

ART COMMISSION

Minutes of the meeting Wednesday, January 28, 2015
Beginning at 2:00 p.m.

PRESENT OF THE COMMISSION: Astorino, Indovina, Lockett

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

December meeting minutes were approved.

B. Correspondence

Letters of support for the Allegheny Landing project were presented from Public Works. A letter from the Mayor was presented for WindNest.

C. Items for Review

1. *WindNest (Conceptual)* *Robert Ferry and Elizabeth Monoian, LAGI*

WindNest was brought back for a second review for more information on the site selection process, the appropriateness of the location, and design modifications.

Ferry presented the investigations for the design of the wind turbines. Were previously using a turbine of 12 feet in diameter, the new design is 9.2 feet in diameter.

For site selection, Ferry presented the information gathered by LAGI over the summer of nine different sites. He presented a comparison of the output of the wind powers of each location. Braddock is an ideal location for the wind condition, neither Schenley Plaza or the Science Center does not reach that level. Schenley Plaza, however, surpasses Braddock with other measurement criteria like public engagement and youth outreach potential. Schenley Plaza scored the highest on their decision matrix.

Ferry presented the revised design of the project and the renderings of the project in its place in Schenley Plaza. He maintains that the project will still allow for the view lines to the Mary Schenley fountain and to the Cathedral of Learning.

The installation is to remain in place for three to five years and will activate this area of Schenley Plaza and act as a positive amenity to this urban space.

Astorino said he was not convinced that Schenley Plaza was the best place for this work, and he is still not convinced. He also commented that it is a shame that local artists were not given an opportunity to apply for the project.

Luckett likes the project, but she is having a hard time fully backing the project place. Stakeholder component is really lacking. The project has international buy-in but is missing a regional input. There seems to be miscommunications between the City and the project. She thinks it is a great concept, but some of the steps along the way were skipped.

Indovina thinks the project is too big, too bold for the place. Astorino agrees that the scale is too large for the spot.

Sallyann Kluz, associate director of the Office of Public Art, commented on the project. While the Office of Public Art believes it is a compelling project, but Schenley Plaza is not the correct placement. There was not a good process in place, that a direct competition without a process in place is not the right fit for such a prime civic space. Is WindNest the best project for Schenley Plaza? Again, the process was not for this site at Schenley Plaza; the design team for WindNest was chosen in a closed door process. Kluz asked the Commission to consider the following: How will the energy of WindNest be used? How will this be communicated to the public? Is there a better use for the energy generated? What will the physical impacts be on Schenley Plaza? WindNest should exist somewhere other than Schenley Plaza.

Ferry commented on the open competition model. The Land Art Generator competition is a biannual competition with the idea that LAGI gathers ideas for projects around the world. They take projects from past competitions and redesign them for other sites.

Susan Rademacher commented on Schenley Plaza. The scale of the Plaza and the openness does create a context for a bold piece. The lightness of WindNest and the elevation balances with its scale. The work will potentially have charging stations for the public to charge devices. The Parks Conservancy is looking at ways to use the energy generated, which could be directed to the main power panel and directed as necessary. The intention is to have educational information onsite for the public to learn about the project. The interpretive design component would use an open design competition for interpretive design experts in Pittsburgh. Rademacher also addressed the idea of a "closed door process." The Parks Conservancy was excited to work with LAGI and develop a prototype to use the space in the Plaza for temporary art installations.

Gastil wanted to clarify some points about the project: Trevor Lee is from Philadelphia. He asked about the site specificity. Ferry commented that Lee visited the Plaza in February 2014, and has been designing to the site ever since. The work was originally designed for wildlife to nest in the area, but the new design allows for the public to "nest." Gastil asked for how the community has been involved. Rademacher answered that they reached out to the surrounding community organizations and institutions. There have been several meetings to

talk about the work. As the piece is being fabricated, there will be a push to outreach and education about the work. Gastil asked if the designer has the ability to understand the range of scale of the work, as that is a big concern of the Commission. Rademacher thinks that Lee will be able to work with scale. He works with Olin in Philadelphia, which is a firm that does many large-scale projects. Ferry and Monoian are also Pittsburgh-based artists. Lee has a real understand on how to make this work. Gastil believes that the project could be successful on that site and that it could activate the site well. But he wonders if there is any way to consider a shorter time period on the site?

Rademacher answered that it could be considered. The question was asked about how long of duration does the project need to be there to be successful, and that should be the driver. Three to five years had been mentioned previously, but the question is still wide open.

Luckett inquired about what is considered temporary. There is a very large number for deinstallation in the budget, which isn't finalized currently. To have something for such a short period of time, it seems like too much. Rademacher said that the piece would probably need to be in place for two years at minimum, or three years. In the contract, there would be very clear definitions for the dismantling and the cost for that process.

Brown commented that these conditions would need to be outlined and secured, because the City could not take care of the project removal if the project team falls apart.

