

# Budget problems blamed for delay in Spring Garden Park development

By Erik Vidstrand  
The Southwest Portland Post

Friends of Spring Garden Park have been curious about the development of their park. Hannah Davidson, a leading activist in the Multnomah neighborhood, contacted the city after no word or action at the park in some time.

The response was that construction has been delayed due to budget reconfigurations.

"They had planned to start in April," said Ken Boltz, a neighbor who lives within earshot of the proposed amphitheater. "We had an email from Travis Ruybal, the park project manager, which said the amphitheater was no longer on the list."

Because of the construction boom, all of their bids came in too high Boltz told The Post.

"Even with the lowest bidder, [the park bureau] didn't have

enough money for everything they planned," Boltz said.

"Thank you for your patience," Ruybal said. "We have been working through the details of the contracting process. We have a qualified low bidder for construction and we are working on contract execution."

"Portland is experiencing a construction boom," Ruybal said. "The high demand for labor and materials has significantly driven up costs."

As a result, the construction bid came in over the project budget. The park bureau is looking for ways to reduce costs while maintaining the integrity of the design. Some items have been removed from the plan, such as concrete pathways and stairs. Tile would replace rubber safety surfacing on the upper playground.

The stone seat wall and concrete pad at the gathering area, or as many neighbors call it, "the amphitheater," will not be included and the area



Dr. John Minahan (left) talks with neighbors Ken Boltz and Kathy Frost in July 2016 about development plans for Spring Garden Park. (Post file photo by Erik Vidstrand)

will be converted into a grassy bowl.

"This is good news for those of us that were against the amphitheater," Boltz said. This was the biggest contention of many of the neighbors.

"It looks like they won't break ground until sometime in June," Boltz said. "This makes it a two-month delay in the overall project."

Ruybal explained that the delay was not caused by the weather but by the budget. But he conceded that it was unlikely that contractors could have begun work any sooner given the record amounts of rainfall and the slope of the site.

"Even with these changes,"

Ruybal said, "the project will still require additional funding that we are hopeful will be approved."

The city's budget was recently approved and the entire park budget allotment was reduced by \$1.2 million.

"It is our intention to deliver the park experience and aesthetic that you all worked so hard for and are so excited to realize," Ruybal said.

"We are confident that these changes will have limited impact on the beautiful and fun park you will soon be able to enjoy. The grand opening won't happen until spring 2018."

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