

**ART COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 22, 2008
BEGINNING AT 2:00 P.M.**

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

PRESENT OF THE STAFF: **Martz, Ismail**

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Indovina asked for approval of meeting minutes for September. Ms. Hall asked for further time to review the minutes. The minutes for both September and July are tabled.

B. Correspondence

Ms. Martz provided the group with a letter from Klavon Design regarding the design for Market Square. The Commission had requested that the firm find a way to remove parking from Market Square prior to granting conceptual approval. The letter addressed the parking concerns and the inability to remove parking in its entirety at this time. The correspondence was acknowledged for conceptual approval by the Commission.

C. Items for Review

a. Window Vinyls, Conceptual and Final Approval

- **Mary Ellen Solomon, Senior Director, Marketing and Communications
Point Park University**

Point Park University would like to place adhesive vinyls over each window in an overhead walkway crossing Wood Street at Boulevard of the Allies. As the walkway is in the public right of way Commission approval must be sought.

Mr. Indovina recused himself as a member of the University's Board of Trustees.

Mr. Serrao recused himself as the University is a client on a separate project.

It was pointed out that with the absent commission members and two recusals there would not be adequate representation to create a quorum.

Mr. Serrao opted to remain for the presentation and act as a voting member.

Point Park University is working on a 210 million dollar improvement project to their campus called the Academic Village. The project will include public improvements, a new park, and retail that the entire community can enjoy. As a means of keeping the community engaged the university is proposing the window vinyls, which will show pictures of what the finished product will look like. The vinyls will be placed in the windows of the pedestrian walkway on Wood Street between Blvd. of the Allies and 3rd Avenue. This will be a temporary installation to be removed in approximately two years when the work is complete.

Mr. Indovina asked about the differences in the illustrations in the packet presentation and the presentation materials that the University brought today. The packet presentation shows a window with text, whereas the new presentation does not. Ms. Solomon explained that the vinyls would contain text and the packet presentation was more accurate.

Ms. Hall asked how well the window illustrations would read as to what was really happening. Ms. Solomon explained that the construction would be happening while the illustrations were in place. Mr. Serrao stated that the work was quite extensive and would take quite some time to finish. The illustrations should be enough combined with the work being done and the campaigning the university has been completing.

Ms. Hall asked why these were presented as banners. Ms. Martz explained that they were not necessarily banners, but they would fall within the same guidelines given that they were in the public right of way. She further explained that the agenda actually listed presentation as window vinyls.

Mr. Indovino asked whether there was any need for further questions.

Mr. Indovina asked a motion.

MOTION: To grant conceptual and final approval to Point Park University for the placement of window vinyls on the glass of the pedestrian walkway crossing Wood Street between Blvd. of the Allies and 3rd Avenue.

MOVED: Haskell

SECONDED: Serrao

IN FAVOR: All

OPPOSED: None

CARRIED

- b. Cell Phone Disco, Conceptual and Final Review**
 - o **Murray Horne, Curator, Wood Street Galleries
Pittsburgh Cultural Trust**

This piece is a commission from the Cultural trust to a pair of artists from Amsterdam known as Information Lab. The idea is to install the work on the rear of the Benedum

Center at the junction of Tito Way and Exchange Way. The Westin Hotel sits at the opposite end of the alleyway allowing visitors to the hotel to view the piece unobstructed. The piece is a 16 foot piece of mirrored plexi-glass. This type of glass is referred to as security plexi-glass in which one can see through from one side, but the other side reflects an image. This piece will be reflecting the alleyway. Behind the mirrored plexi-glass there will be a grid of LED lights. These will be installed on an aluminum grid. The idea of the piece is that the piece will allow you to use your cell phone to play with the lights. The LED lights will react to radio signals from your cell phone causing the lights to react and move.

Ms. Haskell asked if the lights would change with each cell phone. Mr. Horne explained that the lights would react relative to the intensity of the signal strength as well your placement.

Ms. Hall asked if the number of people would make the piece really dynamic. Mr. Horne replied that it would.

