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**[EXTERNAL] Historic Commission Meeting scheduled, Wednesday October 8**

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From Michael Gibb <michaelsgibb@gmail.com>

Date Mon 10/6/2025 10:27 AM

To Historic District Commission (Staff) <hdc@detroitmi.gov>; Public Spaces Planning Unit <PSPU@detroitmi.gov>

Good morning,

As a resident and someone who has been in the green industry for almost 20 years now, I have some opinions for future plans at Voigt Park.

First, Voigt Park needs a major face lift, there is no doubt about that. I have seen many residents in the neighborhood passionate about what that may look like. Although my career path focuses on landscape installation and maintenance, I originally received my BA in history and do have a soft spot for historical preservation within reason. That being said, not all historical sites need to be left or restored to original designs or layouts.

Some key points I would like you to consider are as follows...

1. Pathways should use historical correct materials. A compromise to original materials and that of concrete may be exposed aggregate concrete. Developed and used around the early 1900s, with notable pioneers like John J. Earley. Earley used this material in Washington, D.C. for projects like Meridian Hill Park in the 1910s and 1920s. This would provide historical material that needs less maintenance than permeable materials.
2. Heritage trees that have lost more than fifty percent of their foliage or canopy should be reviewed by an arborist and selected for dormant pruning or removal. Any tree at risk of falling should be considered unsafe and removed prior to any restoration work. Any current trees that are healthy should remain and be worked into any plan. Any new tree should have a three-to-five-year maintenance plan in place to ensure establishment of said trees. Lastly, I would stick to native trees as much as possible and stay away from spruces opting for pines, cedars and firs. Also, less is more. Please consider the maturity of the trees and do not overcrowd them.
3. When it comes to landscape or flower beds, I think this is where we can start to step away from the historical preservation of what was originally there. Original 1928 plans show eight beds that vary in size and shape. I think we can use more of this without infringing on the historical plans of the past. An example of this may be the beds flanking the walkway on the north side of the park (Longfellow) are not duplicated on the south side (Edison). I would say more habitats and less mowing. In fact, I would go as far to say in the last phase of this project, when turf restorations are made that it is considered to restore turf areas with low growing ground cover like clover which needs less maintenance, water and nutrients to thrive. Even the areas untouched can be slit seeded or overseeded with clover at the appropriate time of the year.
4. Benches seem to be a sore subject so I will only say if you can sit/lay on a bench you can sit/lay on the ground. I see no difference in the safety of having benches in the park and therefore I can take them or leave them.
5. As for trash receptacles again, a hot topic. We need them and I don't care what they look like. We have had plastic drums for as long as I can remember. If it is in the budget for something more historically friendly, great, if not so be it.

Here are some examples I have seen of parks that mix historical preservation with modern amenities nicely. Either way, best of luck as you continue this process.

Ritter Park – Huntington, West Virginia

Palmer Square Park – Chicago, Illinois

Knyvet Square – Brookline, Massachusetts