



City Of Sedona Community Development Department

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To: Historic Preservation Commission

From: Cynthia Lovely, Senior Planner

Date: November 2, 2015

Meeting Date: November 9, 2015

RE: Discussion/Possible Action Regarding the Draft Ranger Station Park Master Plan Proposal

Purpose

The intent of this agenda item is to review and discuss the Draft Ranger Station Park Master Plan Proposal (Proposal) for a new park at the historic USFS Ranger Station located at 250 Brewer Road, with a possible action to recommend the proposal to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.

Background

Based on City Council direction, staff is developing a draft master plan which will propose a vision for the park, park features and improvements, and proposed uses of the historic buildings. This portion of the draft plan which sets forth the conceptual vision is attached (the Proposal). The complete master plan will also address implementation and operational issues, property history, and the park planning process. The master plan will then serve as the basis for future design and construction.

Property History

The City of Sedona acquired the 3.4 acre property to ensure the preservation of the two significant historic buildings and to serve as a public park and gathering place in the heart of Sedona. The City was interested in acquiring the property since the U.S. Forest Service sold the site in 2005; at that time the property was part of a 21 acre parcel, and sold to a private entity.

The U.S. Forest Service sold the property in 2005, after operating the Ranger Station at the site since 1905. The Rangers House was built in 1917, and the Barn was built in 1934. It is believed that the house is the oldest standing building in the City. The buildings are designated City Historic Landmarks, and the site is one of four sites in the City that are on the National Register of Historic Places.

The City acquired the property with Development Impact Fees intended for park acquisitions. State statute (ARS 9-463.05) addresses the use of Development Impact Fees for “necessary public service” which includes neighborhood parks and recreational facilities, and restricts certain uses such as museums, arts and cultural facilities, environmental education centers, bandstand and orchestra facilities, etc.

Planning Process

The public outreach phase kicked off with an open house at the site on May 30, 2015. Approximately 100 people stopped by to tour the buildings and share their ideas for how the park and buildings should be utilized. The event was also a successful example of how well the park could serve as a community gathering place.

The Citizen Engagement Program organized a volunteer work group of six individuals to assist with the planning efforts. The Work Group is made up of Planning and Zoning Commission representative Eric Brandt, Historic Preservation Commission representative Allyson Holmes, Parks and Recreation Manager Rachel Murdoch, Arts and Culture Coordinator Nancy Lattanzi, and residents Jeremy Hayden and Cindy Rovey.

Staff and the Work Group evaluated the comments, ideas, and suggestions received since May 30th via email, an online questionnaire, one-on-one and group meetings, and from the open house. The group discussed each of the proposed ideas and evaluated them based on the vision and goals of the Community Plan. The primary goal of the park is to be **the** community's gathering place that offers a variety of opportunities for community interaction. The design of the park is intended to honor the history of the site and incorporate the arts in a relaxing natural setting. The following considerations were also taken into account during the evaluation of the suggested uses: versatility, suitability, potential revenue, capital and operational costs, parking needs and traffic impacts.

Draft Proposal

Prior to starting the planning process, it was expected that there may be multiple alternative scenarios to present. Early on – especially with the results of the open house – it became apparent that there was already a widely supported common vision for the park – a community gathering place. Given this common theme and all of the related suggestions, the need for alternative proposals is not necessary. See Exhibit A “Draft Ranger Station Master Plan” for the proposal, the following is a brief summary.

The highlight and focal point of the park will be the two historic buildings: the Rangers House and Barn. It is imagined that informative panels in the park will tell the story of the Ranger Station, Forest Service, and early days of Sedona. Historic tours and talks could be offered along with walking tours of the surrounding area. These may be led by volunteers or available as self-guided and on-line tours.

The two buildings will be available for use by community groups, individuals or families with fees and rental policies similar to other Parks and Recreation facilities. The idea is to create a plaza area between the two buildings that could be used for outdoor events and activities. A large open lawn will provide space for a variety of informal uses similar to the popular lawn at Sunset Park. Scattered throughout the park will be shaded picnic tables and benches. Activities will include play features such as swings and slides and pickleball courts. A perimeter path will allow for casual strolls or exercise and will connect to neighboring destinations.

