

Disbrow Park Master Plan - Status Report: June 15, 2017
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There is apparently a lot of confusion and misinformation circulating about the study the City is currently conducting regarding the possible improvement of Disbrow Park. The purpose of this brief report is to explain where we are in the process and how things will proceed from here.

Improving Disbrow Park has been discussed in Rye since 2000, well before I was on the City Council. In 2011, Park improvement concepts were initially studied and in the 2014 City Budget we included funding for a more detailed study. On April 16, 2016, a Request for Proposal (RFP) was published seeking a planning consultant to assist us with the process of putting Disbrow Park improvement ideas on paper. After a competitive interview process, Stantec was chosen among several candidates by the Rec Commission, then approved by the City Council and hired on November 18, 2016. Their task is only to make recommendations to us about possible ways to improve Disbrow Park. They are about two-thirds of the way through their work. Stantec's work has been published on the City web site at every stage of the process and I have made regular reports during City Council meetings.

So far, in addition to a lot of research and analysis, there have been two well-attended and constructive public meetings and one on-line survey has been completed. Another on-line survey is underway right now – please participate in that through the City web site. What we know from the work performed to date is that the primary reasons the improvements are necessary are that: the playing fields and courts are inadequate in many ways; certain sports, such as lacrosse and soccer, have little, if any, useful field space; the parking, spectator viewing and restroom facilities are woefully inadequate; the presence of our DPW trucks and children creates a dangerous situation; and our DPW facilities themselves are dilapidated and in dire need of modernization.

One of the ideas which has been proposed by Stantec involves relocating our DPW facilities to another site. That idea was well-received by those present at the second public meeting because it made Disbrow a real park with walking trails, open green spaces, enhanced playing field spaces and courts, adequate parking, restrooms and more. If, at some point in the future, after considering the advice of the Rec Commission, City Staff and the public, the City Council chooses that particular proposal then we would need to study the various options available for a new DPW site. Those possibilities are numerous: the Thruway property across from Rye Country Day School, other City properties and other private properties within the City we would have to acquire. We are far from deciding any of these issues.

The **bottom line** is that no decisions have been made and no final decisions will be made at the Disbrow public meeting on June 27 or at the City Council meeting on July 12. We are simply gathering information and input from the public to make the best decision we can to do the most good for the entire community. A great deal more planning is required for projects of this size. That planning will take months, perhaps years. We are excited about the possibility of potentially solving numerous problems in the City at once but whether it can be done will be the subject of a great deal of work and planning before any final decisions are made. Rest assured that we will not be doing anything in a hurried or rash manner.

The next public meeting regarding the Disbrow Master Plan is set for Tuesday, June 27, at 7:00 pm at the Damiano Center. Please note the changed date.