

**ART COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF March 26, 2008  
BEGINNING AT 2:00 P.M.**

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

**PRESENT OF THE STAFF:**                              **Baker**

**A.     Action on the Minutes of February 27, 2008 Minutes**

Mr. Indovina asked for a motion to approve the February 27, 2008 meeting minutes.

**MOVED:** Mr. Indovina        **SECONDED:** Ms. Hall

**All in Favor**

**APPROVED**

**B.     Correspondence**

Ms. Baker provided the Commissioners with a letter from the City’s Law Department explaining liability as related to the work of the Art Commission.

**C.     Items for Review**

**a.   Ellsworth Avenue Pedestrian Bridge, Final Review**

**o   Sheila Klein, Artist**

Ms. Klein first introduced the project stakeholders.

Ms. Baker shared a letter from Maelene Myers, Executive Director, East Liberty Development Inc. with the Commissioners. Ms. Baker noted that this is the second time that the Pedestrian Bridge project has appeared before the Art Commission and that the applicant is seeking final approval and the applicant waives the 60 day review window.

Ms. Baker stated that she is working on this project for the City of Pittsburgh and that she wanted to share background information about the project with the Commissioners. Ms. Baker stated that the Ellsworth Pedestrian Bridge project is a public private partnership—the partners include SAI Consulting Engineers Inc, the City of Pittsburgh, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Mosites Co. and East Liberty Development Incorporated. The pedestrian bridge will receive federal funds and the integrated art elements of the bridge are eligible for transportation enhancement funds. The team has hosted two public

meetings since they were last presented to the Art Commission—notes from the last public meeting can be found on [eastlibertypost.com](http://eastlibertypost.com). The project has also received positive response from the press—a number of articles have been written about the bridge design.

Ms. Klein, originally from Pittsburgh, is excited to be working on an arts project in her home town. Ms. Klein discussed the site and the limitations of the project with the Commissioners.

Conceptually, Ms. Klein sees the bridge as an alternative street and she strives to create a delightful pedestrian experience as one walks across the bridge. Ms. Klein stated that her design will employ the use of standard materials used in innovative/different ways.

Ms. Klein continued stating that her work is often influenced by the things she encounters as she formulates her concept for her work. In this project Ms. Klein was inspired by the site where the Department of Public Works tests their painting equipment—the results of the test look much like an abstract painting. The surface of the bridge deck will be treated in a similar fashion.

Ms. Klein stated that she is interested in collaborating with local organizations for her public art projects. Ms. Klein showed the commissioners a model, which was made with by an architectural student at CMU. The bridge is about 28 feet wide and 88 feet long.

Looking at the plans for the bridge Ms. Klein discussed the landscaping plan for the bridge—the bridge will feature sturdy native grasses of varying heights.

There are a number of variables that the team has had to accommodate in the bridge design. Because the bridge spans over a bus way and railroad tracks safety fencing must run along sides of the bridge—Ms. Klein has curved the fencing making it feel less standard and more sculptural. Ms. Klein is partnering with the Pittsburgh Glass Center to create ‘sequins’ that will attach to the top (out of reach) of the cyclone fencing. Additionally, vintage railing from the 31<sup>st</sup> Street Bridge will run along the sides of the beam and along the Ellsworth side of the street.

Ms. Klein added that the bridge design does not favor either of the communities that it links but it is inspired by and hopefully it will engage with both neighborhoods—it is neither commercial in its design nor historic but a blend.

Mr. Serrao asked Ms. Klein if the vintage railing will span the entire length of the bridge—Ms. Klein replied that the weight of the railing prohibits it from being used along both sides of the bridge.

Ms. Haskell asked if there will be cyclone fencing along Ellsworth Avenue—no, rather the vintage railing will run along Ellsworth.

Ms. Hall asked about the maintenance and accessibility of the bridge landscaping—two gates have been incorporated into the design that will allow a person to enter the landscaping area. However, it should be noted that the landscaping needs will be minimal as hearty grasses will be used.

When asked about the color selection on the bridge Ms. Klein stated that the sequence of color is intentional and that it was inspired by other Pittsburgh bridges—Ms. Hall replied that the color selection felt a little arbitrary.

Ms. Hall asked for more information about the light fixture on the East Side of the bridge. Ms. Klein said was not sure of the direction that the lamp design would take and that she needs to work on the design with the development company—the light fixture on the East Side development is not considered part of the bridge project.

