

**ART COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF June 24, 2009**  
**BEGINNING AT 2:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT OF THE COMMISSION:** Cooper, Hall, Serrao, Haskell

**PRESENT OF THE STAFF:** Noor Ismail  
Morton Brown

**A. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Cooper asked for approval of minutes. The minutes for May, 2009 were accepted and approved.

**B. Correspondence**

Mr. Brown presented letters of support from Allegheny Center Associates on behalf of the revitalization of Allegheny Square Park.

**C. Items for Review**

**a. Pittsburgh Cultural Trust 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Signage**

- o Bill Kolano, Kolano Design
- o Mark Fleming, VP of Marketing, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust

Bill Kolano introduced himself and his co-presenter, Mark Fleming, VP of Marketing of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust.

Mr. Kolano then began to describe the three graphical components of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Signage project. Mr. Kolano stated that the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration will begin in July (2009) with a huge crawl through the district and extend into the fall and the end of the year. The point of the signage campaign is to recognize the work of the Trust over the past 25 years. The Trust and Kolano design selected 25 buildings in the Cultural District to receive recognition.

Mr. Kolano then displayed a list of the 25 buildings/restoration projects that are recognized in the project. The first recognition signage will be a temporary vinyl to be placed on windows of the 25 buildings, the same size as an historical marker plaque that currently resides on those buildings. Some vertical, some horizontal. The vinyl window signs are not in Art Commission purview (but do conform to Zoning regulations), however, these are presented here to show the Commission the entire package/context of the proposal.

Mr. Kolano stated that each vinyl window plaque will have a "QR" code printed on it. Mr. Kolano explained that a QR code is the next generation of a UPC code. He went on to say that galleries like the Mattress Factory currently use this system. Mr. Kolano then stated that one would take a picture of the QR code with their smartphone, then the phone would link the user to either a text message or audio message that would offer information about the referent.

Mark Fleming stated that the QR code would actually launch the browser on a smartphone, thereby delivering a user to video, text, or anything on the internet. For non-smartphones, there will be a number to call that would deliver information about the referent.

Ms. Hall stated that in the application materials, the sign read differently than what was presented here today. She asked Mr. Fleming to clarify.

Mr. Fleming stated that the notation that she was referring to was actually a means of determining whether or not your phone was "smart" or "dumb".

Mr. Kolano asked to walk through the rest of the vinyls quickly, to get on to the other graphics. Mr. Kolano then introduced the second graphic component: sidewalk vinyls. These sidewalk vinyls will be placed on the sidewalk near the 25 building locations interspersed along the district, and each one would ask an interesting question about the Cultural District, giving you a number to call to get the answer. Each sidewalk vinyl is 36 inches in diameter, and each one would be removed by the Trust at the end of the celebration.

Ms. Hall clarified that the graphic presented in person was more simplified than the design included in the application materials.

Mr. Kolano affirmed, stating that the designs presented today were purposely simplified to produce more visual clarity. Mr. Kolano then quickly scrolled through the rest of the sidewalk vinyls.

Mr. Cooper stated that the vinyl material sample provided seemed non-slip, but asked if the vinyl material to be used has ever had a history of peeling up at its edges, and if so, what would the applicant do about that.

Mr. Kolano stated that the longest application of this type of vinyl is in front of Mellon Arena at gate 1, and that there has never been a problem with it peeling up. He went on to say that the Trust would maintain every piece, replacing them as needed until the end of the year when the celebration closes.

Mr. Fleming affirmed.

Mr. Kolano then presented the third and final graphic form. Mr. Kolano displayed images of free-standing triosks (three sided kiosks) with a windmill attachment at its top that are currently in use for the Three Rivers Arts Festival. These triosks would sit on the sidewalks in the district free-standing atop their individual bases and display information about the District in a flat rectangular portion of its mid-section, near sight-level of an average person. Mr. Kolano stated that in conjunction with celebrating its past, the Trust also want to acknowledge the now and the future. The triosks will display information that speak to the theme of "25 ways to create a cultural district".

Mr. Kolano stated that the information in the triosks will not only be interesting to tourists and delegates for the G-20 summit, but the Heinz History Center and the Smithsonian are planning to take these objects "on the road" in order to use this template of creating a cultural district as a guide for other cities. Mr. Kolano stated that the triosks would be placed along Penn Avenue in their numerical sequence during the celebration from July to the end of the year.

Ms. Hall asked if the windmills "did anything" such as generate energy, or if they are merely visual.

Mr. Fleming stated these are only decorative, but that the Trust was thinking of different ways in which the windmills could create power for lights, sound, etc.

Ms. Hall asked if the triosks could be reused after the celebration.

Mr. Fleming stated that they could and would be re-purposed.

Ms. Hall asked how the triosks were attached to the ground.

Mr. Kolano stated that they were not attached to the ground in any way, that the weight and width of the triangular steel base was sufficient to keep them from toppling. The triosks had been in use for over a year with no incident.

Ms. Hall asked how much they weigh.

Mr. Fleming did not know.

Mr. Kolano stated that they weigh a lot. Mr. Kolano clarified by stating that the upright of the triosk was made of lightweight aluminum, but the triangular steel base was quite heavy—thus, providing a lot of stability.

Ms. Hall asked why the graphic design on the triosk was blank in its lower 1/3<sup>rd</sup> area.

Mr. Kolano stated that this was on purpose, to ensure that the important information was of appropriate sight-level.

Mr. Fleming stated that they were also going to place a brochure holder onto the triosks that would keep walking tour maps for passers by.

Ms. Hall asked if they would also hold the public art walking tour.

Mr. Fleming stated that the Trust had developed a walking tour of the cultural district specifically.