Ms. Haskell asked if the imagery was random or abstract in nature. Mr. Horne explained that there was not any imagery at all and that it was just LED lights illuminating.

Mr. Serrao asked what the distance was that you would be able to see the piece. Mr. Horne stated that you would need to be within 25 feet of the piece.

Mr. Indovina and Mr. Serrao asked how the placement of the piece was selected. They stated that the piece would seem to want high traffic volumes to realize potential and it feels tucked away in this area. Mr. Horne explained that the Cultural Trust is working on a long term project to illuminate the cultural district with art, instigated by Robert Wilson and Richard Douglin. There were a series of lighting projects developed for consideration and this was a top priority. The alleyway behind the trust was a fortuitous selection for the Trust as it alleviates problems of site access, electricity costs, and maintenance. It also opens up a new idea to illuminate an alleyway and it will add a measure of safety.

Mr. Astorino asked how much traffic the area typically sees on a daily basis. Mr. Horne stated that it was considerable with patrons in the cultural district as well as students from the Culinary Institute.

Mr. Serrao asked if there was a loading dock protruding in this area with a large section of wood that keeps tractor trailers from hitting the building. Mr. Horne explained that there is a loading dock to the right hand side of the site location with two entrances. He explained that the Benedum Theatre uses one side the majority of the time and the other entrance 3-4 times per year. The wood barrier would be reinforced in order to protect the piece further.

Mr. Astorino asked if the Trust planned on adding additional pieces to the area over time. Mr. Horne stated that the plan was to continue to build on this idea and bring more people

to the area. He stated that the more success the easier it would likely be to expand the idea.

Ms. Hall asked about the other lighting projects that the Trust has installed over the years and whether or not they were still working. Mr. Horne stated that some of the pieces were still working well. There are some works that had been troublesome that may be decommissioned.

Mr. Horne stated that one of the artists working on the piece is an architect and the other is an internet topography designer. He explained that the piece was designed more sustainability and easy maintenance. If one light burns out it will be a matter of sliding a row out and replacing a bulb. The bulbs are expected to last about 85,000 hours.

Ms. Hall asked if there was anything to the color choice and proximity to Strawberry Way and if the wall would be blank. Mr. Horne stated that the wall would be left blank and the color choice had nothing to do with Strawberry Way.

Ms. Hall asked if the piece would be solid along the edge. Mr. Horne explained that it would be solid both to prevent water from seeping inside but also to hide the electronics from the viewer.

Ms. Hall asked if there would be signage in place to explain the project. Mr. Horned answered that there would be signage explaining how to interact.

Ms. Haskell asked if this would be promoted with First Fridays. Mr. Horne said that it would.

Ms. Hall asked if there were other lights in the alley. Mr. Horne stated that there are security lights in the alley, but that they would not be operating at this time. Ms. Haskell asked if this was a safety issue or if there would still be enough lighting. Mr. Horned said that there would be and that the lights would be on a timer so that the alleyway was never without a lighting source.

Ms. Hall stated that the project was interesting and intriguing. Mr. Indovina agreed and added that it was nice that no other such projects in alleyways existed outside of Pittsburgh.

Ms. Hall stated that she was on the Trust when Robert Wilson's alleyway designs were conceptual and she is very happy to see something coming to fruition.

Mr. Indovino asked a motion.

MOTION: To grant conceptual and final approval as submitted to the Cultural Trust Cell Phone Disco alleyway lighting piece.

MOVED: Serrao

SECONDED: Astorino

IN FAVOR: All

OPPOSED: None

CARRIED

- c. Duo: James Rosatti Sculpture Installation, Conceptual and Final Review**
- **Murray Horne, Curator, Wood Street Galleries
Pittsburgh Cultural Trust**

Mr. Rosati was a Washington County native who spent a considerable amount of his young life in the Pittsburgh area. He had a very distinguished career throughout America and is considered to be an important artist in the United States. The Cultural Trust received the sculpture piece, *Duo*, in 1994 and has made a decision over the last year to try and site the piece in the cultural district. The Trust would like to loan the piece the City of Pittsburgh for a period of 25 years and would like to site the piece on Duquesne and Ninth across the street from the Conservatory of Performing Arts (CAPA) School. The piece could be set back from pedestrian traffic in a significantly sized green space. The Trust has worked to create a site plan to house the piece more appropriately in the space.