Mr. Serrao asked if the grass in the landscaping area on the bridge will need to be mowed and who will assume responsibility for removing trash from the site. The grass will not need mowing but a maintenance agreement will be established and will include caring for the landscaping, trash removal etc.

Mr. Indovina asked Ms. Klein which organization will be responsible for the maintaining the bridge. Ms. Baker interjected that maintenance will be a joint effort amongst the stakeholders—but the structure will be maintained and inspected by the City of Pittsburgh. The stakeholders are negotiating the terms of routine maintenance.

When asked about the lighting plan Ms. Klein replied that there will be a total of 12 lights installed on the bridge deck. She added that the fixtures will meet the City of Pittsburgh standard but the globes (installed so that the bottom will be 11' from the deck) covering the fixtures will be custom made.

Mr. Indovina asked Ms. Klein to confirm the sequin diagram/patterning that she plans to add to the fencing on the bridge. Ms. Klein referenced the correct pattern and she noted that thousands of sequins are needed to accomplish the design—two solid sequin rows installed along the top of the bridge with additional sequins trickling down from the rows.

When asked about the width of the path at the pinch point, Ms. Klein replied that it is 12' at its most narrow and 28' at its widest—to express scale, Ms. Klein noted that the pinch point is wider than an average 11' wide street lane.

Mr. Indovina asked if Ms. Klein anticipated technical issues with the planters/landscaping. Irrigation and drainage of the planters have been discussed/accounted for and Ms. Klein stated that the landscape architect is confident with the plan.

Ms. Hall, concerned about the possibility of one hiding on the bridge, asked Ms. Klein about dimensions and transparency of the space located between the curvatures of the fence. The bridge will be transparent.

Ms. Hall asked if there were too many light fixtures on the bridge (since it is more than what is required by code and will require use of extra electricity). Ms. Klein replied that the number of lights incorporated into the design is intentional but that she will strive to make the lighting energy efficient.

Ms. Haskell asked if the lights will be on through out the night—Ms. Klein assumed that they would be.

Mr. Indovina asked a motion.

**MOTION:** That the Ellsworth Avenue Pedestrian Bridge project receives Final Approval.

**MOVED:** Haskell

**SECONDED:** Hall

**IN FAVOR:** All

**OPPOSED:** None

**CARRIED**

**b. Temporary Outdoor Artworks for The Biennial exhibition, Final Review**

o **Laura Domencic, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts**

The Biennial Exhibition at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts will run from May 3<sup>rd</sup> to August 24<sup>th</sup>—the six temporary artworks which were described during conceptual review will be installed on the center grounds.

Grass Garden – Carin Mincemoyer proposed the creation an artwork made out of grass. Edging installed in the ground will create a perimeter for the artwork—the grass inside the frame will grow and sections of the grass will be cut into various shapes and patterns by the artist. Visitors to the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts will be encouraged to walk through the grass created labyrinth.

Two oak sculptures by Will Giannotti – abstract sculptures wooden sculpture are being fabricated for the exhibition.

Sculpture by Christopher Lisowski –the 5’ high mixed media sculpture will be installed on a slope near the Scaife building—the artist will ensure that the artwork is secure.

“Big Bot” by Golan Levin – this work is a collaborative effort of the PCA and Robot 250; an interactive robot will be installed on the building for a few weeks starting in late June.

Book path by Denise Mahone –Recycled books will be inserted into the earth to create a path—the path will be approximately 100’ in length to begin with and the artist will add books to the path during the exhibition. Ms. Domenic noted that it would be interesting to watch the artwork morph over time to see the decay or overgrowth process.

Greg Karkowsky’s “The Prophet” – a 4’ x 8’ sign-like structure that features the image of an eye will be placed on the wall of the center.

The PCA would like to include (in addition to the 6 originally proposed artworks) a 10’ x 12’ sculpture that resembles the structure of a billboard to be installed on the corner of Fifth and Shady (without the board) by Kim Beck.

All of the artworks will be removed from the grounds and the grounds will be returned to their original state by the end of October--the only possible exception to the October end date is “Book Path”.

Ms. Domenic clarified the location of the “The Prophet” for Ms. Haskell.