Ms. Haskell stated that there would be a need to replenish the brochures frequently to ensure that the holders are not empty at times.

Mr. Fleming stated that the Trust is “all about selling tickets”, and consequently, they have the staff and willingness to keep those holders filled.

Mr. Cooper asked if there were any audience members that would speak in favor or in opposition of this project.

No answer. Mr. Cooper then called for Commission discussion.

Ms. Hall asked if the triosks were currently being used in the Three Rivers Arts Festival, were these items supposed to come to the Art Commission.

Mr. Brown stated that it was his understanding that they should have, but he did not realize that they were to be placed until they were placed. He went on to say that next year, the triosks should come before the Art Commission and he would see to that. Additionally, Mr. Brown stated that he had discussed the plans for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary signage campaign (with the triosks) with the Department of Public Works, and they did approve.

Mr. Serrao stated that he thought that this would be a great educational tool for the City and the Cultural District.

Mr. Cooper asked for a motion.

**MOTION:** Project as presented received Conceptual and Final approval of project as submitted.

**MOVED: Haskell**

**SECONDED: Hall**

**IN FAVOR: All**

**OPPOSED: None**

**CARRIED**

**b. Revitalization of Allegheny Square Park**

- o Chris Siefert, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

Mr. Cooper explained that this is the second time that the Revitalization of Allegheny Square Park project had come to the Commission. The first time was last year in September (2008), and at that time conceptual approval was not given, pending further information on the site.

Mr. Siefert introduced himself and explained that he is here today to present additional information and go over the steps that had been taken from conditions set forth at the last hearing. Mr. Siefert stated that one condition was a site visit by the Commission, which was completed in October, 2008. Additionally, another completed condition was gaining letters of support from property owners adjacent to the site. Mark Fatla of the Northside Leadership Conference was at the hearing today to testify in support, as well as Kevin Krasne of Allegheny Center Associates. Mr. Siefert presented letters of support from Sara Radelett of the New Hazlett Theatre to the Commission.

Mr. Siefert noted that the third condition that has been met was in communicating with artist Syl Damianos about the plans to restore his (City-owned) sculpture entitled *Cubed Tension* that currently resides on the site. Mr. Siefert noted its placement on a map of the site and an email correspondence between Mr. Damianos and himself in which they agreed on the restoration and relocation plans. Mr. Siefert stated that another condition was to provide more detailed elevation and slope information on the site. Mr. Siefert stated that the site was still in conceptual design, but pointed out the proposed location of trees and an elevation rendering from his original proposal.

Mr. Siefert stated that there will be discussions about particular species of trees and a horticulturalist consultant will be engaged at some point. Mr. Siefert went on to point out the elevation indication in the drawing, and how the existing slope of the earth is met and how the footprint of the park fits in with the adjacent buildings. Mr. Siefert stated that the last condition was that an agreement be drafted between the City and the Children's Museum on access, ownership, maintenance, etc. That agreement is underway currently, but is not yet finalized. The Department of Public Works and the City Legal Department are working on this agreement with the Children's Museum.

Mr. Siefert stated that the project schedule has been bumped a little bit. He stated that he came to the Commission last September seeking conceptual approval, so that they could move on in design development and into construction documents. Since conceptual approval had not been gained, their capital campaign has been put into a holding pattern as his board and partners wish to have that conceptual approval before moving ahead. Mr. Siefert stated that since he believes that he had completed the conditions set forth from the first meeting, he would be seeking conceptual approval today so that this project could be re-inserted into the capital campaign and move forward.

Ms. Hall asked to clarify that Mr. Siefert was seeking conceptual approval today even though his capital campaign was halted.

Mr. Siefert stated that he needs conceptual approval in order to continue with the capital campaign.

Ms. Hall asked if the capital campaign was solely meant for the park, or if there were other projects/items included.

Mr. Siefert stated that there were other items included in the campaign.

Ms. Hall stated that the capital campaign, then, is not halted just the portion for the park.

Mr. Siefert affirmed.

Mr. Cooper asked if Mr. Siefert could speak about the overall conception of the park and its relationship to the Children's Museum.

Mr. Siefert stated that the conception of the park is to create a community park at the former crossroads of Ohio Street and Federal street. This park would benefit the Children's Museum in that the site currently is not maintained/fallen into disrepair and no one really uses the space. The conception is to fill the sunken plaza in, meet grade on all sides, and create access and pedestrian flow across it. Mr. Siefert went on to say that there is a diagonal crossway seen in the site plan that relates to the adjacent (former) Carnegie Library clock tower.

Mr. Siefert noted in the site plan that the center of the proposed park was an open space that might allow for public gatherings and accommodate public art planned for the area. The benefit to the museum would be in the addition of a green space, but also to allow for outdoor programming with the Museum's docent and educational components. Additionally, school bus loading occurs in this area. With the new park area, there might be an opportunity for the students to have lunch outside. The Children's Museum already has an outdoor exhibit space---the priority for this new park space would be in creating a community green space.

Ms. Haskell asked who is currently responsible for maintaining this space.

Mr. Siefert stated that Citiparks has maintenance responsibilities. He then corrected that statement to say the Department of Public Works had maintenance responsibilities.

Ms. Haskell then stated that the site currently is not well maintained and in a state of disrepair.

Mr. Siefert stated that Allegheny Center Associates had used their own funds to maintain the area over the past few years.

Ms. Haskell stated that this was unfortunate. She went on to say that since the area is currently not well maintained, what would ensure that the new park would be maintained.

Mr. Siefert stated that the Children's Museum has been working on this issue with the City while working through the agreement with the City. It is possible that a portion of the capital campaign will be allotted for a maintenance fund for the area. The idea currently being worked through in the agreement is one of shared maintenance responsibilities between the City's Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Children's Museum. Mr. Siefert stated that the Children's Museum would most likely take maintenance of the public art elements of the park, but DPW would agree to handle the grass and paved areas of the park.