The goal of the plan is to have all aspects of the park design blend with the historic theme, and use natural and sustainable materials that would not be out of place during the early days of the Ranger Station. Green design features will be energy and water efficient, make use of recycled materials, and utilize stormwater wherever possible. Artistic elements will be incorporated in the park design, and will include sculptures and murals on the existing perimeter walls. The desired experience will be a relaxing, natural setting with enough space for a variety of activities and the possibility of quiet solitude in a shaded corner of the park.

Conclusion

Several additional ideas were discussed at length which are not included in the Proposal. These include a group pavilion, artist in residence program, and a coffee shop. A group pavilion, large picnic ramada, or gazebo was considered, however, it was felt that a pavilion was not necessary because the plaza, barn, lawn and mature trees would serve the same functions. An in-depth proposal for an artist in residence program at the park was presented, which proposed to house visiting artists in the Rangers House while using the barn as a workshop and gallery. The Work Group and Staff considered the proposal as well as

several variations such as temporary or partial use of the buildings; yet felt the program would limit the use of the buildings for other community uses, activities, and events. Other concerns are the potential conflict with the ARS 9-463.05 exclusion of arts and cultural facilities; as well as the cost to renovate the buildings specifically to be used as living and working quarters. This is not to say that staff and the Work Group did not support the idea, but concluded that art workshops and programs could be accommodated and incorporated along with a wider range of public activities.

Another suggestion coming out of the May 30th open house was to use the Rangers House as a coffee shop or café. While staff and the Work Group also liked this idea one conceivable drawback is the risk of a business not succeeding and leaving the building vacant after costly upgrades for a commercial kitchen; such improvements would not be necessary to other uses of the building. The advantages of a coffee shop or café would be to draw people into the park which could result in a more vibrant atmosphere. As a result of this idea, a more transient food and beverage vendor concept is proposed and discussed further in the draft proposal.

This phase of the planning process is to solicit feedback on the conceptual vision for the park (see attached). Future drafts of the master plan will then expand on this and include a conceptual site plan and address implementation and operational issues.

Attachment

Draft Ranger Station Park Master Plan Proposal

-Draft- Ranger Station Park Master Plan Proposal

This proposal sets forth the conceptual vision for a new park at the former Ranger Station at 250 Brewer Road. The Sedona Community Plan serves as the guide for the park vision along with the many comments and suggestions received from the community.

The historic buildings and the location of the park in the 'Heart of Sedona' set the stage for the park concept. The primary goal of the park is to be *the* community's gathering place. To appeal to a variety of people the multi-purpose aspect of the facilities and features will encourage people to visit the park. The design of the park will honor the history of the site and incorporate the arts in a relaxing natural setting.

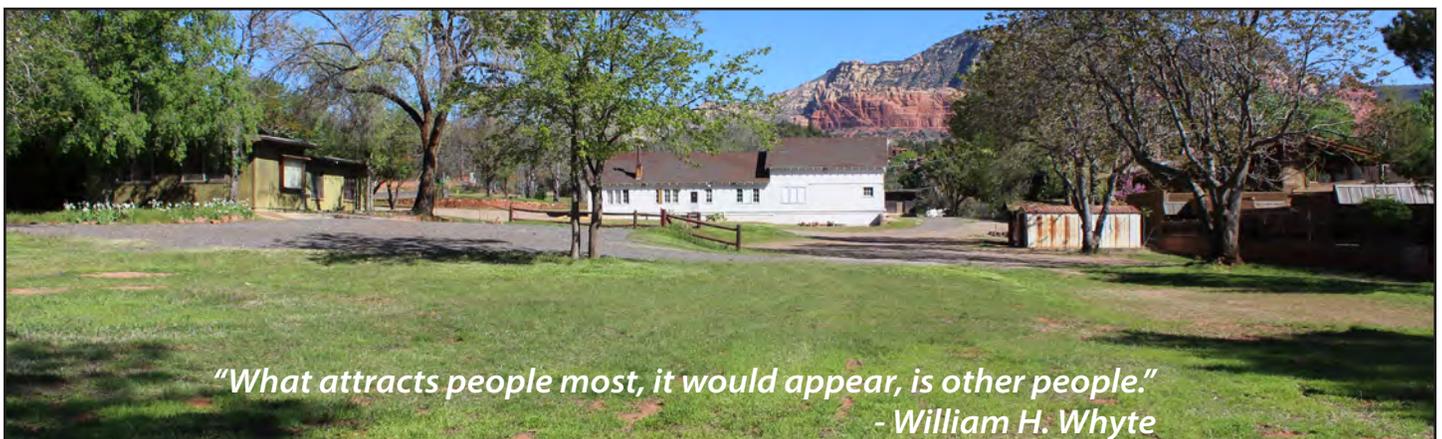
The following are the objectives of the park plan:

