

Letter Number 1 from the Kingsland Community Association



Kingsland Community Association

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Spur report compiled by President of the Community.

The following list, whilst mainly full of negatives is not a complaint but more observations of things that did not work in this pilot project and is sent in order to minimize some of the pitfalls we encountered.

The City people worked professionally and endlessly to meet our expectations but due, mainly to inaccurate costing estimates to them from City departments, had to give us “bad” news late in the project which was hard on us all.

Our community has definitely benefitted from this Spur initiative and we thank you for that, most of the work undertaken has been completed and we are very happy with the outcome. I hope that you will read the following and accept it in the spirit that it was written, not as a complaint but as, hopefully, insight into future projects outcomes.

Initial look at what amount of money we could allow for each projects were way under estimated (estimates came from City participants) as far as cost was concerned. Too rushed and too early

Initial understanding was that this was a Partnership between City departments, City Personnel and Community Committee, we feel it turned out to be more what the City wanted to see and input from us was looked on as “constantly asking for changes”.

\$30,000.00 of the monies was spent on Public Consultation, large amount of money to produce something that ultimately was not followed. Somehow this needs to be done for less money and with less promise of adherence if actual costs end up being too high. When projects have to be cut back, for whatever reason, residents must be notified so that their expectations are changed. I.e. Initial promise of \$35,000.00 for new playground equipment was veto'd by Council in the very early stages but residents were not informed and so they have ended up being unhappy with the playgrounds and feel they have been “deceived”.

In the very beginning we asked that Community Contractors be given an opportunity to bid for the work, at that time we were never actually told that this would not be allowed and it was much later in the process that we found out that this would never have been considered as all work has to be done by the City, to their standards, and by their contractors. As soon as we have the actual costs of the asphalt and concrete steps on the walkways we will be interested to compare the costs of these with similar work completed at our community hall by a “Private Contractor”. Had we been allowed to use some of our community contractors their “reduced” rates could have been included in “Sweat Equity” and our money would have gone further.

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Despite many meetings and many different scenarios discussed, even when we were told that we could have something, the final “implemented projects” were not decided until the very last meeting when “Actual” costs were realized and regardless of the selections by the Open House participants it came down to how much we could have for the money available.

Two of the projects increased in cost tremendously whilst one had the budget reduced tremendously from the estimated costs given at the beginning of the process.

Upgrading the road closures at 69th Avenue and 5th & 7th Streets went from an initial estimated cost of \$22,100 to \$78,000, (at a later stage \$35,000 was contributed from Transportation Solutions to offset some of this increased cost but Spur money was still \$54,000 short).

“Adult Fit Park” which we voted to spend \$10,000 as it was never on our list at all, will cost \$25,000.00 of our Spur money. With an additional \$10,000 coming from Parks as the actual cost is \$35,000.

The Walkway upgrades (6) were estimated at \$157,500 at the beginning of the process and by the end of the meetings, but before they were done, we were told that we would only have \$102,600 for these projects because of the huge increase in the Road closure project and that WE WOULD HAVE TO PRIORITIZE AND DECIDED WHICH ONES WE WANTED TO DO. The Walkways were always our first priority.

No playground equipment money has been spent from Spur and two small “spinning cups” have been installed in the playgrounds at a cost of \$2,000.00. Hence resident’s feeling that they have been short-changed on this aspect of the project. It seems to us that the \$30,000.00 spent on Public Consultation was wasted.

For future Spur projects, projected costs must be much more realistic before going to public consultation.

We were told that if projects for roads were included that information regarding the work had to be into the “Roads” department before February of any year for the work to be done that season. This is something City representatives did not know but which is crucial to the bottom line costs, also the direction from Council as to when the final report has to be in and if funds can be held over to the following season should the work not be completed. For us the Floods played a great part in our not having the work done “this season” although most of it has been done, we were lucky with the weather and most of the concrete and asphalt work was completed in late September/early October. However, the portion of the project that requires sod to be laid will have to be held over to next year.

We were asked if we would be able to contribute money from our Community as well as sweat equity. At no time were we told that the same amount of money that we contributed would be deducted from the amount of money the City had undertaken to provide. This fact should have been made known from the beginning. Our community contributed \$25,800 which same amount was immediately deducted from that which the City put in. We expected that our money would be in addition to that contributed by the City.

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In closing, our thanks go out to everyone from the City that participated in this project, thanks also to the Contractors that have worked so very hard to get the work done before the “snow” arrived and thanks from our community for being chosen to be the “Pilot” for this Spur initiative. We hope to see many more completed throughout the City.

Ann Clarke
President,
Kingsland Community Association