

Buildings and Grounds: Week 1 (5/10/24)

History of Landscape Planning & Feedback

Buildings and Grounds created a sub-committee on a master Landscape Plan to identify needs and wants, locate and contract with a design, and develop a final plan with costs to present to NFM for their decision making.

We provided the designer information from our listening and placemaking sessions on the parking lot as the basis for the plan development. The Borough-approved parking plans were part of his package of information. Committee members also walked the ground with the designer, Bryan Hanes, so that he could become more familiar with the space. From that, three plans were developed and presented to the Meeting for input.

This packet of information includes:

- ï Links to the [Listening](#) and [Placemaking](#) sessions (from 2/28/21 & 4/9/21)
- ï Feedback from the three concept plans presented to Monthly Meeting in late 2023.
- ï The [current version](#) of the consolidated plan with comments.

Notes from Newtown Meeting Landscape Plan

Notes by Bill Fellows from April 7, 2024 Adult Religious Education program with Bryan Hanes presenting landscape plans for the NMM property.

Play

1. General sense that current playground is OK as is and where is until it needs to be replaced.

Patio

1. Strong interest in some type of patio off the gathering room.
2. Make sure there is enough shade on the patio.
3. Consider having the Peace Garden off the patio.
4. Preference to have it as large as practical.
5. Gravedigger access – Sharon addressed the need for the plan to remember the gravedigger needs access to the all the graveyards with his trucks and heavy equipment.
6. Pros and cons of having the patio at ground level versus raised were discussed but no clear preference. Danger of stairs to ground level vs. maintenance and access to bulkhead doors for raised patio. Also, raised patio still requires stairs to get to ground level. Not sure how a raised patio would work with the bulkhead.

Hedges

1. General agreement of lowering the height of the hedge in the front to allow people to see the property without an ability to walk in at any point.
2. Didn't seem to be a clear preference for the existing privet hedge versus replacing it with a lower-maintenance, native species (although the general conversation about the plans was to go with native species, lower-maintenance varieties whenever possible).
3. There were some who prefer no hedge in the front but most agreed with the reasoning of having a shorter front hedge.
4. No objections to hedges on the north side to block view of the new development being built, nor covering the fence on the south side with a low-maintenance vine.

Peace Garden

1. There was a lot of interest in having the Peace Garden towards the front of the property as a more visible “statement” of what Quakers believe in. There was some concern having it too close to the neighboring house to the north as they are installing a swimming pool, but there seemed to be less focus on the use of the Peace Garden than having it as a statement.
2. If the Peace Garden is in the front of the building it should connect to the walkway.
3. Barbara Simmons used the old Peace Garden in her remediation work and felt seating would be important, although she doesn’t anticipate doing much of this type of work in the future.
4. Make sure Peace Garden is low maintenance.

Amphitheater

1. There was general interest in the amphitheater but not much commentary about likes or dislikes. We should investigate further and come back with a more specific plan on size and location taking into account the space needs of the retention pool and graveyard expansion.

Miscellaneous

1. Walkways from front corners – rather than bluestone slates, which can become uneven, there was a suggestion to look into composite materials (mulch with ground-up-tires?) that provide a smoother and easier-to-navigate surface.
2. Accessibility to back of property – Rather than installing more paving to accommodate people getting to southeast corner (if the Peace Garden and/or amphitheater is located there) we should leave as is until there is a sense of usage, and the path people take to get there.
3. Yard waste – Concern was raised about what we do with leaves and sticks that were traditionally dumped in the southeast corner. The leaf issue was addressed with the decision to mulch leaves in place. Not sure if we need a solution for sticks. We need a designated compost area.
4. Salem Oak – No concerns about recommended placement as the current trees in the suggested area are going to be removed.
5. Consider impact of potential changes in neighboring properties, as much as possible.
6. Avoid use of concrete.
7. Plant selection should focus on leaves rather than flowers, perennials rather than annuals.
8. Idea raised after the meeting: We should have signs/placards with the type of tree for all the trees on the property. Need to consider maintenance, as well as impact on lawn maintenance.