- Honor the history
- Build a sense of community
- Create community interactions
- Incorporate art in the park
- Design for a sense of place and sustainability
- Engage people in healthy and active amenities



Ensure that the needs and aspirations of the community now and into the future are met through a variety of cultural activities, opportunities, and facilities.¹

-Sedona Community Plan



"What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people."

- William H. Whyte

Building a Sense of Community

Provide and support community events, festivals, and programs that offer a variety of opportunities for social interaction and contribute to a sense of community. ²

The park will enhance Sedona's sense of community by providing a place that will offer something for everyone, either as a place to simply get together with friends, or attend a special event. Events could be City sponsored, although most are expected to be put on by other organizations that rent the facilities. The Rangers House, Barn, plaza, and open spaces will be designed to serve multiple purposes for the widest range of interests and activities as possible.

The Barn

- The Barn will be a multi-purpose community event facility available to rent for a variety of purposes such as: weddings, festivals, farmers market, performing arts (theater, small concerts), workshops, small conferences, meeting space, etc.
- Rental of the barn will generate revenue for the City.
- Renovation of the interior of the barn will be needed to open up a larger interior space.

The Rangers House

- The Rangers House will be a multi-purpose community meeting space that may be used for meetings, classes, and workshops.
- Rental of the house will generate revenue for the City.
- Minimal renovation necessary to begin functioning as a meeting space.

The Plaza

- The plaza will also be multi-purpose as a flexible space that can be used for a variety of activities, either formal such as a scheduled event, or informally such as an impromptu community gathering.
- Located between the House and the Barn, the plaza could be used in conjunction with the buildings to expand the event space.
- The plaza would be similar to the Flagstaff Heritage Square, with either a brick or paver surfacing.



Creating Community Interactions

- *Provide public gathering spaces that promote social interaction.*³
- *Create increased opportunities for formal and informal social interactions.*⁴

Park features such as a variety of seating, picnic tables, the courtyard, lawn, and buildings all provide opportunities for the community interaction.

Wi-Fi is proposed for both the park buildings and outdoor areas of the park. This will serve community programs in the park, as well as provide another activity for those enjoying the park environment.

The Open Lawn

- The open lawn will be a multi-purpose space for informal and impromptu gatherings for variety of activities, relaxation, and play.
- The lawn will be similar to the popular lawn at Sunset Park.

Picnic Areas

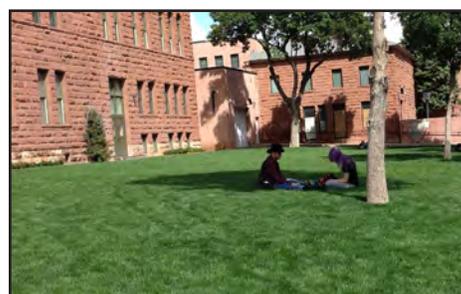
- Picnic tables will be placed throughout the park for a variety of experiences.
- The tables will be of various sizes and designs, and most will be under the shade of trees or arbors.

Benches

- Benches will also be scattered throughout the park to encourage “community gathering”.
- The benches will be in a variety of styles and designs and could also be individual works of art by local artists

Food Vendors

- Space for food vendors such as coffee carts or food trucks would be set aside in the park to provide another amenity to park visitors.
- Generates revenue for the City if the food vendors lease space at the park.



