

ART COMMISSION

Minutes of the meeting Wednesday, December 10, 2014
Beginning at 2:00 p.m.

PRESENT OF THE COMMISSION: Astorino, Lockett, Slavick

PRESENT OF THE STAFF: Morton Brown
Ray Gastil
Mike Gable

AGENDA ITEMS COVERED IN THESE MINUTES

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A. Approval of Meeting Minutes

No minutes were presented for approval.

B. Correspondence

Letters of support for the WindNest project were presented to the Commission. The letters were from Councilman Dan Gilman, Holly Anderton of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Georgia Petropoulos of Oakland Business Improvement District, Paul Supowitz of the University of Pittsburgh, Wanda Wilson of the Oakland Planning and Development Corporation, Jim Griffin of Citiparks, and Richard Reed of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

C. Items for Review

1. ***Pittsburgh Zoo Islands (Final)***

Chuck Coltharp, Indovina Associates, and Frank Cartieri, Pittsburgh Zoo

Chuck Coltharp presented the plans for the Pittsburgh Zoo Islands, which will house four Asian animal species: the clouded leopard, the Phillipine crocodile, Saimang, and the warty pig. All of the habitats will have a vantage point inside and outside. An island, built in the center of a pool of water and waterfalls, will house the Saimangs.

Astorino asked if the Saimangs will stay on the island year round. Coltharp explained that most of the time, the Saimangs will be outside, like the other animals, but in the colder months they will be in an inside holding area.

Astorino asked how the water width is determined. Cartieri explained that research over a period of time, for zoological studies, have determined the lengths animals can jump or

move across water. The width of the water between the exhibit and humans is 16 feet at minimum, which is the required width. The depth of the water in the first six feet of the pool is very shallow, in case babies fall into the fall. After the first six feet, the water depth is increased. The Saimangs have evolved to know that water is dangerous, so they stay up in the trees.

Gastil commented on the enrichment offered to the animals and that it would be encouraged that the Zoo find a way to make that information public. The more a visitor knows, the better. The Zoo is aware of the need for this and information will be made available to the public soon.

Luckett asked if material for the buildings was brought to the meeting. Colthrap explained the materials, including thatched roofs, bamboo, and corrugated metal. No material samples were presented.

Slavick wanted confirmation that since the building is over \$2 million that the construction is meeting LEED silver. Colthrap explained that they are following LEED standards, but since there are no human occupants, they cannot meet the FTE to be LEED certified. There will be stormwater management systems in place with bioswills and to limit stormwater.

Luckett reiterated the need for visuals and building material samples.

<u>MOTION:</u>	Final Approval
MOVED BY	Astorino
IN FAVOR	All
OPPOSED	None

SECONDED BY Luckett

CARRIED

2. Squirrel Hill Bike Racks (Final) *John Katz, Brandywine Agency*

John Katz presented the Squirrel Hill bike racks that were installed using his private funds. The bike racks were designed under the guidance of Stephen Patchan, former planner for the City of Pittsburgh, but were not approved through Art Commission. The steel structures are shaped like squirrels, and bicycles can be attached in two places.

Astorino had a question for staff on the concerns presented in the staff report. Brown said that the design of the racks are not typical of what is seen in a urban setting, the design is more typical for a park or a playground. Objects of distinction can often clash with architecture, but there is obvious public support for the project.

Astorino asked if there was a City standard that needs to be followed. Gable responded that there is a family of standards for the City, and if this is approved, it could be added to that family of standards. Brown cautioned the Commission on deciding on making the rack design a standard.

Luckett asked about the community process in the design and placement of the racks. Luckett also explained that Squirrel Hill has been involved in another project that had a similar lack of Art Commission approval before being installed. A process has to be followed.

Katz responded that he got the approval of tenants of the building, but it was installed at his cost. The Squirrel Hill Coalition had no involvement in the process, and he is not related to the Coalition and the bad history with the Art Commission. The locations were chosen because they are Katz's buildings.

Luckett encouraged Katz to be aware of process, and that other organizations need to follow suit. Katz reiterated he was ignorant to the process.

Marti Isler spoke in support of the project. Isler is the chair of the Gateway Committee of the Squirrel Hill Coalition. Isler spoke to the community process for enhancing the gateway to Squirrel Hill, there have been at least ten meetings. The squirrel is actually community approved imagery, through surveys and envisioning meetings. The community likes and wants to be identified with squirrel imagery.

The Commission talked about the acceptance of a standard, but Gable said there is no standard in place.

Astorino said he would like some standard or direction moving forward. Or the Commission just reviews it on project basis. Brown said that if the Commission should approve this project, the approval today does not make it a City standard.

