



March 27, 2019

Dear Colleen O'Dell,

As the elected board of directors of the Kingfield Neighborhood Association, we thank you for considering our comments to the long-range design and use plans for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park located in the Kingfield Neighborhood. We have shared your plans with the community via links in our weekly eNews, as well as by publicizing and hosting a presentation of the plans at a board meeting. The comments we have received, alongside our own reflection, have led us to the following comments and reflections.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park is an invaluable asset for our neighborhood. As the only park within the boundaries of the Kingfield Neighborhood the park not only serves as a daily place for recreation but as a community space for meetings, gatherings and events. The park acts as a connection for residents on both sides of 35W serving both the Kingfield and Bryant Neighborhoods. It is a regular occurrence on a summer night to see families crossing the 40th Street Pedestrian bridge coming to and from the park. The park is not only a place for recreation for local residents but it is used by a variety of groups, clubs, and teams that are both locally based and outside the community. As an organization we rely heavily on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park for many of our meetings, events and programming. We think that the park is a great place. We are confident that this master planning process will continue us on that direction

One of the greatest things about Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. park is the amount of activity that happens within its boundaries. Through more detailed planning and activation of currently underutilized spaces we believe the park can provide a higher quantity and better variety of activities to create a more inclusive and dynamic space. We believe that generally Plan B fits this vision because of its wider range of activities and holistic use of space.

- It is important to the community that we continue to provide some open space for free play (like the current sledding hill area) but would like more purpose and programming behind many of the underutilized spaces in the park. We strongly support a stronger vision for the NorthWest corner of the park and ways to bring the cabin, community center, gardens, orchard and Nicollet Avenue together in to a more active, engaging and welcoming space.
- We strongly believe that the cabin should be opened up to a community partner. This space currently serves as both a drain on the park in terms of activity and space. Its location at the intersection of Nicollet + 40th along a bike path surrounded by mature trees, an orchard and community gardens is an asset that could provide an amazing asset to our neighborhood and community.
- The amphitheatre should also be a top priority as a part of this plan. Currently there is no spaces in the park that allow for the activities that could take place in an amphitheater. We would suggest that more detailed development or direction is provided as a part of the master plan to specify the types of activities and programming that could occur at the amphitheater space (and many of the other spaces as well). This programming lens will



hopefully lead to more detailed development of the necessary components needed to accomplish these programs and activities.

- Due to the size and variety of users in the park we would encourage the inclusion of smaller game areas for things like bocce ball, shuffle board and game tables.
- Plan B currently places many of the activities into pods lumping basketball/tennis into a corner of the park. With baseball/softball in another corner. We would encourage that the plan be adjusted to work these elements together in a more nuanced way. We believe that much of the success and activity in the current layout of the park is due to the woven nature of different activities and uses throughout the park.
- We would also encourage more activities that occur throughout the park. Things like exercise trail activities instead of an “adult exercise area” or an expansion of the ice skating loop to weave and integrate with more of the park.
- We would also ask that the master plan include smaller items/design features that could be realistically fundraised or paid for by the neighborhood organization. These may be things like call out’s for movie areas/movie screens, fire pit(s) and picnic areas.
- Plan B drastically changes a few features that were just recently installed in the park (most notably the playground area). We would suggest that the final plan not drastically change the layout or areas that are most likely to not need changing/replacement within the next 20 years. By showing drastically different layouts of areas that most likely won’t change future planning efforts are forced to work around a master plan that does not reflect the realities of the park.

Lastly, we like to thank the park board for allowing and supporting the expanding community garden activities we lead on-site at MLK Park. KFNA is excited for our second year of caring for, and possibly harvesting at, the community orchard that was planted last spring. We had five neighbors participate in the Citizen Pruners training program led by the U of M and MPLS Park Board and these individuals have accepted the care and tending of the new fruit trees on site. Programs like this that empower residents, train them and are a great way to build support in our urban parklands.

Again, thank you for accepting our comments—

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah P. Linnes-Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sarah Linnes-Robinson,
on behalf of the KFNA Board