Incorporating Art in the Park

Enhance opportunities for artistic display, engagement and learning.⁵

Art will be found throughout the park with sculptures, murals, special events, and activities. This will provide local artists with additional opportunities to share their art with the public.

The Community's Art Gallery

- The park could serve as a community art gallery: artwork could be displayed in the buildings, similar to the City Hall Art Rotation Program.
- The buildings could be used as a 'pop-up gallery' for special events such as First Friday Art Walks.
- Sculptures and art installations could be placed throughout the park, and could be permanent or rotate on a temporary basis.

Murals

- Art murals will transform the existing block walls on the east and south sides of the park.
- People could participate in creating their own mural as sections of the wall could be a do-it-yourself chalkboard.

Performance Activities

- Small performances, such as plays and concerts could be held on the lawn, plaza, or in the barn.

Art Education

- Art classes, conferences, seminars or workshops could be held in the park or buildings.

Creative Design Elements

- Park features such as benches and tables could be custom works of art.



Design for a Sense of Place and Sustainability

- *Preserve and celebrate the community's history.*⁶
- *Reflect a unique sense of place in architecture and design.*⁷
- *Promote environmentally responsible building and design.*⁸

The National Historic Landmark buildings are important contributions to Sedona's sense of place. The park setting and new features will be designed to blend with the buildings and enhance the historic character of the site.

Historic Interpretation

- The public can learn the history of Sedona and the significance of the buildings from interpretive panels.
- Historic information and photos could also be displayed on the walls of the buildings.
- Walking tours of the surrounding area could start at the park.
- The history and self-guided tours could be available on a mobile application.

Green Building

- The new restroom building will be energy and water efficient.
- Renovation of the historic buildings will incorporate green building features where possible.
- Parking surfaces will be decomposed granite that blends with the natural environment and allows infiltration of rainwater.
- The landscape design will take advantage of rainwater through the use of swales and berms.

Landscaping with a Purpose

- The demonstration of native plants in the landscaping will be informative of locally occurring and low-water use plants for landscaping.
- The landscaping can include orchard trees representative of the historic agriculture along Oak Creek.
- Orchard trees and grape arbors can provide shade for picnic tables and benches.



Engaging in Healthy and Active Amenities

Provide activities and amenities that allow for community interactions and encourage active and healthy lifestyles.⁹

The park will provide for a variety of recreational activities such as walking and pickleball. The open lawn and playscape features will offer opportunities for exercise and play for people of all ages.

Walking Path

- The perimeter walking path will encircle the park, and will be approximately one-third of a mile.
- Pathways will be an accessible gravel surface.

Playscape

- Play features will be integrated into the landscape.
- People of all ages can enjoy play features with a variety of swings, hopscotch, checkers, etc.
- The play features will be of materials and colors that are suitable to the desired character of the park (no plastic playgrounds in primary colors).

Pickleball

- Pickleball courts will provide another activity that will attract people to meet in the park.

Pedestrian Access

- Park visitors will be encouraged to walk, bike, or use transit whenever possible which will help reduce traffic and parking needs.
- There will be pedestrian connections from all directions to make it easy to walk to the park (such as from Tlaquepaque and Los Abrigados).
- Sidewalks on Ranger and Brewer Roads are recommended to link the park to the sidewalks on SR 89A and 179, and into the Brewer Road neighborhood.



Community Plan References:

- 1 Sedona Community Plan Community Goals p. 97, goal 2
- 2 Sedona Community Plan Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Policies p. 86, policy 1
- 3 Sedona Community Plan, Land Use, Housing, and Growth Goals p. 17, goal 4
- 4 Sedona Community Plan, Community Goals p. 97, goal 3
- 5 Sedona Community Plan, Community Goals p. 97, goal 4
- 6 Sedona Community Plan, Community Goals p. 97, goal 5
- 7 Sedona Community Plan, Land Use, Housing, and Growth Goals p. 17, goal 3
- 8 Sedona Community Plan Environment Goals p. 71, goal 5
- 9 Sedona Community Plan, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Goals, p. 81, goal 3