

Boarders want 'sweet jumps' at Brook Run

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**By Cathy Cobbs
For The Crier**

A mysterious language was being spoken Saturday afternoon at Brook Run Park, featuring such phrases as "one-ended Louisville," "crazy ledges" and "islands with roll-in lips." And everyone who attended the meeting, with the exception of this reporter, knew exactly what was being discussed. Those were the terms tossed about during DeKalb County Parks and Recreation's planning meeting for DeKalb County's first skate park, which will be built within the next year at the 102-acre facility in Dunwoody.



Attendees filled out questionnaires at Brook Run's skate park planning meeting.

The 22,000-square-foot skate park will be located across the street from the Brook Run Theatre. An existing building near the site will be renovated to include restrooms and an observation area, and could include a skate shop and concessions area.

The park is projected to cost around \$500,000.

DeKalb County District 1 Commissioner Elaine Boyer has already appropriated \$800,000 in Greenspace funds for the project.

Park officials were on hand to gather feedback from attendees and to answer general questions about the new facility.

"We want to make sure that we design a skate park that is exciting, challenging and safe," said parks commissioner Marilyn Drew. "We need your input."

About 50 people attended the hearing, most of which were middle school teens, and were given the opportunity to have a voice in the type of skating park that will be built.

Marvin Billups, a deputy director in the DeKalb Parks and Recreation department in charge of planning and development, who spoke at the hearing, called the teens' attendance "extraordinary."

"We've never had this kind of participation from this age group at any parks meeting," he said. "These are kids who feel a real passion, and they will be able to design the kind of park they want."

The group looked at drawings from several existing skate parks around the country, including the Kettering Skate Park in Kettering, Ohio, which is near completion, the Riverfront Skate Park in Oklahoma City, Okla. and the Glendale West Regional Facility in Glendale, Ariz., and voted on the type of park they liked the best.

Older skaters preferred gentle "tranies" (transitions) with more "bowls" (contained sloping areas similar to empty swimming pools), while the younger ones liked the "street" feel of the Kettering Skate Park, which featured steps, rails, and "crazy ledges" that were "wicked flowable," according to some teens.

"I know what you guys want - the street stuff, which is what you're already getting in Atlanta," said Brad Siedlecki of the Site Design Group, which is based out of Tempe. "We can do a combination of the two."

After a free-flowing exchange of information about design elements, Siedlecki invited the participants to come to the front of the room with markers and circle the elements of each park that they wanted to see at Brook Run.

He assured the group that a quality skate park will be built.

"We are not going to settle on a bad product and we will be onsite to make sure that it's built right and that it's going to last," he said.

Siedlecki said he would take the group's input and start designing the park in the next few weeks. It will then be posted at www.sitedesigngroup.com.

Those interested in looking at the preliminary design can go to the website and login using "brookrun" as the user name, and "wheels" as the password.

Billups said the department would hold another public hearing to present the final design to the public.

Parks officials predicted the skate facility would be open in about a year. Construction will take about three to four months, once all the permitting and design is complete.