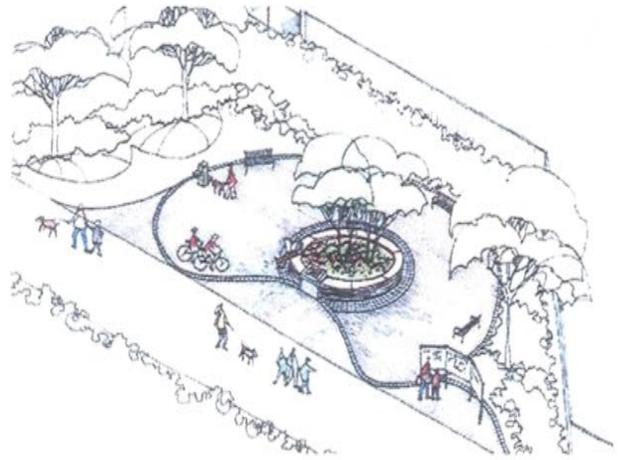
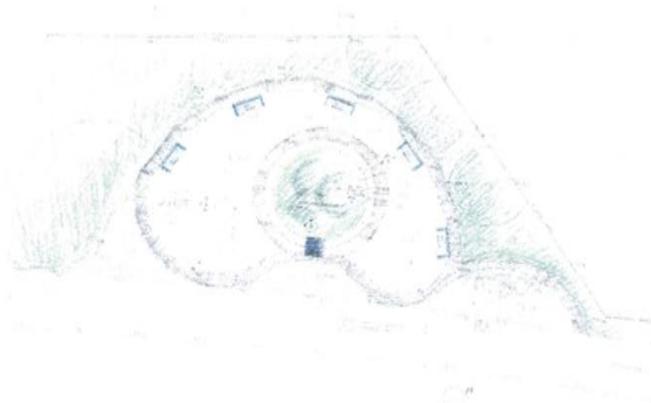
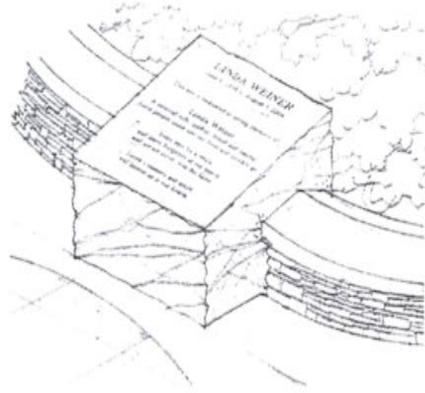
This site is dedicated to the beloved memory of
Linda Weiner

A beloved wife, mother, friend and teacher.

Some people come into our lives and quickly go.

Some stay for a while and leave footprints in our hearts,
and we are never, ever the same.

Linda's memory and smile will be forever in our hearts.



The current water fountain will be replaced with a new one that will include a dog dish. The existing benches will be replaced with solid black steel ones. Landscaping will be added from the Pope Farm to screen the adjacent car dealership. The existing kiosk supplied by the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT) will not be replaced.

Community Outreach

In February 2008, a notice was sent to citizens living within a half mile radius of the trailhead inviting them to the March 13, 2008, public meeting to discuss the proposed renovation to the Trailhead. The design prepared by DCMM Architects was presented at the meeting. Seven citizens attended including Peter Gray, Chairperson of the CCCT. Community comments centered on whether the pavers are accessible, existing fountains, and benches could be recycled, and the time frame for completing the project. All supported the proposed project.

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Construction

To facilitate the implementation of this project, the Commission's Central Maintenance staff will construct the proposed improvements. The work is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2008. It will take approximately two months to complete. Necessary measures will be taken to minimize the impact of construction on trail users.

Project Cost and Funding

This project is funded through a public-private partnership that was presented to the Board in December 2004. The budget for the project is \$90,000 and consists of donations from private donors. The project is funded through the Small Grants/Donor-Assisted Capital Improvements PDF, which allows up to 20% of project cost to be from a County government source.

The OBI impact will be minor for this project since the renovation is restricted to the addition of pavers, and existing water fountain, benches, and landscaping.

CONCLUSION

This site will be surrounded by new development during the coming years. The proposed renovation will allow the trailhead to complement its surroundings. It provides a pleasant gathering place for park patrons to read notices in the kiosk, rest on the benches, and have a drink of water before proceeding down the trail. The memorial will enhance this experience by honoring the contribution made to the community by Linda Weiner.