The site plan shows footer, four feet down with a concrete block on top covered by a section of granite. The piece would be anchored to the granite through a series of bolts. The perimeter of the piece would be surrounded by an evergreen, such as boxwood to protect persons from getting within close proximity to the piece. This will prevent both injuries to the public caused by interaction with the pieces sharper corners as well as injury to the piece by prank.

Mr. Indovino commented that the piece would be in a protected area. Mr. Horne stated that the placement was very quiet and natural. It is a piece that one can simply come upon.

Ms. Hall asked if the potted plants currently in the space would be moved. Mr. Horne stated that they would most definitely be moved across the street.

Ms. Haskell asked if there was a lot of pedestrian traffic in the area. Mr. Horne stated that there was not.

Mr. Indovino pointed out that the Trust has had the piece since 1994 and asked where it has been. Mr. Horne stated that the piece was being stored in a basement as several past site plans have fallen through.

Mr. Serrao asked who would be charged with the maintenance as there was sure to be a need being so close to CAPA. Mr. Horne stated that the maintenance would be taken care of by the Trust as well as the removal as the expiration of the 25 year period.

Ms. Ismail asked if the Trust was working towards securing the site with the City. Mr. Horne stated that the Trust has been working closely with DPW to accomplish this.

Mr. Indovino asked a motion.

MOTION: To grant conceptual and final approval as submitted to the Cultural Trust to place Duo, by James Rosati at the corner of Duquesne Blvd. and 9th Street subject to the Cultural Trust securing the site through the City of Pittsburgh.

MOVED: Haskell

SECONDED: Serrao

IN FAVOR: All

OPPOSED: None

CARRIED

d. National Aviary Phase I Improvements, Conceptual Review

- William T. Szustack, Associate Springboard
- Pat Mangus, Chief Operating Officer National Aviary

The National Aviary is located on the Northside of Pittsburgh within the Allegheny Commons. As the building currently stands it is fairly non-descript and hard to identify and find. For instance, it is difficult to find the entrance to the building. The positioning of the building just isn't suitable as it now stands. The Aviary was built in the 1950's and underwent its first expansion in the 1960's in an area which is known as the Marsh Room. The Aviary building was owned by the City until 1992 when the Aviary took over the lease. In 1994, the Aviary added a dome to the atrium area of the building and added some temporary expansion over the last few years. This will be the first major development and reconfiguration of the Aviary since inception.

Mr. Mangus showed the 2002 Allegheny Commons Master Plan and how the Aviary plans looked at the time. The Aviary plans were completed shortly before the Master Plan for the Commons and inserted into the overall park plan. This projected change was endorsed by the Commons, but the changes did not happen at the time due to funding issues. The plan remains much the same though, but it has developed over time.

As the plan was reworked the Aviary used the Allegheny Commons Master Plan as a guide and further involved the Northside community in two community meetings. In the meetings the Allegheny Commons Initiative created a subcommittee made up of three architects that would assist in developing the plan. The footprint will not take any more land than the original plan would. The Commons had requested that the Aviary restrict expansion to original footprint. The Aviary will need to add offices, classrooms, food

service, a theatre, and additional parking in this space. In addition there is currently not a great connection between the Aviary and the park space. The Aviary will include a rose garden in the park area and a section of the Aviary where park visitors may walk through the Aviary without paying admission and viewing the entire site. The park patrons may enjoy parts of the Aviary as well as the proposed terrace site, café, rest rooms, and rose garden.

Ms. Hall asked how the drop off area is designed and works. Mr. Szustack explained that creating curb cuts and infringing upon the space is not so desirable. The changes will not be made and the Aviary will remain enveloped within the park. The Commons understands that the Aviary needs to grow to remain viable, but they are not willing to see the Aviary expand to the street. It will remain the same as it currently is with pedestrian pads.

