

2019

Hello neighbors & friends!

We are excited about the formation of a Voigt Park Block Club -where we'll share information, fellowship and address issues of common concern, while benefiting beautiful historic Voigt Park, which is near & dear to us all.

By now you are probably aware of the actions being taken to develop Voigt Park. The Boston Edison Historic District, was long ago granted City, State and Federal Historic Designations. There are many neighbors that want to maintain the historic character of Voigt Park, for the benefit of all Boston Edison Historic District neighbors and Detroiters.

While we may personally appreciate some of the proposed "amenities" suggested in the "proposed master plan", we may at the same time realize that as residents living on Voigt Park are most directly impacted. I'm reminded of the old adage, "Your right to swing, stops at my nose".

The following 7 points are some ideas and concerns

1 - We all are bound to maintain the exteriors of our homes in a manner consistent with historic standards and specifications. Many neighbors believe the park needs to adhere to the same historic standards. All of the wonderful historic architecture on the park -including the magnificent Historic Ford's and James Couzens' homes, should not in our opinion, have in front of them, anything other than what is historically complementary and appropriate. The Historic aesthetic sensitivity of our B.E. neighborhood is greatly responsible for it's real value for us and for the city of Detroit, as well.

2 - Many of us may park our cars on the street. Public parking spaces for our families and friends near to our homes, could be more difficult to come by with increased competition.

3 - The city's 2017 Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan, states a preference for and a vision of diversification. We believe it's the White Park is one of its kind in Detroit so it offers another choice for those seeking park access, for a variety of purposes . Voigt Park is wonderfully unique among city parks, some would say sublime, with a of number of large mature trees, including very old London Plane trees, that we understand were brought from England for the park. For further tree history, ask me about the three trees configured that were, referred to as the, "Three Graces".

We would like to see any available funds, spent to address issues affecting the health of Voigt Park, e.g. mitigating drainage issues, providing for the care and planting of historically appropriate and arborist approved trees and greenery--Park "improvements" need to be limited to needed and regular maintenance.

4 - The park's natural and completely open plan allows for the greatest versatility of use, that residents have been able to enjoy for years. Great picnics, music, movies, yoga and other B.E. Association gathering, all can be held in the park and temporary structures necessary for those events can be configured and dismantled as needed. Imagine if you will, a wonderful BostonEdison annual Croquet Tournament! Bocce...

The open natural space of Voigt Park, is unique and versatile asset offering natural space for contemplation and reflection, something so rare and needed by many, these days.

5 - Many, happy children have been observed playing in the park, enjoying the park as it is! There are many other parks in the area that are not Historic, that offer the playscapes and amenities similar to those that are being proposed for Voigt Park. These other Parks are close enough to B.E., providing for more and diverse options very near and in the vicinity of B.E. Voigt Park is unique, a quiet historic park, a natural respite here in the center of the city.

Voigt Park can offer wonderful opportunities for children to play in a natural, open space, with native plants, trees and their leaves to identify & enjoy. If we really focus on native plants, Voigt Park, would be a fabulous asset to nearby schools and groups, wanting to study nature and ideally sustainable environments...

6 - Security is probably our number one concern, it was discussed in Jim's letter presenting the history of Voigt Park, where security problems have persisted. New security issues could be expected and are inevitable, with the proposed amenities offering comfortable resting places that could encourage loitering... We may prefer to believe that increased crime wouldn't exist but I believe we all will be safer, if we face the potential reality. (For more on this, please see Jim Hamilton's letter, referencing the prostitution and other Park Security issues.)

7 - Noise is often an obvious result of development, bringing visitors and not only residents of Boston Edison. The anticipated increased intrusion of noise in the park, so near to our homes, may become more of daily annoyance, that we would be expected to tolerate.

Points 1-7, are some of the shared concerns we believe are deserving of further consideration and discussion. We really look forward to hearing all, additional concerns and ideas. We believe communication and solidarity at this point could be critical, as it is our desire to maintain Voigt Park as a natural park, a sanctuary where one can be with nature's beauty and perhaps even find some solitude.

Any structural additions or changes would not be easily retractable, if at all. We believe often times, that less can be more. We also believe that we, who appreciate historic standards, don't automatically view new developments as "improvements". One person's idea of improvements, can be another person's nightmare.

We are really looking forward to getting together for fellowship concerning the Park. We can also envision having a lot of fun together, while working toward a collective vision, and applying our efforts to help remedy the problems we've observed, eg. the drainage/sewer problems, the health and number of appropriate and mature trees and park maintenance issues. We hope that all Parkside Residents will join and continue in helping steward the park, as always, as a shared legacy together.

Peace,
AnnMarie & Paul
161 Longfellow