Gastil recommended that the new Bike/Ped Coordinator should come to the Art Commission to talk about standards in 2015.

Astorino commented that the issue here is that the Commission was not able to make comments and suggestions on the project before it was installed.

Luckett withheld approval because of the noncompliance to policy and process.

<u>MOTION:</u>	Final Approval		
MOVED BY	Astorino	SECONDED BY	Slavick
IN FAVOR	Astorino and Slavick		
OPPOSED	Luckett		

CARRIED

3. Emerald View Park Signage (Conceptual)

Kathryn Hunninen, Mount Washington Community Development Corporation, Sarah Thompson, Patchak Associates

Hunninen presented the plans for trail signage. The Development Corporation is working closely with the City of Pittsburgh who actually hired Patchak Associates as landscape architects.

The trail will feature an informational sign that will include color images and narrative about the area and the trail itself, like grading. A map of the trail is included as well. The signage follows standards set by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

Thompson presented the design plans for the medallions and the sign. A sidewalk medallion will be a visual cue for trail users to confirm that they are still on the trail. The medallions will be placed six feet apart. They will be made of cast aluminum with a blue inlay. There are currently two designs in consideration. They will be six inches wide in diameter.

Thompson asked for opinions by the Commission on the two designs for the medallions. The community prefers the first option of a Pittsburgh skyline with trees. The second option of a simple, tree medallion might be a more appropriate pick for the material. Astorino prefers the skyline option and does not feel like the detail will be too small. Slavick agrees that it is clearly Pittsburgh, and the other medallion is too generic.

Luckett asked how many medallions will be placed. Thompson answered that six medallions will be placed in the sidewalk.

Gastil asked for the estimated lifespan of the signage. Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy curator Susan Rademacher spoke up from the audience that they have a ten year lifespan. The images are screenprinted onto the signage.

Gable commented that the logos on the sign include the Mount Washington logo and the City's logo, but that would need to be approved. Brown concluded that the law department would need to look at that, but since the City has a cooperative agreement with the Mount Washington CDC, it shouldn't be an issue.

Gable asked Rademacher if these medallions would be used to mark other Parks trails, or is it unique to this park. Rademacher said she does not know the answer to this question, but the idea has been in play before for other parks. There is some interest. Criteria if it were to become a standard would be good for future use.

Luckett wanted to know if the Commission could grant final approval as well as conceptual approval. The Commission agreed.

<u>MOTION:</u>	Conceptual and Final Approval	
MOVED BY	Astorino	SECONDED BY Luckett
IN FAVOR	All	
OPPOSED	None	

CARRIED

4. WindNest (Conceptual)

Elizabeth Monoian, Society for Cultural Exchange and LAGI; Robert Ferry, LAGI; Susan Rademacher, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy; and Trevor Lee, artist/designer

Elizabeth Monoian and Robert Ferry, both of the Society for Cultural Exchange and LAGI, presented the background information about their program. LAGI runs international design competitions for designers to make structures that look at new ways to generate renewable energy. The goal is to engage renewable energy into the urban environment. Their program arms include: design competitions, events, education and outreach, construction of renewable energy designs, and providing a platform for research development and innovation. If constructed, WindNest would be the first design to be actually constructed by the group.

LAGI held a design competition for a site in Abu Dhabi in 2010, where the original WindNest sculpture was the winning design. The design competition was juried by a panel of 12 to 15 people local to Abu Dhabi and designers of international recognition. Eric Shiner, the director of the Andy Warhol Museum, was the only local Pittsburgh representative on the selection panel. LAGI confirmed that outreach and education would be a main component of the project, looking to Pittsburgh public schools and other educational opportunities.

WindNest was brought to Pittsburgh through conversations with The Heinz Endowments and additional funders. Trevor Lee was selected as the designer. The idea will be for WindNest to act as a DC microgrid and supply power to the Schenley Park carousel.

Trevor Lee presented the design of the WindNest. The idea of the original WindNest design was vastly different than what WindNest will be in Pittsburgh. Lee and LAGI went through many iterations of designs to determine how the sculpture would be able to capture wind while not disturbing the view between Schenley Plaza and the Cathedral of Learning.

Ferry described the site selection process to choose Schenley Plaza. LAGI looked at several sites but circled back to Schenley Plaza as a best fit for the project for the funders and wind conditions.

Lee noted that the design is currently in a schematic design phase, they still have another phase of design. Consultants will be working with them in the next phase of design to make sure the design will be engineered correctly. They are currently confident that the design will be able to produce enough energy to meet the demands of the Schenley Park carousel.

