

**ART COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF March 23rd, 2011
BEGINNING AT 2:00 P.M.**

PRESENT OF THE COMMISSION:

**Indovina, Lockett, Rhor, Slavick, Mike
Gable in place of Rob Kaczorowski**

PRESENT OF THE STAFF:

Morton Brown, Noor Ismail

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Indovina asked for approval of minutes from January 26th, 2011.

MOTION: To approve meeting minutes for January 26th, 2011.

MOVED: Slavick

SECONDED: Rhor

IN FAVOR: All

OPPOSED: None

CARRIED

B. Correspondence

Mr. Brown submitted the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership's list of answers to further questions he had had about changes for the Market Square project.

C. Items for Review

- Lawrenceville Hanging Flower Baskets: Conceptual & Final Approval
 - Maya Henry, Lawrenceville Corporation

Ms. Maya Henry introduced herself as the Business Manager of the Lawrenceville Corporation. She stated she was there today to ask for Conceptual and Final Approval for hanging flower baskets in Lawrenceville's main street district. She stated they have partnered with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to place 70 hanging flower baskets on Butler Street and Penn Avenue in Lawrenceville which will be seasonal from June to October. She added they are hoping to receive Conceptual and Final Approval in perpetuity so they can continue the project in subsequent years.

Ms. Henry explained that hanging flower baskets have been approved in other neighborhoods such as Mt. Washington, Downtown, East Liberty, and South Side. Lawrenceville's hanging baskets would be identical to those approved for Mt. Washington. She added that WPC has provided a plant list included with their application, and they will be maintaining the flower baskets through daily watering and other maintenance from June through October.

Ms. Henry stated their business owners have long requested beautification efforts in the Business District, and they are looking forward to implementing this strategy with the Art Commission's strong approval and support.

Ms. Henry displayed photos of the basket and bracket proposed to be used. She also pointed out a map showing the location of all 70 baskets along Butler Street and Penn Avenue.

Ms. Lockett asked if they had given any consideration of extending the baskets to Doughboy Square and Penn Avenue/

Ms. Henry responded they will extend to Doughboy Square. She said due to limited funding, they did choose the main streets' district boundaries, which do include Doughboy Square on Butler Street from 34th to 55th Street. She stated along Penn Avenue, the baskets will be hung only from 40th to 45th Street. She said this constitutes their dense Business District that they have around Children's Hospital.

Ms. Slavick asked if the brackets would have any other signage.

Ms. Henry responded no.

Mr. Indovina addressed the audience and invited them to comment on behalf, against, or in general about the project.

Mr. Indovina asked for a motion regarding Conceptual and Final Approval on this project.

Ms. Slavick moved for approval.

MOTION: To grant Conceptual and Final Approval for the Lawrenceville hanging baskets as proposed.

**MOVED: Slavick
IN FAVOR: All**

SECONDED: Lockett

OPPOSED: None

CARRIED

- Downtown Planters: Final Approval
 - Judy Wagner, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Ms. Judy Wagner from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy introduced herself as the Senior Director for the Community Gardens and Green Space program. She stated this project was first initiated as a “Happy Birthday” project by the Colcom Foundation to celebrate the City of Pittsburgh’s birthday. She explained they had been notified that they would be receiving funding again this year.

Ms. Wagner explained the typical planter has multiple types of plants, and they do five different change outs of flower types – two into Spring, a long Summer display, a long Fall display, and then a Winter greenery only display. She stated they tried to pick flowers that could handle the tough conditions Downtown and that provide constant color – a very challenging goal to achieve. However, by combining different flowers that bloom in different patterns it helps them achieve that goal. She added they will also have five different color patterns that allow them to highlight different pedestrian streets. Ms. Wagner then displayed an example of their tulip display from last year.

Ms. Wagner then stated they have a unique component to this project, which is they have been able to incorporate volunteers into the actual planting of the bulbs. She explained plantings in the Summer are much more challenging than Spring, but they have had fantastic engagement by Downtown business corporations who have brought out their personnel to give them a hand. She displayed an example of the Summer planting mixture. She pointed out Direct Energy, located Downtown, brought out over 80 volunteers last September to help the WPC do their Fall transition. She added for winter, they choose evergreens that can last even through the toughest parts of winter.