Mr. Astorino asked who the three architects were that the Aviary worked with. Mr. Mangus stated that they were John Francona, Jeff King, and Bob Grumbar. They worked with the Aviary as well as the planners from Springboard. Mr. Astorino further asked if it was possible to get letters of support from these three architects. Mr. Mangus stated that it was possible.

Mr. Astorino asked what groups were the most challenging. Mr. Mangus stated that it was West Allegheny.

Mr. Mangus explained that it is difficult to develop expansion plans in the area because they are situated within a park. He stated that they need to be mindful of the green space and maintaining the integrity of the park. At the same time the Commons acknowledges the need for growth. They have come to an understanding with the community with some reservations. For instance there is currently a rose garden that the Aviary created and uses for bird shows. This garden will be lost to create some additional parking; however the Aviary will be moving the garden to another area of the park. The Aviary will be placing the rose garden east of the building near the entrance to the Aviary as per the request of the community and the bird shows will be moved inside to the proposed theatre.

Ms. Haskell asked if the current drawings were accurate as to the placement of the rose gardens. Mr. Mangus stated that they were not; the drawings reflected the original plans which have changed.

Ms. Haskell asked if the existing driveway into the Aviary would remain. Mr. Mangus stated that it will remain and a sidewalk will be placed along the driveway so that patrons do not have to walk up the driveway.

Mr. Mangus explained that there will also be an entrance from the park. This was also request of the community groups.

Ms. Haskell asked about a small building located on the original plans. Mr. Mangus explained that it was a sprung building and it will be removed. Once it is removed there are plans to put in a crane yard and a bald eagle exhibit.

Mr. Mangus stated that this is part of a larger master plan. The aviary is looking to grow within the next 12 years and this is only the first phase. The Aviary would like to expand the bird collection and viewing opportunities and to add on an avian hospital.

Mr. Szustack explained that there are separate plans for each phase of the Aviary expansion. There is a plan for lighting and landscape as well as the interior bird facilities and patron areas. Mr. Szustack stated that most of the facility would only open to public on the first floor. Mr. Szustack said that the Aviary would be seeking a LEED silver level. This final product would look like a place as opposed to a conglomeration of spaces and remain true to the park.

Mr. Mangus stated that the majority of the roof and sides of the building would be glass. He said that while this can be problematic with outside birds striking the glass, it was necessary as the birds require natural light. There is a thin; invisible to the eye, netting that will be placed over all of the exposed glass. This serves in a boomerang function. Birds flying towards the glass will be gently bounced back. Ms. Haskell asked if anything else would get caught in the netting. Mr. Mangus stated that while some things would likely get caught and some maintenance would be required, however bird experts have stated that this is the best product available to protect birds from injury.

Ms. Hall asked what the landscaping would look like in the entrance area of the building/how would it change. Mr. Mangus stated that they had specific plans concerning landscaping and would be working closely with the Allegheny Commons landscape architects.

Ms. Hall stated that the Friends of the Urban Forest recently created office flooring out of trees that they were made to remove and asked if the Aviary had given any thought to this idea. Mr. Mangus answered that it was a good idea and they would certainly consider it.

Ms. Hall asked if any thought had been given to making the parking lot green as it was right in the park area. Mr. Mangus said that they had discussed it, and again stated that they were shooting for a silver LEED certification. He stated that they have not ruled it out, however green parking lots are not very visitor friendly. They are difficult to maintain and clean.

Ms. Hall asked if all of the roofs would be green or just the theatre. Mr. Mangus stated that they were not all green and this was due to the need for natural light and glass roofs.

