

ART COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF February 27, 2008
BEGINNING AT 2:00 P.M.

PRESENT OF THE COMMISSION: Chairwoman Klavon, Astorino,
Serrao, Indovina, Hall and Patrick
Hassett sitting in for Costa

PRESENT OF THE STAFF: Baker

A. Action on the Minutes of January 23, 2008 Minutes

There was discussion regarding the wording of the motion.

Ms. Klavon asked for a motion to approve the January 23, 2008 meeting minutes.

MOVED: Mr. Astorino **SECONDED:** Mr. Serrao

APPROVED

B. Correspondence

C. Items for Review

a. Gateway T Station Bollards, Submission of Additionally Requested Materials for Conceptual Review

- o Rob Pfaffmann, Pfaffmann + Associates PC
- o Carl Bergamini, Pfaffmann + Associates PC
- o Jerry Maritzel, Port Authority

Mr. Pfaffmann presented the Commissioners with the additional materials that were requested at the last meeting. Mr. Pfaffmann reiterated the six items that the Commission required of the applicant and referred the Commission to the documentation provided. Mr. Pfaffmann stated that he believed the submitted documentation met the Commission request. He continued that they hoped to reach 60% completion in the next few weeks and would have 100% construction documents by March.

Mr. Pfaffmann then walked the Commissioners through an 11" x 17" packet that listed all updates that have occurred since the last meeting. The exhaust tower has increased in size and it will be clad in metal with the Port Authority Logo, maps and perhaps an interpretive item if additional funds can be raised. Mr. Pfaffmann discussed the barrier configuration and provided the Commissioners with an overview of the Faith Gallo

Garden—the project landscape architect and the conservancy are working together to finalize the plantings—addressing color, ornamental grasses and themes.

Mr. Pfaffmann then discussed the project materials—the terrazzo will be a cooler palette than the City standard. Ms. Klavon suggested the applicant talk to EPD for details of an adjacent plaza.

Ms. Hall asked the applicant to revisit signage of the garden. The signage of the garden will be unlike the standard Conservancy sign and will be in congruence with the project aesthetic—incidentally, the Conservancy is working on a new signage standard. The inclusion of sponsor signage will be addressed by the project but the goal is to have information etched into the stone/granite and not to have a multitude of freestanding signs. The City will maintain ownership of the plaza and will have a voice in the signage standard.

Mr. Pfaffmann stated that project is trying to re-use stones that are being excavated from the project site; but if re-using the stone is not possible the project will find similar looking stones (which will be cemented in) for the slope. The project hopes to incorporate the green space creating a rain garden on the slope. Ms. Hall asked the applicant if the City currently maintained a rain garden because it could be a good opportunity for training City employees—the maintenance implications need to be clarified.

Ms. Klavon asked the applicant to respond to the heat in a hardscape. Mr. Pfaffmann responded that it would be no different than other plazas in Pittsburgh and that there is a precedent to not put green space in the middle of a plaza to accommodate civic use. The applicant has been charged to create a usable civic space for events. Ms. Klavon stated that those events would only happen 14 days per year. Mr. Pfaffmann responded that it is this is not a passive park—it is a traffic island and a T-station that will be used by thousands of pedestrians on a daily basis. Mr. Pfaffmann continued that there are areas of shade in the current design. The planting design will be submitted to the Urban Forester.

There was discussion of the rail and mesh and code requirements of the project as related to the slope. There is a concern about the accumulation of trash in the slope—the applicant responded that the plaza would need maintenance, which incorporates trash removal, much like other public plazas in the city.

When asked about the lighting plan the applicant responded that the City standard shoebox light would be used in this project—with the addition of a single LED light on the etched granite map a row of LED's that run along the curb and under tree lights. The predominately glass station will emit ambient lighting on the plaza and the station will glow like a lantern. When asked if shoebox lighting was the correct lighting, Mr. Pfaffmann responded that pedestrian level lighting would compete with the plaza and the shoebox fixture would complement the contemporary space—the existing poles will be refurbished and re-lamped which will decrease the lighting cost for the project.

The applicant concluded their presentation by stating that the public plaza and bollards will be at 100% CD's by the end of March.