Ms. Wagner then shared comments from Downtown partners that state why they felt the planters were a good investment in Downtown. Lucas of Millcraft Industries stated the improvement that WPC has made to the overall appearance of the Golden Triangle is a major reason why Downtown is being viewed so positively. He also talked about how the planters around Downtown have added to the Marketability of the new Market Square project. Mariann Geyer of Point Park University stated the beauty and hard work of the WPC is seen 365 days a year by their faculty, staff, students, and visitors. As the University continues to realize the various pieces of the Academic Village Initiative, the Conservancy serves as a daily inspiration of what is possible in the neighborhood when they all work together. Ms. Wagner added that students and faculty have come out and have helped care for the planters right in their area.

Ms. Wagner stated Visit Pittsburgh wrote to them stating walking around in Downtown is a much more pleasant experience for visitors and local residents because of the planters. She said it sends the message that this place cares about its appearance and wants to bring nature closer to people within the urban core. She then stated the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership have commented that the consistent maintenance has demonstrated strong management presence and a dedication to improving the spaces. She stated when you see people replacing, deadheading, and trimming plants that are dead, it addresses those issues that conveys the maintenance message about the entire space, not just the planters. She added the PDP also appreciates

their flexibility, as they do have to move the planters from time to time for parades or specific needs for different businesses or institutions Downtown. She stated they have worked out a pretty good process so in a minimum of notice they can make those changes as needed.

Ms. Wagner welcomed comments and questions from the Commission.

Ms. Rhor stated she recalled this project coming to the Art Commission before, and wondered if their concerns from last time had been addressed. She stated they had mentioned the number of planters, and believed the Commission had asked the applicant to view the number of 400 planters as a bit too much. She asked if they had considered this question any further.

Ms. Wagner stated they did take that into consideration, but actually keep getting requests for more. So they feel pretty hard-pressed to tell certain people can have them and other cannot. She added Art DeMeo had conducted a survey to assess location optimality and to see if reconfiguration was a possibility.

Ms. Rhor stated that in the last hearing they also discussed the WPC giving consideration to the architecture around each of the planters. Ms. Wagner replied that this is part of why a walk-through was conducted, and that there are still a few changes that need to be made. There is a question of cost, and Ms. Wagner pointed out that the budget had been cut, which impacted staff time dedicated to this project. However, they believe that they can sustain the same quality in maintenance despite the staff cuts, due to lessons learned in the past three years that have increased efficiency.

Ms. Wagner mentions that she has been in discussion with Colcom and other funders about the Gateway Center Islands. She is waiting to have some additional meetings with other city personnel before moving forward in seeking significant funding. She is unsure of how this would impact the current grant. Her group has been working diligently in trying to figure out longer lasting spaces for greening downtown, which was a recommendation from the commission previously.

Mr. Indovina addressed the audience and invited them to comment on behalf, against, or in general about the project.

Ms. Rohr referenced a previous conversation where engaging artists with this project had been discussed, where they could perhaps create a more distinctive and dynamic object that would be different than a typical planter, and asked Ms. Wagner if this is something that had been considered.

Ms. Wagner replied that she had seen the Cleveland planter project which included planters designed by artists. They had not pursued project like this because of the cost associated with producing planters at this scale, and the question was one of who would maintain them. They city was not able to maintain something at that scale, and that she would not want to ask Colcom to consider this an enduring gift. She had been getting mixed messages about how this would be maintained beyond a few years.

Ms. Rohr expressed that she had mentioned this as a suggestion, and that the project was more about engaging artists as opposed to scale. She noticed that there is some potential to utilize our local artists to create a more dynamic project. She viewed this as a missed opportunity to discount something more engaging due to scale. She suggested having a conversation with Renee Piechocki and Morton Brown to find solutions to accommodate budget and concerns related to scale.

Ms. Wagner mentioned that they have looked into models in other cities, but that the scale of investment of these projects still led to concern about the maintenance in terms of the budget that she was working with.

Ms. Rohr added that this budget is actually quite substantial. Ms. Wagner replied that the presented budget is only for maintenance, and does not include initial implementation and cost of the actual planters – the planters themselves were an additional \$200,000 investment which is not reflected in this budget.

