

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BUEHLER PARK MASTER PLAN

February 25, 2017

I commend mayor Lou Magdits and the City of Rolla for initiating this public discussion of the future of Buehler Park and in particular for the mayor's presentation of a draft master plan for public comment. Below please find my comments on this subject.

General Comments

1. Much of Buehler Park's charm comes from its semi-natural state with playground equipment nestled among huge trees and an open meadow area for running and playing or just plain walking. Let's please be careful to avoid over-development to the point where Buehler Park loses its natural charm.



2. As a dedicated park, Buehler must always remain a public park as set forth in the court injunction of October 29, 2007.

Comments on Highway 72 Extension

1. The extension of Highway 72 to the 184 mile interchange of I-44 and the rerouting of Kingshighway are expected to free up some land adjacent to Buehler Park which could be added to the park. This should prove a great asset to Buehler Park. However, we really do not know yet what the end-product will look like. Previous designs actually showed Buehler Park losing land to this highway construction project.

2. Any land added to Buehler Park as a result of the Highway 72 extension would not be covered by the original dedication deed or the court injunction. Thus, there is no guarantee it would remain part of Buehler Park.

3. With the expected increase in traffic, a safety fence along the border of Hwy 72 and Kingshighway is an absolute must.

Comments on water and bathroom facilities

1. Buehler Park's water and bathroom facilities have been slated for replacement for many years. New ADA compliant facilities would greatly enhance the desirability of Buehler Park.
2. The draft master plan shows new bathroom facilities and a water fountain to be placed in a central location, but I would suggest building the new bathroom facilities in the northeast corner of the park. This would be both less expensive and more visually pleasing and would not break up the park. (see red overlay on accompanying draft master plan) If deemed desirable, a second water fountain could be added at a more central location.

General comments on dogs

1. Buehler Park should follow the example of other Rolla parks by welcoming dogs but requiring them to be leashed with their owners present.
2. The old sign with the "no dogs" icon (which people ignore anyway) should be removed.
3. A poop-bag dispenser should be added along with a "PLEASE clean up after your dog" sign.
4. Dog owners in Buehler Park are pretty good, although not perfect, about cleaning up after their dogs. I see very little evidence of negligence on the part of dog owners.

General comments on proposed Rolla dog-park

1. If Rolla is to have a dog-park, why should it be placed in a popular lovely little park like Buehler Park? There are many other locations in Rolla where a far bigger dog-park could be built just as easily.
2. While some maintain that Buehler Park is the "best" location for a dog-park, Buehler Park is the best location for a lot of things, particularly for children, and grown-ups too. The open meadow area in Buehler Park where the draft master plan places a dog-park is currently used for soccer, baseball, football, frisbee, running, dog-walking, geocaching, exercising and walking. (see photos at <http://buehlerpark.org/Thumbnails.html>) Please let's keep this wonderful open area as it is.

Specific comments on proposed dog-park in Buehler Park master plan

1. The master plan shows the proposed dog-park encroaching into the forested area close to the playground equipment. One large tree lies within the fenced area and two more appear to be within or on the border of the fenced area.

2. If the meadow is to be fenced for any purpose whatsoever (a poor idea in my opinion), it should follow the contours of the forested area (see red overlay on accompanying draft master plan)
3. It would also seem to make more sense to have the entry-way to the fenced area adjacent to the parking lot rather than in the middle of the park.

Playground equipment

1. The three old dinosaur playground structures are iconic. Henry A. Buehler, chief geologist of the State of Missouri for 36 years, after whom the park is named, loved dinosaurs. They were placed in Buehler Park in his honor. They are heavily used and likely responsible for much of the popularity of Buehler Park. They should remain at their current location. It is my understanding that they are "grandfathered in" and do not need to be made ADA compliant which is probably impossible anyway. (see red overlay on accompanying draft master plan)
2. New ADA compliant playground equipment is shown on the draft master plan as being placed in a single area. I would suggest that new equipment should fit in with the over-all character of the park. New equipment should be as much like the old dinosaur structures as possible and should be nestled in among the large trees to whatever extent possible. (see red overlay on accompanying draft master plan)

The red overlay on the accompanying master plan shows alternative locations for the new playground equipment, the bathrooms and water fountain and the ADA compliant walkway. It also shows the rearrangement of the proposed fenced area.

For more information see Citizens for the Preservation of Buehler Park website:

<http://buehlerpark.org>

Sincerely,

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BUEHLER PARK DRAFT MASTER PLAN WITH RED OVERLAY