Ms. Haskell asked if any of the existing trees would remain.

Mr. Siefert stated that there are currently 3-4 dozen trees in the area of the park. He stated that most trees would stay, but there are about 5 or so that would need to go. One particular species of Bald Cypress (a rare tree in Pittsburgh) is currently in the park and it is the intent that they stay. He went on to say that they had engaged an arborist to make assessments of the trees in the area and are planning to go by that assessment in order to keep as many trees as possible, but remove those that are diseased or at the end of their life. However, the plans for the park include the introduction of dozens of more trees.

Ms. Haskell stated that the steps that currently exist in the proposed park area mirror the steps of the adjacent old Buhl building, and asked if those steps would be removed in the grading.

Mr. Siefert stated that the steps would be removed in order to level the grade of the new park. Mr. Siefert noted on the site plan where the park renovation actually restores the park parcel back to its original property lines and helps augment an actual right of way, allowing the park to exist as a whole in the event that Ohio street were re-opened at any point in the future. The stairs exist in the right of way. They will be removed and filled over to create the ability to enter the park at grade.

Ms. Haskell asked if it is still a possibility that the City will re-open the streets that once ran through Allegheny Center.

Mr. Siefert stated that anything is possible but he did not know for sure.

Mr. Cooper asked to clarify that the lateral east-west walls are at a height in which a person could sit, but that they dip down and end at grade.

Mr. Siefert stated that conceptually, all walls are 18 inches high, but maybe a paving stripe gets picked up and it is just a mark on the ground.

Mr. Cooper asked if the purpose of these walls was to provide seating.

Mr. Siefert stated that first of all, the walls create a rhythm throughout the park by setting up a horizontal feature as a design. Secondly, it creates less formal ways to sit and be in the park.

Mr. Cooper stated that the artwork had been in the plans since the first presentation last September. Mr. Cooper asked Mr. Siefert to tell the commission about that.

Mr. Siefert noted on the site plan where the public art piece by Ned Kahn was to be placed. Ned Kahn was contracted by the designers of the Children's Museum to create the art piece entitled *Articulated Cloud* that adorns the entire exterior tower structure of their building. Kahn was also engaged to design the public art piece for the new park which consists of stainless steel poles that would emit misting water—a "cloud" that would present a relationship with the piece on the façade of the Children's Museum. Mr. Siefert pointed out a second piece of public art planned for the space. Mr. Siefert began to talk about the artist, Edwin Hamilton (now lives on west coast, but a native of Beaver Falls, PA) and described his work as a stone mason. Mr. Siefert stated that the reason they chose to engage Mr. Hamilton is that there was a recent lightning strike at the adjacent former Carnegie Library that caused some of the granite stone to fall into disrepair, not to be used in the repair of the building.

Mr. Siefert went on to say that DPW made him aware of a quantity of canal stones located at one of their local facilities. These stones came from canals that used to run through the area of the Northside near Allegheny Center, and the thought was that they could utilize these semi-historic artifacts in an interesting way in the park. Mr. Siefert noted a place holder on the site plan for the spot in which Mr. Hamilton might produce a stone piece, but also noted that they do not have the piece designed as yet. Mr. Siefert went on to say that it was their intent to create this sense of unity in the park through the use of many natural materials—even in the public art.

Ms. Haskell asked where Mr. Hamilton's piece would be in relation to Syl Damianos' piece (*Cubed Tension*).

Mr. Siefert stated that he had spoken to Morton and Syl Damianos about potential placement, then noted specific places on the site plan where they are thinking the piece might go. Mr. Siefert stated that they do want to keep the right of way open, so that once the piece is repaired and ready for installation, it might go to the side of the park out of the right of way. Mr. Siefert went on to say that there are several locations that they are considering (even in the area next to the New Hazelet Theatre, although they are hesitant to place near an historic structure) and that they would work with Morton and the Damianos—as well as take any guidance from the Commission—on final placement.

Ms. Haskell asked if the concrete overhangs would be removed.

Mr. Siefert confirmed.

Ms. Hall asked about the reasoning behind placement of the public art pieces in the park. Ms. Hall went on to say that if the Museum already has an outdoor exhibit space, as was stated, then why place public art in the open space of the new park and that if the park is to be public, then why have a piece in it that refers back to the Children's Museum.

Mr. Siefert stated that the new public art would be the property of the City and “belong” to the public, but the Museum would retain maintenance responsibilities on the artwork funded through an endowment and in coordination with the City’s Public Art Manager.

Ms. Hall stated that it is of concern that after having visited the current site, there is a worry that maintenance will not be performed properly in this new park, just as the current site has been largely neglected over the years.

Mr. Siefert stated that therein lies the opportunity. With a new and vibrant museum willing to invest millions of dollars into this project, they will not sit idly by and watch the site deteriorate. The Children’s Museum wants to have ownership and care for this area that has been neglected in the past. Mr. Siefert went on to say that the Museum wants the community and the City to have ownership on this park, as well, and that it is his belief that if one builds a place that is well designed and well maintained, the community will use it and call it theirs.

Ms. Hall stated that the current site is not horribly designed, and it is used quite often by a few persons for lunch and such. She went on to ask how the newly designed park would provide a beacon of vibrancy in the area.

Mr. Siefert asked if the other option was to leave it the way it is.

Ms. Hall stated that she does not have an answer, that she was just asking the question.

Mr. Siefert stated that he does not have any scientific data to support his theory, but has no question in his mind that the park, once renovated, will be more populated than it is now.

Ms. Hall asked if he thought that if the current site was just properly maintained, would it produce more users, or was it his assertion that a better design would call more users to the area.

