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Parachute unveiling reveals new play structure at Dickinson Park



A parachute covered the new play structure until opening moment. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

By Polina Olsen
 The Southwest Portland Post

More than 30 neighbors and friends celebrated the official opening of the Dickinson Park play structure on Saturday, June 6. Culminating 10 years of work, organizers decked out the 15.81 acres on Southwest 55th Avenue and Alfred Court with colorful booths and live music from Gypsy Jazz West. A parachute covered the new play structure until the grand opening moment.

Children blew giant soap bubbles and adults gazed across the stunning vista as Crestwood Neighborhood Association President John Prouty addressed the group. "It's a day to celebrate and reflect on the hopes and work that got us here," he said.

The project began in 1999, when the city bought property from Portland Public Schools. The Parks Bureau organized a citizen's advisory committee and, by 2001, adopted the Dickinson Park Master Plan.

"Since there was no city budget for improvements, the Crestwood
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MULTNOMAH NOTEBOOK

By Allison Voigts
 The Southwest Portland Post

Capitol Hill Road speed bumps approved in 15-4 vote

The Capitol Hill Road traffic calming project will proceed full speed ahead since overtaking the final obstacle in its course—a supporting vote from the Multnomah Neighborhood Association. After a failed quorum at the MNA's May meeting stalled the project's rapid progress, 15 MNA members gave their support on June 9, while four members voted against it.

Though the calming project had already achieved approval from the Hillsdale Neighborhood Association and signatures of support from 74 percent of the road's residents, it needed MNA support to continue. The plan to install 11 speed tables (a gentler version of a speed bump) on the road has raised heated arguments on both sides, leaving the outcome of the vote in doubt until the last minute.

City transportation planner Will Stevens and local resident Mellani Calvin,

who helped initiate the project, answered questions during the meeting. Public comments about the project took the majority of the meeting time, with both MNA members and non-members allowed to contribute their opinions (However, only MNA members could vote afterwards).

Those who opposed the project objected not to the idea of slowing traffic on the neighborhood street but to the suggestion that speed tables will fix the problem.

Elaine Saunders, who lives on the Multnomah side of the road, argued that emergency vehicles will be forced to slow down when responding to calls on the road and that noise and pollution would increase as cars accelerate after each speed table.

"This just isn't a safe street to walk on, even with speed bumps," she said. "I cringe when I see people walking their dogs on it, trying to get to the park."

Many of the residents who attended the meeting shared stories of witnessing drivers swerve into ditches and front yards after taking curves too fast or when trying to avoid pedestrians on the road's inadequate shoulder. At least three people wondered if a car would come through their living rooms

someday.

The project's supporters, like Scott Miller, agreed that "speed bumps won't fix everything," and that sidewalks would be the preferred project. However, speed bumps are the only affordable option at this point since the City has no funds to aid the neighborhood's traffic problem. Each speed table has a price tag of \$2,200 and will be paid for on a voluntary basis by the street's residents.

Editor's Note: In a June 10 e-mail, Calvin summarized her feelings about the Capitol

Hill Road traffic calming vote. "At last night's meeting there was much discussion about needing to actively work on clearing our individual properties on CHR to make pedestrian and bicycle traffic safer" said Calvin.

"This is important to all of us so we would like to convey that request from the attendees last night. There has been discussion, as well, on developing work parties to help clear more walking spaces."

Next steps for the CHR folks include obtaining an account through SWNI for
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City transportation planner Will Stevens answers questions about the Capitol Hill Road traffic calming project during the Multnomah Neighborhood Association meeting, June 9. (Post photo by Allison Voigts)

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