Ms. Hall asked how many visitors per year they had. Mr. Mangus stated that they had about 150,000 visitors per year with about 700-900 on a typical Saturday. Ms. Hall stated that the Aviary was looking to increase their visitors and yet had only added 40 parking spaces. Mr. Mangus stated that they were currently working with Allegheny

Commons and other vested neighbors on a parking study to determine demand. They are currently leasing space from Kindred Hospital for employee parking. Ms. Hall asked if there was a parking solution gleaned from the study if the Aviary had considered plans to eliminate the parking lot. Mr. Mangus said that it had currently not been evaluated. Mr. Mangus further stated that they were cut-off from Allegheny Center visually and they are looking into various ways to address this. Mr. Astorino pointed out that the current parking was hidden. Mr. Mangus explained that the parking would remain hidden in the same way.

Mr. Indovino asked if the flight zone building was meant to be as simplistic as it appeared in the plans. Mr. Mangus explained that it is meant to be an emersion experience. It will be a free flying theatre and light can be distracting to birds that are trained. Mr. Mangus further stated that there is not another theatre like this in the world.

Mr. Astorino asked at what level the plans were at, were they simply conceptual at this time? Mr. Mangus explained that they would be visiting the Historic Review Commission in early November for final review and would be back before the Art Commission at the November meeting for final review.

Mr. Indovino asked that they produce other elevations of the building. He explained that the purview of the Art Commission was to evaluate what the building would look like from the public side.

Mr. Mangus stated that the overall design was meant to be as organic as possible while still connecting to the property already being maintained and to also be low maintenance.

Mr. Indovino asked if there was anyone in the audience that wished to speak on behalf or against the Aviary's expansion plans.

Alida Baker requested to speak on behalf of the Allegheny Commons Initiative. Ms. Baker explained that she was the staff person for this group and was charged with representing the interests of the community. The Allegheny Commons' function is to protect the historical integrity of the park. The group is comprised of representatives from four different groups that are contiguous to the park. These groups are Allegheny West Civic Council, Mexican War Streets Society, East Allegheny Community Council, and Central Northside Neighborhood Council. Ms. Baker stated that the membership also includes institutional membership and a few at large members. She stated that they have been working with the Aviary quite well and have responded to the requests of the Commons group. The Aviary has attended meetings with each of these groups and are now awaiting letters of support. Ms. Baker stated that the Commons did receive a letter of support from the Central Northside Neighborhood Council; however they were waiting on three additional letters. Ms. Baker explained that for the part of the Allegheny Commons' there is a list of about 25 points that the Commons would like clarity on. They are in general in support of the project and would hope to show support at the next meeting.

Mr. Indovino called for discussion.

Mr. Astorino stated that he felt it was imperative that they have community acceptance. He stated that he felt it was a wonderful thing for Pittsburgh, but the community support must be showed.

Mr. Serrao stated that he wished the Aviary had more of a presence. He would like to see them do more along Sherman Street. He respected the existence of the park, but felt that the Aviary deserved a presence as well.

Ms. Haskell stated that she was not very familiar with the Aviary as it currently exists and was having difficulty commenting on the proposal. She stated that she felt it appropriate to request to grant conceptual approval in November's meeting with more information.

Ms. Hall stated that the progress that has thus far been made is great; however there is a need for a show of community support as well as the elevations. She suggests that the approval is tabled at this time.

Mr. Indovino asks if Ms. Hall is suggesting that the Commission grant both conceptual and final approval at the next meeting.

Mr. Serrao asked if the Aviary has a particular time schedule.

Mr. Mangus stated that they will be ordering materials in December or January to begin work due to the lag time in delivery.

Mr. Astorino stated that he feels that the information presented is enough to grant conceptual approval.

Ms. Hall stated that she is uncomfortable with granting conceptual approval at this time.

Mr. Indovino stated that he also has concerns with granting any approval without all of the information as long as it does create an impact on the work.

Ms. Haskell stated that she would also like to hold off approvals as long as it does not impeded the project.

Mr. Astorino stated that he felt that enough information has been presented to provide conceptual approval. He stated that by pushing the requirements too far it is turned into final approval.

Mr. Indovino asked if there would be a problem with the Aviary coming back twice more for final approval.