Since the project was presented to the Art Commission for Conceptual Review Ms. Baker said that she met the BBI, Zoning, the Mayor’s office and legal department to discuss procedures for allowing temporary artworks on City Property. The departments are working to establish a standardized permitting process for the temporary projects; Ms. Baker’s goal is to waive permit fees for temporary artworks. In the meantime, the City will be reviewing projects on case by case bases. Ms. Baker requested drawings for pieces that will be attached to the building.

Mr. Indovina asked about the size of the robot on the roof. Ms. Domenic said that the arm of the robot is about 7’ and the base is approximately 8’ x 10’.

Ms. Haskell asked if there are screens/cameras on the robot for people to see themselves. Ms. Domenic replied that the goal of the project is the interaction between the robot and visitors and not visitor observation of themselves.

Ms. Hall asked if “The Prophet” piece is illuminated and Ms. Domenic said yes. Ms. Hall then asked if the artwork could be considered a sign as far as the Zoning consideration. Ms. Baker replied that there is a difference between signs and artwork and she is working to legally clarify the definitions—Ms. Baker stated that she does not want artwork to be considered a design.

Outdoor signage will be installed adjacent to each artwork and additional information about the artworks will be added to the PCA’s website.

Mr. Indovina asked a motion.

**MOTION:** That the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts receive Final Approval for temporary outdoor artworks as part of a biennial exhibition.

**MOVED: Haskell**

**SECONDED: Indovina**

**IN FAVOR: All**

**OPPOSED: None**

**CARRIED**

**c. World War II, UPDATE**

- **Robert Bukk, Executive Director, World War II Veterans of Allegheny County Memorial Fund Inc**
- **Todd Johnson, Design Team**
- **Larry Kirkland, Design Team**

Mr. Bukk introduced the project designers and stakeholders Larry Kirkland, John Vento, Howard Piper, Lynn Griffin, and Carol Siegel. Mr. Bukk recapped the process that the applicant undertook in order to receive conceptual approval. Conceptual approval was granted with conditions. To meet the conditions in December 2007, a series of productive meetings were held with the Riverlife Task Force, the City of Pittsburgh and the SEA. The design was refined and the project was presented to the Riverlife Urban Planning Committee last week.

Mr. Kirkland stated that the design of the memorial has been refined to reflect to meet the conditions of approval but that the conceptual underpinnings of the work remain the same—telling the story of WWII as the war related to the world and to Allegheny County. The memorial will be elliptical in shape and will feature a series of upright standard steel elements that will serve as a frame for historic images transferred to glass panels and supporting text etched on black granite—the outside text will reference world events and the text on the inside of the monument will reference events in Allegheny County. It is likely that the ground plane will be Pennsylvania Blue stone and granite.

Mr. Serrao asked Mr. Kirkland to explain the logic of ascending/descending steel elements of the monument. Mr. Kirkland said presenting the project in this way would provide a nice scene from the river and from Downtown.

When asked about the visibility of the images, Mr. Kirkland stated that the glass is transparent and that the images can be seen from both sides.

Mr. Indovina asked the width of the fence. Mr. Kirkland said that the fence starts at approximately two' and ascends to approximately 21' in height.

Ms. Hall asked about the surface of the ground plane. Mr. Kirkland said that it will be granite with Pennsylvania Blue Stone.

Ms. Haskell asked if the Pennsylvania Blue Stone will be gravel or set and Mr. Kirkland replied that it will be handicap friendly and will probably be set into a base.

Mr. Indovina asked about the widths of the openings into the memorial. Mr. Kirkland replied that the opening coming into the space will be 11' and the exit is about 14.5'.

Ms. Hall asked about the amount of the information that would be incorporated into the memorial—stating that understood that there is a lot of information that needed to be covered but felt was too much visual information between the images and the text. Mr. Kirkland replied that they are working with a historian and the client group to determine the stories that will be told and the most effective way of telling the story.

Ms. Hall asked if there are any concerns with putting glass in outdoor environment. Mr. Kirkland said that glass is the architectural and is often used in outdoor applications—building etc..

When asked about the transparency of the images/glass Mr. Kirkland replied that everything will be transparent.

Ms. Hall asked if there is any discussion between members of the client group about getting information out in a multiple ways and she encouraged the project team to think about sharing information broadly. Mr. Kirkland replied that he was looking at a project in Washington DC that linked stories about the project to one's cell phone.