Luckett commented on the stakeholders involvement, that to not involve people beyond organizations and high profile people is not a good model. Rademacher agreed that involving the public will be an important component as they move forward.

Astorino said that he would like to see the project somewhere in Pittsburgh, but he just does not think it fits in Schenley Plaza. It is light and airy, but it is large. Perhaps somewhere else in the Plaza?

Indovina agreed that it is a compelling piece and it should be in Pittsburgh, but not in Schenley Plaza. It is too close to the sidewalk, too close to pedestrians. It should be viewed from a distance – the proximity is too close. It should be a destination piece. In Schenley Plaza, it is not a destination, it is a confrontation. He also considers three to five years as semi-permanent, not temporary.

Monoian says that this would be the first LAGI project built. No other projects have been realized to date. Rademacher said that another space in Schenley Plaza is not really possible, if it is not to go in the space that is designated for public art, then they would have to find another entirely new location.

Luckett asked for the time frame of the installation. Ferry said that they are scheduled for a Zoning Board of Adjustment hearing on March 5 and hope to be in front of the Historic Review Commission in March as well. With approval, the project is slated to be installed by August. Late summer is the original schedule.

The Commission maintained that they are not convinced of the location selection. Luckett reiterated the need to involve more stakeholders in the process. Need to work on these things on the front end and not the back end.

Indovina asked for renderings of the project from the street.

Brown noted that the City has offered to look at other City owned properties for the project placement.

Indovina said he'd put a time limit on the project, and he would like to see more study on how this project is going to look perceived by pedestrians from the Plaza and sidewalk. If it was in another location, these wouldn't be considerations.

Ferry said they can't afford design fees for the project, not knowing whether or not the project can be completed.

Luckett wanted to know if the funders know about the concerns the Commission has, so they understand what is going on.

Indovina motioned for conceptual approval of the project, but with conditions related to the site of the project and location concerns resolved. LAGI will need to present at the next Commission hearing and be ready to talk about the following:

- Site selection clarification, including renderings of how the project will look from the sidewalk and from the Plaza
- Site plans/duration
- The project sited in a different location

The question to be answered: Why this site only? The Commission is not convinced of the location, and for the project to move forward, this has to be resolved.

Ferry wanted to clarify that LAGI came to discuss the site and the project – Ferry wants to know whether or not the project will ever be approved for the site.

Given that the vote was made, no further comments can be accepted. LAGI will need to present more clarification for the project placement. While this information was to be presented at this meeting, it was not clear to the Commission, so more information needs to be provided at the February 2015 meeting.

<u>MOTION:</u>	Conceptual Approval with conditions		
MOVED BY	Indovina	SECONDED BY	Astorino
IN FAVOR	All		
OPPOSED	None		

CARRIED

2. *Allegheny Landing (Conceptual and Final)*

Addy Smith-Reiman, Riverlife and Sarah Minnaert, Carnegie Museum of Art

Addy Smith-Reiman presented the new phase work of Allegheny Landing. The project had previously been at Art Commission in 2011 for approval of physical improvements of Allegheny Landing park. The project was broken into phases, the phases have since been juggled.

Sarah Minnaert presented the artwork restoration plans and a letter of support from the artist, Ned Smyth. The Carnegie Museum of Art is responsible for the restoration of four of the five artworks at Allegheny Landing. Ned Smyth's artworks, *Mythic Source* and *Piazza Lavoro*, will be

the first to be conserved. The original drawings of the artwork, from 1984, will be used to reconstruct *Mythic Source* in the footprint of *Piazza Lavoro*. The *Piazza Lavoro* palm structure will also be restored. The artist is going to be involved in the project through completion.

Jason Loney with LaQuatra Bonci presented the landscape plans for the park. They are proposing to use concrete on the trails rather than asphalt which is currently in the space. It will match the material used in other areas of the trail.

The Carnegie is in charge of the artworks, Riverlife will be managing the trails.

The Commission was in full support of the renovations, stating the much needed improvement of the Smyth artworks.

MOTION: Conceptual and Final Approval

MOVED BY Astorino

SECONDED BY Luckett

IN FAVOR All

OPPOSED

CARRIED

3. *Poros Restaurant Street Café (Briefing)*

Andy Wisniewski, Highwood Properties and Yves Carreau, Poros Restaurant

Christopher Houghton, representing the owners of PPG Place, presented the plans for Poros Restaurant. This is a briefing, as there was not a quorum, but the group came to the Commission to get feedback before a formal approval process.

The concept is taken from the idea of dining al fresco along the Mediterranean. The project will provide an outdoor eating concept, with a proposed canopy and trellis with a fixed roof. The patio will be elevated and have a railing for fall protection. The facility will be usable for seven months, with some weather protection.

Discussion by the Art Commission was positive in reception. The group will return for approval at the next Art Commission meeting.

D. Director and Staff Reports

No reports were presented. The Commission talked at length about WindNest before adjourning, reiterating the concerns presented previously in the hearing.

Meeting Adjourned