Mr. Siefert stated that he did believe that the design is part of the answer. Mr. Siefert stated that sunken plazas were used a lot in the seventies and they worked well. This particular plaza had a fountain in it during its early years, and he imagined that it was very effective. Currently, however, the cost and time to restore the fountain/sunken plaza and surrounding eroded bricks would be infeasible and cost the City a lot more money over time to maintain.

Ms. Hall asked him to take away the idea of money and talk about vibrancy and use.

Dennis McCarthy introduced himself as an architect that works with the Museum. He stated that he once worked with RTK in Baltimore back in the 1960’s, when he designed Charles Center. He stated that any time that they designed any space in which they took people up or took people down, the space never worked—people never used them. The design of the new park to exist at grade will get more users due to the simple ability for users to walk through it, linger in it, and come back to it.

Ms. Haskell asked about the fountain in the sunken plaza, and where did the water go when it operated.

Mr. McCarthy said that it was recycled.

Ms. Haskell corrected and stated that she meant to ask if it splashed up into the rim of the sunken plaza.

Mr. Siefert explained that there was a center jet that sometimes could have been blown by the wind, but most of the time contained its splash inside the sunken plaza. There were also lower jets that sprayed into the center one.

Ms. Haskell asked the name of the original architect.

Mr. Siefert stated that his name was Michael Breger Associates out of New York.

Ms. Haskell stated that there are aspects of that original design that are very beautiful.

Mr. Siefert stated that there are definitely some strong geometries.

Ms. Haskell stated that there was obviously a lot of thought and design that went into this plaza that related well to the space and surrounding buildings, and she wondered if it was responsible to simply cover it up in lieu of a new park, especially within the current economic stress in which we are all involved. She went on to ask if simply refurbishing the park had been considered.

Mr. Siefert stated that refurbishment would cost significantly more than building the new park.

Ms. Haskell stated that some good bricks could be used to replace others...

Mr. Siefert stated there was not one good brick in that area, and if one appeared good now in five years it would not be.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the brick samples that he inspected had intense de-lamination throughout.

Mr. Cooper asked if Joe had a question.

Mr. Serrao asked about the connectivity on the west and south sides. He went on to ask about the transition or connection of the park into the space that affronts Allegheny Center Associates. Mr. Serrao stated that he could not decipher some of the sections of the site plan and asked Mr. Siefert to point out where Children's Way was in the plans.

Mr. Siefert started by locating 764.8 on the site plan (the low point). He stated that there is a four foot rise to a point directed on the site plan. Mr. Siefert stated that by filling the grade and allowing a slope on the 3 sides (north, east and west) it would make a natural low point that they plan to become the water management system which includes a bioswale.

Mr. Siefert noted that these elements do make for an implied "X" design of the park with a side entrance, which historically had been the original design of the space. Mr. Siefert noted that they may have to study this some more. Mr. Siefert noted that on the south edge, there is a building holding at area 773 on the site plan all along the south edge. He noted stairs that correspond to an entry into the park, allowing a smooth transition from that building. Mr. Siefert stated that he had met with Mr. Krasne and agreed that all parties need to study the transition from the Allegheny Center Associates building into the park some more and come up with an amenable situation.

Mr. Serrao stated that he believed that the connectivity of the park to its surrounding constituents was very important.

Mr. Siefert stated that they were trying to get accessibility at grade from all four corners of the park, but that the Allegheny Center Associates building footprint posed a particular problem, and its transition needed some more work.

Mr. Serrao stated that he had seen a double line on the plan and thought it was indicating a wall there—he was happy to understand that it was not a wall, but a transition. He stated that opening up that area will help the park a lot.

Mr. Cooper asked if there were any other elements of the presentation.

Mr. Siefert stated that there were none, but that there were community members present who would like to speak to the project.

Mr. Cooper stated that if there were people present who would like to speak in favor of the project, would they approach the podium and do so.

Mark Fatla of the Northside Leadership Conference identified himself and noted that this project had the full support of his organization, and mentioned many meetings that he had attended in which he witnessed much support from other community members. He went on to say that he is well respectful of this site's history, and the problems associated with deferred maintenance but he sees this new park as a new opportunity for new users and future users of the space.

Kevin Krasne of Allegheny Center Associates introduced himself and offered his support for this project.

Mr. Cooper asked if there was anyone in the audience who would speak for or against this project.

Renee Piechocki introduced herself as the Director of the Office of Public Art and a member of the Allegheny Commons community. She went on to say that she was "neutral" on this project. Ms. Piechocki stated that she wished to remind the Commission of its "60 day rule" that renders its decision unnecessary if it is unable to reach a decision on and applicant within 60 days of the applicant's first submission.

Ms. Piechocki went on to say that she was a little disappointed with the Ned Kahn piece, and questioned Mr. Siefert as to whether or not he had spoken to Mr. Kahn about some of the concerns raised at his first presentation to the Art Commission last September. Ms. Piechocki stated that she believes that Mr. Kahn is a wonderful artist, but that the piece proposed for this park was not the artist's best work.

Ms. Piechocki also questioned giving conceptual approval for Edwin Hamilton's work as there is no design yet to consider.

Ms. Piechocki went on to say that there is also no decision yet as to where Syl Damianos' work is to be placed.

Ms. Piechocki stated that she is a neighbor to the park, and that she would love to use this park more. She stated that her largest concern is that the Commission avoid having the situation that occurred with Tribute to Children repeat itself with this project.

Mr. Cooper asked if there were any others that wished to speak.