Mr. Indovina asked where the project team is in approval process. Mr. Kirkland said that they presented the redesigned project to the SEA and Riverlife. There are still some minor concerns from the Riverlife urban planning committee and the SEA but that the WWII team will refine their design to address the remaining issues.

Mr. Bukk wanted to add a comment about the existing trees on the site—stating that none of the trees would be destroyed—the trees will be boxed and taken to a nursery to be cared for and then replanted on site.

Mr. Kirkland said that the seat wall really enhances the experiences of visiting the site. They respect of what the SEA and Riverlife want but also want to follow through their idea.

Mr. Indovina asked about if they will tie seat wall into memorial, such as inscription on benches. Mr. Kirkland said that at this point they haven't planned on adding any inscriptions but that there are opportunities to add text on the seating elements. Mr. Indovina said it would be good to have some introduction on seat wall.

Ms. Hall asked Mr. Kirkland to clarify the distance between the edge of the benches (in center of the elliptical form) and the wall. He added that the space is 62' long and 36' wide and that each bench is 12' long.

Ms. Hall said that the actual shape of the space around the memorial seems arbitrary, even though the actual memorial space is specific. Mr. Kirkland replied that the landscape architect would be better equipped to answer that question. However, Mr. Kirkland stated that the client asked that the adjacent space be able to accommodate 400 people as it will become a gathering space for commemorative events.

Ms. Baker said there was correspondence from the Riverlife Task Force regarding this project. Fred Watts from the Riverlife Task Force was invited to share the contents of the letter with the Commissioners. Mr. Watts said that he had met with the applicant to discuss the project a number of times and the group responded well to SEA, City of Pittsburgh and Riverlife questions—the applicant has addressed many of the concerns and will continue a dialogue with Riverlife as the project progresses. Mr. Watts concluded by stating that Riverlife supported this project.

**d. Gateway T Station Bollards, Final Review**

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

Mr. Pffaffman handed out and discussed additional materials (not included in the packet) for the Commissioners to review. Mr. Pfaffmann said that they are continuing to meet with stakeholders and continuing to refine project details. He noted that there was some concern regarding maintenance of the plaza but the maintenance negotiations are beyond his scope of work.

Mr. Indovina asked the applicant to clarify the construction schedule. Mr. Maritzel stated that construction would begin in 2009 and the project would be built by late 2009 or early 2010.

Mr. Indovina asked a motion.

**MOTION:** That the Pfaffmann + Associates PC receive Final Approval for Gateway T Station Bollards.

**MOVED: Haskell**

**SECONDED: Serrao**

**IN FAVOR: All**

**OPPOSED: None**

**CARRIED**

Ms. Baker added that additional deliverable were received and approved conceptual review.

**e. Bloomfield Sign, Conceptual and Final Review**

- **Janet Scullion, Bloomfield Citizens Council Public Art and Design Committee, Conceptual Review and Final Review**

Ms. Scullion introduced the proposed project to the committee. She stated that the Public Art and Design Committee of the Bloomfield Citizens Council have met for the past two years to determine appropriate projects for the neighborhood.

Ms. Scullion stated that Morrow Park could be considered a gateway to the 8<sup>th</sup> ward. Ms. Scullion stated that the BCC has been the stewards of the park for the last 40 years and proceeded to state the accomplishments of the group. She added that the BCC's sister organization, the Bloomfield Preservation and Heritage Society, has provided education, research for and development of public spaces for the last 18 years. The BCC and the Historic association are partnering to create a sign that will welcome visitors and residents of the community—she noted that the sign would complement the existing sculpture in the park (which she noted was paid for by Bloomfield citizens). Ms. Scullion then discussed the naming of the park and goals for the project.

Ms. Scullion stated that they hoped to elevate the status of and recognize the people who served and will serve the country yesterday, today and tomorrow. The sign will be accompanied by flowers, flag poles and lighting. Ms. Scullion then presented proposed location of and the design of the signage to the Art Commission—goals of the signage are to welcome and to share the history of the neighborhood.

(A memorial to World War II by sculptor Frank Vittor is located in the park.) Ms. Scullion noted that the two men who are posed for the sculptor are still living and stated that the BCC used to/wants to incorporate apple trees into the park, add more lighting to and additional information for pedestrians in the park. She continued by stating that the war monument was paid for by Bloomfield people and it is part of the neighborhood.