Lee described the designs of the structure. The structure includes two poles with windsock-like turbines that will capture the wind. A solar film will cover the wind turbine structures.

Susan Rademacher of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy described the Conservancy's role in the project. As part of a plan for Schenley Plaza, a site, where WindNest is to be placed, was designated for temporary art projects. Rademacher said that sustainability, safety, maintenance, and working with the City are the Conservancy's top priority to make sure the project is successful.

Astorino asked for more clarification on how the site was chosen. Lee noted that Schenley Plaza was one of the highest wind areas of the sites tested. Monoian confirmed that Braddock might have had a higher wind capacity, but the funders were not interested in that site, so it was removed from consideration.

Slavick asked about the temporary nature of the project and who funds the the moving of the project. Monoian said that the project is intended to be at Schenley Plaza for three to five years, depending on when a site can be confirmed. Rademacher agreed that the project is not intended to be a permanent fixture, and the Conservancy is committed to the project being moved to another location. Lee said that one part of the process might be to return to the Art Commission around year three with other site options. Funding is not currently in place to remove the structure. Brown mentioned that funding would need to be in place in order to enter into contract with the City.

The question was asked about how the WindNest project was chosen for Pittsburgh. Monoian answered that LAGI looked at the 2010 and 2012 design competitions to find a good fit for the City. The original Pittsburgh site was to be the Andy Warhol Museum, but

fundere were against the location, so it had to be rethought. Ultimately, LAGI looked at the project team of each design to see who would be a best fit.

Luckett asked about the design competition and how the process works. Monoain answered that the competition is open to the whole world, and Pittsburghers are able to submit if they would like.

Renee Piechocki, the Director of the Office of Public Art, spoke against the project being installed in Schenley Plaza. Piechocki noted that the process was not driven by the City, which is a failing for such a prominent City space. While the process was a free and open competition in 2010, it was for a location in Abu Dabai, not Pittsburgh. The concern is the lack of process for artists to be included in an open process and using a method of just putting a project in the space is problematic. What precedent does it set for future projects in the City? Piechocki also offered that the space might not be the most ideal location for the scientific purposes. The scale of the project will alter the view corridors of the Plaza. Looking at other less culturally rich locations of the City would be encouraged. Lastly, Piechocki asked if a million dollar plus energy generator greatest use powering a carousel, a children's ride?

Heather Sage, Director of Community Projects for the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, reviewed the letters of support for the project and talked about the community partners. Councilman Gilman's office has met with the team several times. The University of Pittsburgh has been involved and supports the project. The community partners did not necessary consider this project a work of public art, but rather a renewable energy resource very artfully done. Other Oakland based organizations provided their support.

Astorino commented that the scale and the location do not seem appropriate. He wants to see documentation on how the site was chosen, with wind resistance and other community determinations.

Slavick repeated this concern over how the location was chosen. There are lots of underserved neighborhoods in the City that should be addressed. The Schenley Park location is such a prime spot, and it calls for a very site-specific design process. While the LAGI process was broad, it was not site-specific, it was designed for another place. Slavick thinks that it should have been a different process for this site. It needs to be temporary, for sure, because it did not go through a proper channel.

Rademacher commented that there is still discussion on how this space will function in Schenley Park, whether it is open to temporary works in the future and the process for that. She hopes that the project will help to form a sense of how this area will function. She confirms that it will be temporary.

The Commission expressed concern over the temporary nature of the project. LAGI needs to have a plan in place for the removal, including funding and another location secured before the work is installed.

Astorino also expressed concern over the scale of the project, that the structures are too high for the space. Lee commented that the scale can be adjusted and that the view corridors have been taken into consideration. Schenley Plaza is the most visible location for this project. Scale can be negotiated.

The Commission debated how to proceed heavily, as they have reserves with the process, scale, and location. But the Commission is in favor of the structure itself. Conceptual approval was then granted with the following conditions in effect:

LAGI and Lee must address the following:

1. An investigation of scale for the structure must be more realized. The group should research different options for height and show more detailed renderings of how it would affect the space.
2. More information on site approval. The Commission needs to see all of the sites considered and the pros and cons of each location. This includes wind readings and funder information.
3. A definitive presentation of why this structure for this site. The site-specific nature of the project is not evident. LAGI and the designer must address how this site and the structure are actually complementary.
4. Funding structure must be in place before a contract with the City can be signed. This includes money for structure relocation.

LAGI will report back to the Commission in the winter of 2015.

MOTION: Conceptual Approval with the above considerations

MOVED BY Astorino
IN FAVOR All
OPPOSED None

SECONDED BY Lockett

CARRIED

D. Director and Staff Reports

No reports were presented.

Meeting Adjourned