Ms. Klavon opened the floor for discussion.

Ms. Baker stated that the motion from the last meeting will stand and the only action needed from the Commissioners was a decision regarding approval of the applicant supplied documents. Ms. Baker then asked the Commissioners if they were satisfied with the documents that the applicant provided. The Commissioners replied that they were satisfied with the majority of the documentation but that they wanted additional letters of support from the stakeholders/community (in particular the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership) and a more definitive approval letter from PennDot regarding the safety of the bollard design. Ms. Klavon stated that she did not believe that the additional letters would/should hold up the project and that the letter from PennDot/DimJim was not necessary as legally they are not responsible for the barrier/bollard safety issues. Mr. Serrao stated that Ms. Klavon's comments were true if the City Law Department states that such a letter is not needed. Mr. Astorino stated that he does not see any reason why the project would be stalled/not move forward if the applicant could provide the requested documentation—a new motion is not needed.

There was some discussion that there was not enough documentation of stakeholder support for the project. Ms. Baker replied that in all fairness the Commission did not define who they believed the stakeholders of the project were and who they were requiring that the applicant seek letters of support from. Ms. Baker continued that the applicant has done their due diligence in supplying the Commissioners with requested documentation and that the Commission or staff could continue to work with the applicant to ensure that the project has appropriate documentation of support. The Commissioners replied that the receipt of this documentation would not stall the project.

Staff Report

The World War II Memorial project will present their project to the Commission in March. Conceptual Approval for the project has been received and the approval transfers to the new location—the bosque of trees and will not encroach upon the Great Lawn.

There was more discussion re the motion created for the Gateway T Station Project. Ms. Klavon did not intend for her vote to grant conceptual approval to the project and she would have voted against the project. Mr. Astorino stated that there was not a problem with the language because conceptual approval was not granted unless the Commission received and approved the requested documentation. Ms. Hall asked how the Commission knows if the project received approval—a record of the receipt and approval of documentation would be made in the minutes. Mr. Serrao explained that the overall project is on the correct path and that the applicant should continue in the direction that presented to the Commission—receipt of the requested documentation should not halt/shut down the design work.

Ms. Klavon then wanted to discuss what ‘conceptual’ means and that what they are requesting is typical for us (the Commissioners) and that these are typical 30% design items that she is used to seeing. Ms. Baker replied that this is an excellent topic for discussion at the retreat but that her experience in a public art program did not require the level of detail (i.e. details of railings and benches) at the conceptual level—including the review of artwork integrated in to architectural projects. Ms. Klavon restated that the requested documentation is what all persons around the table would have at 30% design. Mr. Serrao and Mr. Astorino stated that it is foolish to continue down a path that can’t be realized.

Mr. Hassett stated that he believes that the retreat will be beneficial to define Commission purpose and procedures for review. Mr. Serrao stated that there is a problem with the language currently used to review public space and public art projects. Ms. Baker added that the bylaws are potentially confusing as they essentially ask for the same documentation for conceptual and final review of all projects reviewed but they do not state the level of design information required (other than stating that final review requires stamped drawings). Ms. Klavon responded that architects and landscape architects know the level of detail required. Ms. Baker replied that the Commission can not operate on the assumption that the applicants will know what the Commission is seeking in the submission process—our job is to make our requirements clear. Ms. Baker continued that the retreat presents an excellent opportunity to refine our submission guidelines etc which will help to create a smoother process for future applicants.

Ms. Baker stated that she believes that a goal of the Commission should be to give good service to applicants and to make sure that process for presenting projects to the Commission is very clear to the applicant and to all members of the Commission. Ms. Klavon did state that today’s applicant did provide the Commission with better and more organized information/materials than they had in the past. Ms. Klavon continued that there are industry standards and when the bylaws were originally crafted that there was an attempt to insert that language into them. Ms. Baker replied that she understood what Ms. Klavon was saying but now that we have seen the review process in action that there are a few areas of that that need modification and that we should always be evaluating/looking for improvement in our processes.

There was discussion amongst the Commissioners regarding the review of public space and public art projects and the role of other City of Pittsburgh review bodies and the relationship of those commissions to the Art Commission.

Meeting Adjourned.