Ms. Scullion noted that the BCC will take care of signage in the park. She believes the sign will have a nice impact because it is about tomorrow and about Bloomfield—she believes the sign will help to educate and foster appreciation of the park and monument. She concluded by saying that additional things could be added to the park to increase feelings of patriotism.

Ms. Hall asked where the sign is going to be in the site. Ms. Scullion answered that the sign will be at the tip of the triangle.

It is understood that the monument is important to the community stated Ms. Hall—she then asked if a master plan had been completed for park. Ms. Scullion replied that they have been in contact with City Planning and people from City Parks. She stated the park is not large and they can do a lot with it—there are already benches, trees and statues.

Ms. Hall replied that everything they do in the park will be important since the park is so small.

Ms. Hall worried if the sign would fit into the small space and if the signage would diminish the feeling of the community space. Ms. Scullion said that the sign is the center piece of their work, the flag pole is necessary, and the sign and statue will be lit.

Mr. Serrao said that the city just funds some money for restoring the park and the statue, so the city already addressed the project. Mr. Serrao said that the design committee needs to step back and come back to the art commission. He thought that there was too much information that is not coordinated. The park is very small to create the sense of reverence, which was repeated through the design committee's letters and dialogues. Putting this sign at the site that is quite large relative to the monument may destroy what they are trying to do. There is a balance that needs to be constructed. Mr. Serrao said that the most important thing is to get together and say what they want to do with the park.

Mr. Indovina said that the art commission can only react to the things that the design committee is showing. He thought that the group was here pretty surely. The group has done a lot of work and showed the commitment to the community. The art commission needs to see what specifically the group is going to do and what issue the group needs the art commission to review before they can get the action of approval.

Ms. Hall said that everything that they do counts in such a small space. Add one large sign will completely alter the experience with this space. So really mapping out all the things is going to help themselves to better understand the project. Ms. Hall also suggested getting more people involved in the process. She asked if the Bloomfield Citizens Council includes everybody that needs to be in the table. Ms. Scullion said yes.

Ms. Haskell suggested the design committee provide the overall concept of the park.

Mr. Serrao said that there is a church across the street, and there are apartment buildings. They are also important. Mr. Serrao suggested waiting to see what will come up across the street. The changes of surrounding area might change the concept of the project too. He said that what they do depending on what is upon around them. Ms. Scullion said that they want to put the sign as a gateway. Mr. Serrao said that by doing that may trap people in the small space.

Mr. Indovina said that there is a fine line. Maybe it is important to hire a professional to work on the project.

Mr. Serrao said that they might not be able to do what they want to do.

Mr. Indovina said that, from the commission's stand of point, he didn't feel that they have enough information to grant approval. He suggested that the design committee putting the information together and come back.

Ms. Hall said that there are other resources. She thought that the design committee could work with Ms. Baker and think that the monument as a very important piece of public art works. The design committee could also work with the community.

Ms. Scullion said that when the monument was done, there were a lot of dialogues. That was the very reason that it was put there. They were trying to pick up where things were left out for tomorrow.

Mr. Serrao asked whether an identity sign match the memorial concept. He thought that the sign is more often being used for commercial district. The monument is a historical site, but the sign seems like an advertisement for Bloomfield. Ms. Scullion disagreed. Mr. Serrao said that it was the perception of “welcome to the community” signs.

Ms. Haskell said that the historical marker for Schenley Park is a good idea. Mr. Serrao agreed.

Mr. Indovina thanked the group’s effort and suggested them to refocus.

Ms. Scullion introduced the “Passion for the Community”. She pointed out the eternal flame on the drawing. There is a patriotic flag in the corner in brown and silver. They chose the identities of the community and set them for the pride. They didn’t try to do it for advertising.

Mr. Serrao said that they could go back and figure out the elements themselves, such as what pieces of the park they want to put in there. The sign that the design committee showed looks commercial.

### **Other Correspondences about the Signage of Bloomfield**

Ms. Baker said that the commission received a letter from Councilman Dawd. Dawd would like to see the project to be a public process and be part of the process. Dawd thought that this site is where the Bloomfield started coming together and maybe this is something that should be explored. He wanted there to be more community dialogues and he thought that this is the transition point within the city.

Ms. Baker said that there is no reason to rush on the project and there is a reason to do a potential artistic gateway.

Ms. Baker said that the commission also received a letter from the state senator Jim Furlous. Ms. Baker read the letter to the commission and presenter.

Meeting Adjourned.