Mr. Siefert stated that he would like some clarity on what conceptual approval means, and "who is responsible for what" He stated that he was not aware of a 30 or 60 day time limit on decision, and that his project needs more time than that to develop itself into final plans. Mr. Siefert went on to say that his project is seeking conceptual approval, but that the project is still in its conceptual phase: He has spoken to Ned Kahn about previous points of concern from Art Commission hearings and Syl Damianos about potential sites for *Cubed Tension* but no real plans have been solidified or have been asked of the artists to modify at this time. He went on to say that, as he discussed with Morton, the Children's Museum considers the process thus far to be conceptual in nature, and that they must move ahead in the next design phase—there is more work to be done before plans are finalized.

Mr. Siefert explained again that he is more than willing to come to the Commission frequently over the coming months and present updated information as the project moves toward final technical specs and final approval, but in order for his partners and board to pursue and release funding for the next phase of design development, they need a sense of direction and confirmation of conceptual approval from the commission.

Mr. Cooper stated that it was his understanding that this was exactly the way that the approval process currently works. Mr. Cooper went on to say that if the 60-day rule were to kick in at conceptual approval, then no project could operate at that pace for final approval.

Mr. Brown stated that he was not in office at the time of the Tribute to Children application and decision, could not speak to that event, and frankly did not understand the decision that was made at that time to deem Art Commission approval unnecessary due to its failure to make a decision. He went on to say that it is his current understanding—even after speaking to the City legal department—that giving a project

conceptual approval is considered making a decision and therefore there would be no “clock ticking” within the 60-day rule. He went on to clarify that the 60 day rule takes effect when the Commission fails to make a decision on a project when it is presented. If a decision is not made on an application by the Commission within 60 days of the applicant’s presentation to the Commission, then the Commission’s decision is deemed unnecessary.

Ms. Hall asked if tabling a decision would be considered not making a decision.

Mr. Brown stated that it was nebulous as to what tabling a decision means in this context.

Mr. Serrao stated that one thing they have done in the past is to give conceptual approval, then ask that the applicant waive the right to enact the 60 day rule. He went on to say that they have structured motions to reflect this in the past so that it is clear to the commission, the applicant and the legal department that the applicant needs more time than 60 days in order to work through the design process and get to the point of final review.

Mr. Siefert stated that they would be more than willing to come back, not just once for final approval, but as many times as needed to provide informational updates and seek guidance. It was his plan to come back after conceptual approval to provide more information and updated design work from Ned Kahn and Edwin Hamilton, for instance. He went on to say that he would prefer to come back more as a relationship building process than to just come before the Commission two times seeking approval.

Mr. Brown stated that the Children’s Museum could come back for informational updates—that the Commission’s process is flexible in that way.

Ms. Haskell asked that if the Commission were to table the decision today, would the applicant be able to come back for informational updates until the project is better defined.

Mr. Brown stated that he believed tabling a decision is dangerous in the context of the 60 day rule.

Mr. Cooper stated that he believes that there are still a few remaining issues to be resolved with the design conceptually: 1) the southern edge area near the building, and he went on to say that he agreed with Joe’s assessment earlier of the west edge and raising all sides of the park up to grade to make it more accessible. Mr. Cooper went on to say that his second, most important point from this today is that here we have a strong local organization that wants to create a useful and much needed park where currently a derelict and neglected area exists, and he believes that the Commission should not get in the way of it.

Mr. Cooper stated that he believes that the Commission should approve this project as an idea, which is what the terminology of conceptual approval means. For the next round of review, however, Mr. Cooper stated that he agreed with the comments regarding the sculpture. He stated that the Kahn sculpture is well placed, given the way in which he imagines that it would work with the wind, but he sees less clarity about the other piece and he does not believe that the Damianos sculpture belongs in this park. Having three pieces of sculpture in this small park is simply too much for the site to bear. Mr. Cooper stated that it is his belief that the proper thing to do is to grant the project conceptual approval.

Ms. Ismail stated that one condition of the former review of this project was for the applicant to return with letters of support from community members. She wanted to make note that the applicant had completed that condition.

Mr. Brown noted that another condition of the former review of this project was a site visit by the Commission, and that that was completed.

Ms. Hall stated that she does not necessarily think that the art is integral to the park, that the Kahn piece is the right piece for the park, the selection process of the art in the park was done correctly, and questions the choice of these particular pieces for the park that will be the maintenance responsibility of the City no matter who the partners are.

Ms. Hall stated that another issue for her is that this project cannot move forward without conceptual approval. She stated that she is not clear on the applicant's assertion that the capital campaign is being held back pending conceptual approval. Ms. Hall stated that the design of the park has not progressed since the last hearing. She noted that there were newly presented letters of support and a site visit did occur, but there is no new information to consider. Ms. Hall asked as to why can't the decision on this application be tabled, given that there is no new information presented and the applicant does not have the money to move forward.

Ms. Haskell stated that she agrees with Ms. Hall on the fact that there are many issues left to be resolved. She stated that on the other hand, she would like to see what is going to happen with this project and she did not want to discourage the applicant from coming back to the Commission. She went on to say that a lot of unanswered questions remain around whether or not the artists presented are under contract, or if there were plans for an artist competition, etc. Ms. Haskell went on to say that her questions do not preclude her appreciation of the efforts that the Children's Museum has taken to design a vibrant space for the community and she did not want to present herself as an obstructionist to the project. She stated that she is concerned that the Commission needs to know more.

Mr. Serrao stated that he understands how projects have a certain momentum, and that sometimes he has seen projects lose momentum when they are not granted conceptual approval. He went on to say that he is of the mindset to give the project conceptual approval with conditions and that that would be fair. Mr. Serrao stated that he believed that the Commission was in support of this project, although there were a lot of outstanding questions.

Ms. Haskell asked for clarification of how a tabled decision might affect the fundraising campaign and design process.