Mr. Astorino asked Ms. Hall if she was prepared to grant conceptual and final approval at the same time. Ms. Hall stated that she would not be comfortable with this. Mr. Indovino stated that in the past there had been problems with granting conceptual and final at the same presentation in particular with a project of this magnitude.

Mr. Indovino stated that the Commission would need complete elevation drawings as well as letters from all of the community groups to grant all approvals.

Mr. Astorino stated that we need to determine what it is that we need to comfortably grant approvals. This is a significant change that will be a final change and must be reviewed.

Ms. Haskell stated that she would also like to conduct her own site visit to gain familiarity with the area prior to granting an approval.

Mr. Indovino asked for a table or a motion to grant conceptual.

Mr. Indovino explained that the Commission felt that the Aviary was moving in the right direction and that the request was merely procedural.

Ms. Hall asked if they would need to go to CDAP. Mr. Mangus stated that they would need to go to CDAP. Mr. Indovino asked whether they were on the schedule for CDAP at this time. It was stated that they were not at this time on the schedule. They are also working to prepare for the Planning Commission as well.

Mr. Szustack stated that they were currently receiving letters from various community groups and were developing final schematic designs. Ms. Hall asked if they would have the materials for the HRC. Mr. Szustack stated that it would be at design level and that all designs were subject to some change as construction and development was started.

Ms. Ismail stated that she did not have a problem with granting conceptual approval, however it should be noted that there are several concerns. There were concerns that the letters from all vested communities were not completed and that some members wished to visit the site. Ms. Ismail further stated that she was concerned that holding up the approval process would delay the progress on the site.

Mr. Serrao stated that there were only three weeks between the meetings. This may not be enough time between meetings.

Ms. Hall stated that they should be put on the agenda for next time for conceptual and final.

Mr. Astorino stated that there needs to be a clear definition as to what is needed in conceptual review. Mr. Astorino stated that the information must be formalized so that we can translate the specific needs to the groups presenting.

Mr. Serrao stated that the general consensus seemed to be that everyone was happy with the direction that the Aviary was going in, however there is a definite gap in information needed.

Mr. Indovino asked if the consensus was to table the approval and shoot for conceptual and final approval at the November meeting.

Mr. Indovino stated that he would like to see design level drawings of the major elevations as well as the plans and the site for final approval.

Mr. Serrao stated that he would like to see a larger site plan so that people can have a better sense of what is in the area beyond the Aviary.

Mr. Astorino stated that we would also need to see letters from all of the communities.

MOTION: The Aviary has been tabled to return in November for conceptual and final approval.

e. Downtown Partnership, Downtown Shopping Banners, Conceptual and Final Review

- Sean Luther
Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership

Mr. Luther explained that the PDP is working on a three year plan concerning retail in the downtown area. One of the early ideas for this plan is a way finding system for potential shoppers throughout the major downtown thoroughfares. It was decided that a great time to test drive the concept was during the holiday shopping season. The banners will be about 18 inches wide and unobtrusive in design. There are three areas in the concept, Fifth and Smithfield, Market Square, and the Cultural District. These will be coordinated with major holiday attractions such as Saks, Macy's, and the rink at PPG.

Mr. Serrao asked what the different colored circles on the site plan indicated. Mr. Luther stated that the colors represented the different areas.

Mr. Indovino asked how long the banners would be up. Mr. Luther stated that they would be up from First Night through the first of the year.

Ms. Haskell asked if these were three dimensional signs. Mr. Luther explained that they were two dimensional and were being printed on vinyl.

Mr. Astorino referred to the guide example given to the commission including advertisement. He asked if the banners would include the advertisements. Mr. Luther stated that they would not include advertising, but were close to the same design. Mr.

Luther wanted to demonstrate that the banners were not a concept unto itself but was tied to a greater downtown experience.

Mr. Indovino asked a motion.

MOTION: To grant conceptual and final approval as submitted to the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership for the placement of banners throughout downtown celebrating the holiday experience to be removed after the first of the year.

MOVED: Serrao

SECONDED: Astorino

IN FAVOR: All

OPPOSED: None

CARRIED