

# Homewood planting community meeting

## Meeting overview

On January 18, 2023, Hennepin County forestry and Northside Safety NET interns hosted a hybrid community meeting to solicit feedback about a proposed planting for the 2.1-acre vacant lot at the intersection of 8<sup>th</sup> and Washburn Avenue North in the Homewood neighborhood in Minneapolis. There were six community members present: four in-person and two virtually. Four additional members of the community provided feedback via an online survey.

## Homewood planting site information shared by community members

- Used for dog walking, children playing, and the occasional picnic
- Neighbors keep an eye on the park because it is not under the security purview of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- There may be a natural spring in the park and neighborhood. In any case the water table is high.
- Lots of wildlife visits the site including foxes, deer, coyotes, cranes, woodchucks, racoons, egrets, opossums, owls, turtles, lots of fireflies, and there was even a bobcat sighting reported.
- People use the site to access bike and ski trails across the railroad tracks in Theodore Wirth Park.
- The debris-laden soil present on the site was brought in from the construction of the civic center downtown
- Clean soil was added to the planter boxes by Tree Trust at some point

## Concerns shared by community members

- Amenities like benches may attract loitering or other undesirable activities
- One resident is concerned about people dumping yard waste on the site
- There needs to be a plan for watering trees and maintaining the site if a planting takes place.

## Concrete requests and ideas from community members

- Amenities like benches, garbage bins and recycling
  - The attendees seemed somewhat split on benches
- Neighbors are open to a full reforestation as they already live so close to a great park
  - This would entail filling the space with trees and seedlings and replacing open turf areas. Paths through the site would still be desired
- Benefits for wildlife would be a good focus for the planting
- Interest was raised in a food production planting, some brought up a multi-level food forest concept, others talked about a nut focused planting with an emphasis on the "new American Chestnut hybrids"
- Buckthorn remediation was requested for the forested depression on the northeast corner of the park

## Potential partners for the project

Community members shared potential partnership opportunities for the project

- Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC)
- Loppet Foundation
- University of Minnesota Bee Lab
- "DNR learning forest"
- Wildlife expert to help identify ideal trees to benefit wildlife