Mr. Siefert stated that the park has a budget of \$5 million, and it is part of a larger campaign in the \$20-22 million dollar range and there are a range of projects inside the greater campaign: site acquisitions, exhibits, and parking.

Ms. Haskell asked if there was a time limit on the campaign.

Mr. Siefert stated that the campaign is currently in a holding pattern, and that it was the intent of staff and board involvement to convene in late summer to decide what steps can be taken to re-engage the campaign.

Ms. Haskell asked if this park had a high priority in the use of monies from the campaign.

Mr. Siefert stated that there are four priorities to the campaign: the renovation of the park, site acquisitions, new exhibitions, and new parking, but all were seen as equal priorities.

Mr. Cooper stated that there are two movements among the Commission right now. There are some who would like to table the decision, then there those that would like to grant conceptual approval with conditions. He stated that he thinks that the Commission is coloring their discussion with fear from being burned on a past decision. He went on to say that in doing that, he fears that the Commission may be quashing something that normally, they would like to see happen. Mr. Cooper stated that there may be changes or questions with the current project, but he believed that the motion could be made that would ensure that the changes or questions or design concerns could be met. He stated that it would be a big mistake to table this decision as eight months ago they did the same in effect, they made a site visit, but if they do take this project back to square one (which a decision to table would do) then he believes that this project would never take place—which he believed would be very unfortunate for everyone in the city.

Ms. Hall asked if they could look at it separately, as an artwork portion and separately as a landscape project.

Ms. Haskell stated that this is the way in which they reviewed the Mellon Park Walled Garden project.

Mr. Serrao stated that maybe this is the way to do it.

Mr. Siefert stated that he would like to bring the artist to the Commission at a later date after design work is done, so this scenario is acceptable from his perspective.

Mr. Haskell stated that because of their past bad experience, they are very grateful that the Children's Museum came before the Commission so early in the process and that the Commission does want to be a part of the process moving forward and be helpful in that.

Mr. Cooper asked for a motion.

**MOTION: To grant conceptual approval for the revitalization of Allegheny Square Park project as submitted with the following conditions:**

- 1) That the Commission continues to review and finalization of the artwork quality, quantity, typology, and process of selecting and placing the artwork in the park**
- 2) The applicant continues investigation of general site conditions and access**
- 3) Refining and further defining the landscape plan**
- 4) The applicant waives any potential time limit of Conceptual approval**
- 5) The applicant will present to the Commission as necessary until Final approval is granted on all components of the plan**

**MOVED: Serrao**

**SECONDED: Hall**

**IN FAVOR: All**

**OPPOSED: None**

**CARRIED**

**c. Federal Street Railroad Underpass Design Enhancement Project**

- o Chris Siefert, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

Mr. Siefert began by describing the background of the Federal Street Underpass Design Enhancement Project. He stated that about two and a half years ago, the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh (CMP), along with various stakeholders on the Northside, created something called the Charm Bracelet project (which was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts) in which the CMP engaged four artist/design teams (3 American and 1 team from London, England) to come to Pittsburgh, and assess the cultural and family oriented amenity organizations around Allegheny Commons (the charms on the bracelet) and develop and envision artistic ways in which CMP and its stakeholder group might build connectivity to the various organizations and enliven and beautify this area.

This initiative allowed the CMP group to think outside of their respective parcels of land to focus on all neighboring passages into the community-- the spaces between the "charms"---often even residential neighborhoods. One of the four design teams was Pentagram, led by Paula Scher out of New York City. One of her primary answers to the challenge of building connectivity had to do with entry points to the Commons area—primarily, the underpasses where visitors to the area would have to negotiate in order to enter the Northside.

Mr. Siefert went on to say that there are three main underpasses where visitors would use in order to enter the Northside/Allegheny Commons area from Downtown: Federal Street, Sandusky Street, and Anderson Street underpasses.

Some of the ideas for these underpasses that Ms. Scher developed sought to brighten and make these areas more safe through the use of paint and additional lighting, while looking at opportunities for artistic expression. Mr. Siefert then directed the Commission to an illustration of the Federal street underpass and

noted many ideas that were proposed by Ms. Scher. He noted that the underside of the underpass might have a metal mesh installed to form a ceiling of sorts that would catch any debris and allow for the potential of additional LED lighting. Mr. Siefert also noted that other concepts for lighting include a “ribbon-type” lighting system, and fluorescent tube lighting that would create a more “jazzy” type lighting system for the area.

Mr. Siefert stated that there were many community meetings over the past months that included the Northside Leadership Conference (NSLC) and various other community stakeholder organizations and citizens. In the process of these meetings, CMP learned of efforts begun by the Urban Redevelopment Authority and the NSLC that sought to renovate the Anderson street and Sandusky street underpasses, and that if they, as a community collective, began to work in tandem on their respective projects, there would be an opportunity for federal dollars for funding. Mr. Siefert went on to say that in working more with this group and Ms. Scher, the group began to recognize that the Northside has become a venue for the arts and family-oriented programming because of the work of the organizations in the charm bracelet. Some recent community-wide art events include the art-banner project along East Ohio street that was co-sponsored by NSLC and Artist Image Resource. Ultimately, there would be plans to take this banner campaign further into the community into the Allegheny Commons area and north and south on Federal street—the imagery of the banners or future banners could also occupy the Federal street underpass area.

CMP had presented a free concert in front of its building (the former intersection of East Ohio and Federal streets) which also was a form of taking art to the streetscape.

Mr. Siefert noted that the Federal Street underpass project could be an anchor for what he sees as a burgeoning art scene that will continue to present art in the streetscape throughout the Northside.

Mr. Siefert then directed the Commission back to the illustration of the Federal street underpass and noted that all of the aforementioned proposals were helpful, but he would now describe the current plans for this site as they have determined a course of action that would be a little more realistic.