Mr. Indovina offered a suggestion to perhaps phase artist-designed planters in. Ms. Wagner mentioned that there are a few high-visibility locations where this would work very well.

Ms. Slavic offered examples of city-wide public art projects, such as CowParade (fiberglass animals designed by local artists) that have individual objects that were sponsored by local businesses, and that some regular planters could be fillers which supplement artist-designed, business sponsored planters. She

funding for this, but that they were very happy to be able to re-use the blockstone, as it is historically significant to Pittsburgh and aesthetically had a very similar effect.

Ms. Burk went on to mention that another change was regarding the tree pit width, which was changed to 5ft. for a better environment for the trees. They were able to keep the outdoor dining sidewalks large enough, even with the increase in tree bed. They were also able to add Market Street to the project. This was a good tie-in with the work that was already being done on 5th Avenue, the Fairmont, as well as with nearby Heinz Hall.

Mr. Indovina asks if there are any questions from the commission, or any comments from the audience. As there are no comments, he asks that a motion be entertained.

Ms. Slavik moves for Final Acceptance of the Market Square renovation.

MOTION: To grant Final Acceptance for Market Square Renovation

MOVED: Slavik

SECONDED: Rohr

IN FAVOR: All

OPPOSED: None

CARRIED

- Mellon Square Phase I Renovation: Final Approval
 - Susan Rademacher, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy

Susan Rademacher of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy (PPC) introduces herself and states that she will be presenting the final construction documents for Mellon Park Phase I.

Ms. Rademacher stated and this area of Mellon Square is the focus of phase I because it was the most deteriorated, and it established fundamental design prototypes that will be used to direct additional phases of the project. She pointed out that this part of the park with the new terrace has 15.5% in paved area, which gives this segment the greatest gain in terms of publically accessible space.

Ms. Rademacher also described that the driving factor behind the project was sustainability at all levels. Suitability of additions to the site taking into consideration to weather and climate conditions in terms of plants chosen, durability of the materials chosen and with the historic nature of the park in mind as well. She then turns the presentation to Patricia O'Donnell, a landscape architecture consultant from Heritage Landscapes.

Ms. O'Donnell presented a small scale color 11" x 17" drawing of the color and lighting plan. She began by mentioning that there were a number of factors about the terrace construction that were mentioned in the last meeting of the commission. There was a question of two means of access egress. There were issues surrounding materials that related to matching or their divergence from original historical materials. Ms. O'Donnell mentioned that the terrace itself was the biggest change to the plan, and that conceptual approval was received. The gain of space that is afforded by the changes is highlighted in the application materials.

Ms. O'Donnell described that after the conceptual review, the team was assembled for several charettes with the aforementioned guiding factors in mind, including awareness so as not to incur on the structural slab. There is a line between DPW and the park, as well as between the Parking Authority and the Parking Authority's tenants located on the structural slab. A scheme with an angled entry was proffered in the previous meeting, but the structural engineers indicated that the slab could be cut through to achieve the desired grade. This suggestion was vetted in a number of other thinking processes and field reviews, however ultimately encroaching on the structural slab in any way was not deemed to be acceptable.

The next issue addressed by Ms. O'Donnell's team was the intent for safe access.. A number of schemes for points of entry were explored, including testing of a mid-level landing entry point located at the Smithfield and 6th stair (O'Donnell indicates that this the rectangular space to the left, located on the color

plan). She noted that there is an interesting grade relationship at this point – one of the planters is considerably lower to a neighboring planter by roughly 40 inches. All of the testing and research done to make this point ADA compliant (without disrupting structure) was unsuccessful. Many other scenarios were researched, and as mentioned in the last meeting, care was taken so that the openings of the sweet gum planters were not visible from the entry of the Omni William Penn. Working the relationships between grades access and safety egress, the final solution wielded two entries at various points. The final solution married the relationship between the best spacing for the trees, the cleanest relationships of ramping, and the best symmetry and use of space after twelve alternatives had been tested.

