**Meeting:** Olmsted 2022 – The Legacy

**Hosts:** National Association of Olmsted Parks and the American Society of Landscape Architects

**Time/Place:** September 6, 2018, 1:30 – 5:00, Brookline Town Hall, Brookline, MA

**In attendance:** Please see List of Participants

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### Introductions and Welcomes

**Addy Smith-Reiman, Co-chair, NAOP**

- Welcome to all. You are invited to Fairstede for a reception following this meeting.
- We need to look to the future as well as look back.
- Many thanks to Gerry Wright for initiating the Olmsted 2022 conversation and the need for a bicentennial “celebration.” The idea has grown from local interest to state, national, and possibly international (e.g., Birkenhead Park, GB).
- In 2017 NAOP met in Hartford, CT., and Rochester, NY, which was then followed by a “national summit” with ASLA in Washington, DC, April 2018. DC became the first listening “session” to convene potential national organizations, the National Park Service and Library of Congress—the two major repositories of the Olmsted plans, drawings, and papers—in the idea of a “celebration” of the Olmsted legacy in 2022, the bicentennial of Frederick Law Olmsted’s birth. Brookline is the second meeting to convene regional/local Olmsted stewards and leaders for their perspective.
- The next Olmsted symposium, which will be accompanied by the NAOP annual board meeting, will be in Louisville, KY., in April of 2019.

**Kevin Fry, Director of Public Relations and Communications, ASLA**

- Kevin introduced himself as new to ASLA and comes with a strong background in communications and public relations.
- ASLA considers itself to be “founded” by a small group of practitioners that included John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., in 1898
- Olmsted is just as relevant today and a 2022 celebration is an opportunity to reach out to the many people who know Olmsted, think they know Olmsted, and who have never heard of Olmsted.
- Evoke emotion about the landscape – that was FLO’s aim – keep that in mind
- Remember that we (parks advocates) have a different parks vocabulary to the general public
- One approach to a celebration would be to create 2 tracks – one for the general public and two for the experts and Olmsted community
- Values, Vision and Voices. Identify values. Transform values into vision. Provide a means for the public to express their voices (through technology)
• Put Olmsted “back to work” for the benefit of the parks

**Jason “Jay” Newman, Superintendent, Frederick Law Olmsted NHS**

• An interesting observation from Jay’s transition and first days at his new job—which echoed Kevin Fry’s comments—was hearing from friends, family, and acquaintances when he told them the name of his new park, that few knew the name Olmsted or understood anything about the significance of his work or the work of the firm. This is something that Jay and his staff are happy to help us with as part of the Olmsted 2022 effort.

Presentation: A Celebration of Celebrations: Notes on best practices from near and far

**F. Philip Barash, Fellow, Design Culture, The Boston Foundation**

• Do not reinvent the wheel
• Make every celebration count but have perspective
• Example 1 – Hemingway Centennial: Embrace the myth. “If it lacks authority, add more vodka” – Hemingway
• Own your historic assets
• Example 2 – Burnham Plan Centennial: “Raise no little money” and build public good will
• Provide a “legacy” that will continue after the celebration
• Saturate the marketplace
• Example 3 - Poetry Magazine at 100: Small text writ large
• Reintroduce yourself
• Example 4 – South Carolina’s Secession Sesquicentennial: Just don’t do it
• There are no lines in nature. Let’s celebrate the things worth celebrating

**Break-Out Sessions (four groups)**

**Group 1 - A National Framework**

• Need to better define what is to be accomplished
• Increase support for parks and landscapes –
  - Embrace or squash the myth – the ‘man’ or the ‘man and the legacy’ – commitment to expanding the conversation to relevancy, resiliency, health, etc.
  - National branding campaign – similar to NPS Centennial, which was “Find Your Park”
  - Potential national themes: community, engagement, connections, urban planning and design, social justice, environment, health
  - National level questions: who makes up the consortium
  - Groups to engage - Conference of Mayors

**Group 2 - State and Local Challenge**

• Need for Statewide Olmsted legacy landscape surveys - CT as example, with state and local engagement during inventories, etc.
• Create local coalitions; don’t overtake local group brands
• Incorporate the NPS “Find your Park”
• Fund and Disseminate the NPS-Frederick Law Olmsted NHS “Good Neighbors” youth education program
• Develop a press kit for Olmsted designed, and non-Olmsted designed parks
• Separate communications strategy – same values and principles /slightly different approach to national vs state/local audience
• Develop and share types of events – ‘work, play, engage’ thinking
• Engage schools and SHPOs around Olmsted legacy
• Tool kit/press kit that describes the ‘worthwhile’ investment/policy of the Olmsted Legacy
• Develop Language/translation for Olmsted values for 21st century audience

Group 3 – Developing a “Tool Kit”
• Develop and share projects and programming at various levels
• Develop generic press kits: sample media articles, etc.
• Develop and share themes to promote: freedom, health, and humanity;
• Involve young/multi-generational audiences and give them ownership
• Develop Olmsted legacy landscape types: cemeteries, parks, private estates for Senior’s legacy + beyond
• Need a unifying tag line for all participants in O22 to use

Group 4 - Resources
• Leverage existing resources (involve museums and historical societies to develop exhibitions with shorter lead times)
• Partner with schools (primary, secondary, college/university (especially LA and planning programs)
• Partner with Health and Wellness Industry: Insurance, Hospitals, Private industry (Walgreens)
• Climate Change Resources/Sustainability Plans – Engineering, Corporate resources, etc. Maybe state and local
• Social Justice (Foundations)
• Democracy – (Foundations)
• Private foundations with Olmsted values – e.g., Bloomberg Foundation (public health issues/public space)
• National Brand – competition?
• International attention – find the connections, e.g., Oslo, Norway building new city plan off Emerald Necklace
• Re-brand existing programs -
  - Community foundations – 2022 grant program? Is there a network? Convene as soon as possible – a ‘fund-around’

Summary - What are the next steps?
Define the Purpose – Olmsted 2022 should not be just a celebration
Group would like to see outcomes include:
  - Public commitment to open space – part of national conversation in funding of infrastructure needs
What are we trying to accomplish? Can we measure “success” in 2023/4 – metrics (tangible and intangible)
  - Bipartisan issues - Adopt land and water act in the name of Olmsted or have the LWCF have an Olmsted funding theme in 2022 – all grants go to Olmsted legacy parks?

Who is heading this up? Who is in charge? There is the need to identify the Olmsted 2022 core leaders by early 2019

A possible goal for 2019 – gather information/inventory ‘Olmsted landscapes/places of challenge’ – need to define: maintenance/lack of investment/limited access, etc.

Produce a “report card” at the end of 2019 that is a list of the 10, 20, (some number) of the most threatened Olmsted legacy landscapes – can we capture common theme/problems that become goal(s) to address with 2022 funding (using American Society of Civil Engineers “Infrastructure annual report card” and applying it to Olmsted Parks/Landscapes in trouble – highlight crisis)?