Mr. Siefert stated that the underpass is owned by Norfolk Southern Railroad, and the two abutments on either side are owned by Penn Dot. The streetscape and sidewalk are owned by the City. He went on to say that inside the underpass, there is a concrete block wall on the west side, and a sandstone wall on its east side. The railroad bridge that forms the underpass is metal, with several columns that support it and the trains that cross overhead. The metal structure of the underpass is currently fraught with rust and peeling paint. Mr. Siefert went on to note the current gutter drainage system that is in place near the ceiling of the underpass and described how they were insufficient (in that they run over the sidewalk) and how they would be replaced. He also noted that the City has put in new light standards (acorn lights) along the sidewalk under the underpass. The walls, electrical and lighting, gutter drainage and metal surface of the bridge are the main components of this planned renovation.

Mr. Siefert stated that the stakeholder group had determined that the concrete wall of the underpass might serve as a venue for artistic expression, and the stone wall might be a venue for more historical information. The stone wall could be cleaned and serve as a place for historical images and/or plaques that would be more in keeping with that wall’s historic nature. One idea was to have a series of plaques that would denote important artists from the Northside. Ultimately, the idea is to have this area become a venue for a rotating gallery of art on one side, with the historical plaques/information on the other. In order to create this art venue, the group proposed to install a substantial metal mesh that would accept a multitude of art forms that would be affixed, be on display for a time, then replaced with a new set of art pieces. Mr. Siefert passed around a sample of the mesh materials and described the installation of the mesh as being a series of 4 feet wide by 10 feet tall screens arranged 6 inches off of the wall (to allow for water run off, etc) that would run the entire length of the underpass, allowing some free space on either end and along its bottom edge. Mr. Siefert went on to point out in the design where there would be places in which electrical junction boxes could reside near the ceiling to allow for additional lighting on both walls.

Mr. Siefert stated that they have to really look at the painting of the bridge. He pointed out that they are considering many color options, but that the illustration presents a “Pittsburgh Bridge gold color”.

Mr. Siefert stated that they are still in research of paint color and product applications, and went on to note a color chart that they are considering. He went on to say that in meeting with the vendor of the paint, they understand that they will have to sand or water blast the bridge—with containment—and perform the necessary lane closures and permission/scheduling with Norfolk Southern Railroad. The vendor also pointed out (upon onsite inspection) that the bridge had been painted over many times in the past. He also stated that the topmost flat pieces on the façade of the bridge were cast iron, and that they were most likely originally an oxide red color, with the rest of the bridge being black.

Mr. Siefert concluded by speaking about the types of art that might be included in the gallery of the underpass. The art-banners of East Ohio street would most likely be one of the first types of art placed in this space. As the art-banners project is being perpetuated by Artist Image Resource, and there is the intent of future images/future artists engaged in that process it would make sense to reconfigure some of that project's art into many iterations of the gallery exhibit in the underpass over time. There is also an idea circulating that the Museum of Photographic Antiquities (located on East Ohio street) might also contribute imagery for the underpass gallery at some point in the future.

This would also make sense as the point of this campaign (and that of the Charm Bracelet project) is to make some visual connections to the cultural amenities of the area through art among the various entry points to the area.

Currently, CMP are building a group to curate the exhibits in this gallery. The group consists of Barbara Luderowski of the Mattress Factory, Artist Image Resource, Mary Monahan of the Carnegie Library, and potentially a member of the Warhol museum.

Mr. Siefert went on to say that the wall mesh system would be ideal as it would lend itself to a variety of types of art for display including light, photographic elements and sculptural elements that could be affixed to the mesh in a secure manner. He noted that the thrust of this project is to create a venue for rotating artworks that would change over time, while allowing an opportunity to brighten and beautify an entry point into the community.

Ms. Hall asked if the group had gained permission from the railroad.

Mr. Siefert explained that they have engaged an engineer who has been working with the railroad on the other two underpasses (Anderson and Sandusky) and the railroad has stated that they would like to have two months to review the drawings for the project at Federal Street. Currently, the railroad is familiar with his project, and the engineer is developing the drawings at this time.

Ms. Hall asked if the drawings that are being worked on are the same as those presented today, or are they different.

Mr. Siefert stated that drawings sent to the railroad will be technical drawings, but that the railroad has been notified verbally of the intent to paint the bridge and installing the artwork mesh.

Ms. Hall asked if the other two underpasses currently have permission from the railroad to proceed.

Mr. Siefert stated that those other two projects have been in the works for years at this point, and that the railroad has seen technical document son those. He stated that he does not know for sure if they have notice to proceed from the railroad.

Ms. Hall asked if anyone present knows the status of the *Conductor of Cherries* project that was originally proposed to be installed near this location.

Mr. Fatla noted that the *Conductor of Cherries* project was planned for the Sandusky underpass, but they did not want to install the piece until the infrastructure portion of the renovation of that underpass is completed.

Ms. Haskell asked how they planned to protect the artwork at the Federal Street underpass (against dirt, vandalism, etc.).

Mr. Siefert stated that the artwork would have to be cleaned and that is part of the plan.

Ms. Haskell stated that if the art is a group of posters and printed materials, they would be exceedingly vulnerable in that environment.

Mr. Siefert stated that they would maintain or replace the pieces as necessary.

Mr. McCarthy noted that for sculptural applications, the mesh would allow for a very secure attachment that should ensure against theft and to a degree, vandalism.

Ms. Haskell stated that reproduce-able artwork is one thing, but original artwork in this location would be a different problem.

Mr. Serrao asked about the material of the artwork, was it plastic metal, etc...