Ms. O'Donnell continued to explain that the movement through the sweet gum planter remains above the structural slab and the ramping begins after one crosses the second wall of the sweet gum planter. That ramping is designed to be just .13 grade below the maximum ADA grade. This allows for any potential slight construction error. The double ramp concept provides symmetry, despite narrowing the space. The space is now a 5ft wide ramp with a 4 inch detail for the mounting of the outer rail. ADA compliance dictates that a 5ft clear area is needed for any turns in ramping.

Ms. O'Donnell clarified that the ramp is located on the construction plan.

Mr. Indovina asked what the difference in grade elevation is.

Ms. O'Donnell responded that just shy of two feet are gained. She went on to state that the relationship between the length of the ramp and the grade reflects the desire verbalized by the PPC after looking at the first design that there is no more than 2% grade through the overall terrace, as that is the limit for complete access. She also references the drawing set and explained that the parapet wall edge is completely even, despite the street being graded. In the interest in drainage and in light of the flat parapet wall, there is now a 2% pitch toward Smithfield Street. The planter at the left hand edge of the Smithfield and 6th stairway is being used to take up a bit of grade in between the soft space and the paved surface. This is the biggest 'designed' piece, as much of the rest of the design is simply to replicate the historical design of the park. She added that they are moving forward with the fiberglass basin at the end of the cascade. There was an issue in this area with vibration affecting concrete, and the fiberglass is a solution which provides an absolute waterproof barrier but also accounts for vibration with the garage below and the street traffic. The cascade will be a matte finish in a celadon green color, which is replicating the historical materials. The fountains today seem very dark and heavy because of the granite used in the redesign. This new construction will be closer to what the fountain looked like historically. The granite will be removed and the shape of the basins will be more similar to their historical shape, with a slight shift in shape to accommodate for the grade of the slope and to account for overspray.

Ms. O'Donnell went on to mention that none of the original mechanics will be used in the fountains, there will be new piping and new controls, including a wind sensor that will drop the level of the water when the wind increases. State of the art equipment will be used in the control room. With the restriction in the structural slab, the original drawing plans have been researched and it's been determined that the original drainage routes were the only options for drainage. There is a trench drain along the entire front. A Laureco waterproofing system will be used to prevent leakage into the mezzanine level shops.

Ms. O'Donnell added that there was a redesign with the railing. There is no longer a glass gate, due to cost and safety issues. The railing is now stainless steel. The top of the rail is a custom extrusion in aluminum that will allow the down-light to rest above the rail. There was also a lengthy discussion in planning sessions about if the rail should be flat in the interest of cups falling off of it. The railing has a sleek aerodynamic profile with a thickening toward the 'inward' side so that the lighting is in the handrail top and lights downward and will rake across the stainless steel. Otherwise the lighting is replicating the original to a degree. The steps and the planters all had wall lights. They were at uniform heights which cast a semi-circular pool of light below them. L-401 and L-402 are railing details. We've looked at the issue of lighting the cascade below the shells rather than underwater lighting. The basic failure of underwater lighting is gasket replacement. The funds raised by the PCP are both for the work and for the maintenance above what the city is committed to continuing to provide. The city through PDP is doing daytime staffing and contract care, and the PCP will be doing above that level of maintenance through that fund.

Ms. O'Donnell continued that one of the issues throughout the project was also to design to dissuade rat nesting. It was noted since the last meeting that site protection was a significant issue, and she stated that

on the page after the cover page, several protection details are shown. She went on to say that they have a detail for a six foot high fence with concrete boots that will go completely around the sculpture bed. There is a detail for 2'x4's, dowel blue board and an exterior surfacing of exterior plywood to hook over the planters so that movement back and forth during construction doesn't damage the granite of the planter walls. There is an ongoing discussion of access during construction. They will be using the left hand side for movement of small machinery and stockpiling. They are restricting the size and weight loads of machinery during construction.

Mr. Brown asked about the weight restriction.

Ms. O'Donnell stated that her structural engineer has that information. She adds that it is variable through the lot. They have also found that the entire terrace bottom is flat, as was typical in architecture of the 1950s. They will be doing a 'wedge lift' with the structural engineers that will create a drainage bottom, directing water to the drainage points. The wedge base will create the first layer, above that is the Laurencio waterproofing, above that is a protection board for the waterproofing itself. Finally, the layered soils detailed in the soil profiles are on the top.

