Ching-Fang Chen, M-NCPPC Park Development Project Manager and Landscape Architect, presented the background of the project and the recommended concept. The presentation reviewed the project schedule, history, community input to date, project objectives and program of requirements. The presentation briefly reviewed the design inspiration and the schematic concept plans (A, B and C) that were presented at the previous community meeting along with the public input. In the presentation, staff also reviewed the comments provided in the Focus Group meeting regarding historic interpretation (May 22, 2018) and the Historic Preservation Commission preliminary review meeting (June 13, 2018).

The recommended park plan was developed based on the community’s preference for schematic Concept C to maximize the usable open space and allocating more green space in the park by reducing paving. The plan was presented to the community using diagrams, plans, details, precedent photographs, sections, and “before” photos and matching “after” 3D renderings.

The plan recommends the following:

- Retain and restore the historic spring and Acorn gazebo. Rehabilitate existing stairs to meet code. Restore the water feature at the grotto.
- Create a consolidated interior lawn as community open space for flexible activities.
• Build a wooden platform for seating and gathering while protecting existing tree roots.
• Provide ADA accessible ramp, boardwalk and walkways as well as a safe street crossing.
• Provide boulders and low visual impact play elements that complement the park setting.
• Provide a multi-use terrace that transitions into the Kennett Street sidewalk and existing building exit.
• Integrate bioretention facilities with the boardwalk and play area to treat stormwater. Capture sidewalk runoff.
• Provide seating opportunities throughout the park.
• Provide interpretation opportunities.
• Relocate lighting to the street front to enhance the park. Install ground level and/or other lights to highlight the historic features and provide safe passage through the park.
• Protect existing significant trees. Add new trees and groundcover planting to provide an aesthetic environmental setting for the historic features and to buffer the park from the busy street activities.

The project schedule anticipates the facility plan to be presented to the Montgomery County Planning Board in spring of 2019. If approved, detailed design and permits are planned to occur in fiscal year 2020 with construction in fiscal year 2021.

Approximately 18 people attended the meeting and provided comments. After the group discussion, staff invited the attendees to provide further comments via email or Open Town Hall.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION
The presentation and recommended park plan were generally well received. A summary of comments and discussion from the meeting is outlined below.

Circulation
• The primary concern expressed by multiple attendees was that the plan does not provide a direct pedestrian route through the park from the sidewalk at the corner of Kennett Street and Newell Street to the corner of East-West Highway and Newell Street. Meeting attendees indicated that this is the most common direction of pedestrian travel through the park. Ideas and suggestions to improve the circulation and provide more direct access included the following:
  o Add a sidewalk along the entire length of Newell Street. Staff noted that the existing large white oak tree and Acorn Gazebo would be negatively impacted by this.
  o The configuration of the seating wall along Newell Street and sidewalk transition to the boardwalk could be softened to improve pedestrian flow and allow more direct access to other areas of the park. A large boulder could be placed to keep people from continuing to walk along Newell Street into the area with the oak tree and gazebo.
A resident expressed concern that the proposed walkway is near the gazebo where people frequently smoke. Staff pointed out that smoking is prohibited on M-NCPPC park property and a sign could be added as a reminder of the regulation.

**Program**

- There was a comment to reconsider the play and open space and that the park may not be suitable for play equipment. Consider incorporating nature play with boulders and/or logs and eliminate the play equipment. This would allow better access/circulation through the park without reducing the open lawn area.
- One resident noted that families with children were not present at the meeting and did not think they would agree with removing play elements.
- Residents recommended providing free Wi-Fi to make the park more usable.
- There was support for the increase in green space and planting, configuration of the bio-retention with the boardwalk/bridge, and the plan to protect trees.

**Interpretation**

- There was a suggestion that the Wi-Fi log-in portal or landing page could have historic information about the park and Instagram filters.
- Consider integrating the park with nearby DC interpretive sites. Consider interpretation of the Civil War.
- There is good interpretive information at Jesup Blair Park, although not in a prominent spot. It’s important to have good placement for signage.
- One person mentioned desired interpretive themes to include Lincoln, the Civil War and slavery.

**Materials**

- Several opinions were expressed regarding the character of the railings. Some wanted them to be clean, minimized and to disappear visually into the landscape. Others suggested that they have a more bucolic character of wrought iron or rustic wood to stylistically mimic historic features of the park. Staff noted that metal handrails can be smaller than wood and can be visually less intrusive. Maintenance needs and durability also need to be considered.
- Residents expressed concern that the wood boardwalk may rot over time, as it is close to the damp ground. Consider using a composite material such as Trex. Staff mentioned that the structure for the deck will not be wood. Rot-resistant wood decking, such as Ipe or black locust could also be considered.
- Consider the design of the walls, as they could encourage skateboarding and be damaged.

**Other**

- A resident inquired about maintenance of new facilities in the park. Staff noted that MNCPPC Maintenance staff has been closely involved with the design process.
• Staff showed sections and a grading plan to demonstrate that the steps and landings are reconfigured on Newell Street to be more efficient and to help capture water running into the spring.

**NEXT STEPS:**

• Advance and refine the recommended plan based on community input.
• Review plan with Historic Preservation Commission for approval of design.
• Finalize recommended facility plan and submit to Montgomery County Planning Board for approval.