Mr. Siefert stated that they have some ideas of the content of the artwork, but have no exact plans for type of art, materials, etc—only some ideas of potential types of art such as vinyl banner material, printing on board, etc...

Mr. Cooper asked about the curatorial process for the space—would CMP jointly curate the exhibition space with the curatorial partners mentioned before.

Mr. Siefert stated that the group would curate, but that one member org of the group might take the lead on the first year, then another for the second, and so on.

Mr. Cooper asked if there was some sort of endowment in place that would ensure that this project continued each year.

Mr. Siefert stated that they have the ability to take on and maintain the first year currently, but the hope would be that if the project goes well they could use that momentum to build funding for subsequent years.

Mr. Siefert stated that they have built a relationship with NRG energy that occupies space in the area, and that NRG has agreed to pay for the (cleaning) maintenance of the areas for the first five years of the project.

Ms. Hall asked if NRG would do this in exchange for signage recognition.

Mr. Siefert stated that there is intended to have some sponsor acknowledgement of all sponsors located in the area, but there would be no special outstanding signage for a single donor.

Ms. Hall asked again about how the artwork would be lighted--would the artwork be lighted by the existing street lamps, or by additional lighting.

Mr. Siefert stated that there would be some ambient lighting from the poles (and possibly could be modified and augmented) but that there would be some additional lighting from above along the ceiling mesh that could be modified as needed per artwork installation.

Ms. Hall asked if the artwork portion of this renovation were to not exist someday for whatever reason, would the rest of the renovation be able to exist without the art.

Mr. Siefert stated that yes, the area will be brighter, safer, and even the wall mesh itself has a sort of sculptural quality in and of itself even without any art attached to it. The wall mesh is pre-galvanized and coated to resist deterioration.

Ms. Hall asked why have the mesh if you could just attach the art to the walls.

Mr. Siefert stated that the mesh is there to give the art a system by which it could be securely fastened, but to keep it off of the walls where water seepage, rust, dirt and other problems could not deteriorate the art. One might be able to see some of the mesh depending on the artwork applied, but the mesh would be largely inconspicuous.

Mr. Cooper noted that the CMP should put some parameters on how far from the underpass/mesh that any artwork might extend beyond it, just for safety reasons.

Mr. Siefert stated that they are going to do that, exactly.

Ms. Haskell asked if this project were funded out of the same capital campaign noted in the revitalization of Allegheny Square Park project.

Mr. Siefert stated that this was a totally separate project from that and that they were not connected to the same funding resources.

Ms. Hall asked if there was funding already in place for the Federal Street underpass project.

Mr. Siefert stated that this project has some funding, but not all of the funding it needs.

Ms. Haskell stated that she has walked through this underpass on many occasions over the years and she is very happy to see that something is going to be done about this unsightly corridor into the Northside.

Mr. Brown asked if the paint vendor had given any indication on how long a new paint coating would last and how long it might be before the new coating would need to be washed as it would get dirty rather quickly with its proximity to the train and auto pollution.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the bridge would first have to be power washed or sand blasted (to remove the failing existing paint and rust), and the bids that they get might determine which course would be taken.

Ms. Siefert stated that it was the vendor's recommendation to water-blast instead of sand.

Mr. Brown asked if one could sand blast without containment.

Mr. McCarthy stated that one would have to install containment (due to the prevalence of lead-based paint) in either case: sandblasting or water blasting), and that they would have to close one lane of traffic at a time when the work was being performed.

Mr. McCarthy said that once blasting was done, then the painters would apply a penetrating sealer, then a mastic sealer (both of which remain flexible) before the paint/color is applied. He stated that this scenario would render a coating that would remain intact for a minimum of five years. The current thought is that every five years, something new should happen to the bridge and that maybe they would one day give the whole bridge to an artist and say "Paint it". Once the initial coating, the bridge should only require spot coating over the next few years.

Mr. Siefert did say that the paint vendor had recommended that especially in high-rust prone areas, the group might go with an oxide color so that if small pits and rust spots do reappear, their appearance would be minimized until a spot treatment could be applied.

Mr. Cooper asked if there were persons in the audience who would like to speak to the project.

Mark Fatla of the Northside Leadership Conference spoke in favor of the project.

Mr. Cooper asked for discussion of the Commission.

Mr. Serrao stated that they were in the same position with this project as they are with the revitalization of Allegheny Square Park—that this is a great idea and sorely needed, but the Commission needs more information and clarification on elements of the plan/details of artwork.

Ms. Hall stated that the Commission also needs finalization on the agreement with Norfolk Southern Railroad, specifics on signage, the design (particularly the color choices for the bridge and columns), a maintenance agreement, and further details on the curatorial process. If the plan gets conceptual approval, then for final review the applicant should develop a feasible plan—maybe the first year’s plan—that would outline a comprehensive process for the site, then after the first year plays out, the Commission and the applicant might re-evaluate the following year and its plan of action. She stated that in this way, the applicant would not need to come before the Commission for each new artwork, but the project could be evaluated yearly if it had an annual plan.

Ms. Haskell agreed.

**MOTION:** To grant conceptual approval to the Federal Street Railroad Underpass Design Enhancement Project as submitted with the understanding that the following conditions be met prior to final approval:

- 1) An agreement between the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh and Norfolk Southern Railroad is executed
- 2) Plans are completed for signage associated with the project that include placement, content, typography, etc.
- 3) Design considerations finalized for the bridge including lighting and color choice for trusses and columns of the bridge
- 4) Maintenance agreement or plan for maintaining the bridge and art elements over long term
- 5) Curatorial plan for the first year of implementation of the project

**MOVED: HALL**

**SECONDED: Serrao**

**IN FAVOR: All**

**OPPOSED: None**

**CARRIED**

**Meeting Adjourned**