Ms. Rhor added that she likes the changes in the lawn.

Ms. O'Donnell stated that it's more uniform, and that DPW, PPC, and the funders have all been privy to the changes.

Ms. Slavick noted that these are very elegant solutions.

Mr. Indovina asked if the fiberglass basins will be prefabricated and then set into the fountain.

Ms. O'Donnell said they will be custom fabricated offsite.

Mr. Indovina then asked if they will reflect the original profiles of the original fountains, to which Ms. O'Donnell replied that they will be, except for the one adaptation to angle the edge slightly, to be lifted slightly to accommodate for overspray control. It will have the lightness and grace of the original rolled edge.

Mr. Indovina expressed that he liked the stainless steel railing and that it was consistent with the 1950s design of the original. He noted that the difficulties seemed to be resolved. He concluded by noting that one of the designs reflects a 2/100ths of a foot elevation rather than a two foot difference.

Ms. O'Donnell replied that this is an error.

Mr. Indovina asked if the planting on the canopy roof includes a tray and pipe system.

Ms. O'Donnell replied that this is a new green roof, where it is brought in on trays with a gravel edge and a restraining detail, with 2 feet of gravel at each edge, which is where the ladder access will be for any maintenance. She stated that they have checked all the loads on that run and they don't have any problems with weight. The structural engineers have assured that even with a load of fully saturated plants it should be well under below the limits of the structure.

Mr. Indovina asked how much elevation difference there is between the terrace to the top of the canopy.

Ms. O'Donnell responded that it was three feet, and this was actually brought up in a charette where it was discussed if there would be access to the canopy from below or from above. The answer was determined that due to the elevation there would need to be two structural restraints and lines for any work done.

Mr. Indovina noted that since people are being brought to the edge of the terrace, it's a bit safer to have this secondary level. He also asked how long the construction period is.

Ms. O'Donnell replied that she thinks that if they can bid in May, then they should be finished by October. The intent is to do a ground mending ceremony in mid June (June 15). They can begin then in mid-June if they can contract in May.

Mr. Gable asked what was happening with the patterned paving.

Ms. O'Donnell said that they will replace that paving, as they assume it will be damaged during the work. It will be replaced in-kind. She went on to say that Patricio Mosaic with Phil Simonds invented that paving. They are still in service and will be invited to bid on the relaying of this. Public Works has been doing the marble chip scatter in other places but not as detailed in Mellon square.

Mr. Indovina asked if the intent is to replace all of the paving.

Ms. O'Donnell replied that the intent is to put a life span number in all of the paving. The replacements will be done in phases as the money is raised. This area was selected because it will make the biggest difference in this phase of the project.

Mr. Indovina asked about the steps.

Ms. O'Donnell responded that the mortar has failed completely and that they are held in place with gravity right now. The very deep, very thick efflorescence was removed last fall. The steps will be lifted, cleaned, leveled and reset.

Mr. Indovina thought that these stairs were not that old.

Ms. O'Donnell stated that she thought it was the 1955 granite still. One of the strategies was to do one flight at a time and to use the landings for staging.

Mr. Indovina asked if there were any other questions.

Mr. Brown referenced a photo from 1955 where it seemed as though people could not access a particular area. Mr. Brown asked whether the original terrace was accessible.

Ms. O'Donnell responded that the area in question was not accessible originally. She noted that in the earlier photos there was a linear hedge that was green at the edge that was denser than what is being discussed. Ms. O'Donnell further added that at the time of the photo there was no access to the terrace and the area in question. The original concept design from the 1940s shows people on the terrace with a railing, and it gives the sense that the railing would be glass. The issue has been that this is the least successful area. As noted 15.5% of the overall area has been gained in space. The current use of it is deteriorated plant material and homeless living.

Mr. Brown agreed that the change in access to the terrace is indeed for the betterment of the park.

Mr. Indovina asks if anyone in the audience would like to comment, or if there is further discussion.

Mr. Indovina asked for a motion regarding Final Approval on this project.

MOTION: To grant Final Approval for Mellon Square Phase I Renovation

MOVED: Slavick

SECONDED: Rhor

IN FAVOR: All

OPPOSED: None

CARRIED

Meeting adjourned