October 28, 2020 at 2:00 P.M., Meeting called to order by Chair Luckett

In Attendance
Luckett
Moss
Goulatia
Parsakian
Newman (DPW)
Lucas (DOMI)

Staff Present
Dash
Minnaert
Cavalline

Agenda Items Covered in These Minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
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A. Approval of Minutes

Roll call. Luckett asks Commissioners to review and comment on minutes from September 2020. Moss motions to approve the minutes, seconded by Goulatia. All ayes. Motion carries.

B. Items for Review

1. Christopher Columbus Statue – City of Pittsburgh Conceptual/Final Review

   Sarah Minnaert of the Public Art & Civic Design Division of the Department of City Planning gives a brief recap of recent events relating to the Christopher Columbus statue, including public engagement and Art Commission actions. She presents the removal of the Christopher Columbus statue for a final vote by the Commission. The statue, plinth, and related signage will be removed, and the fountain will be decommissioned by filling in the basin and laying it with topsoil, grass, and planting consistent with the programming of the surrounding area by Phipps Conservatory. The removal can be facilitated using the resources of the Department of Public Works.

   Goulatia asks what the timeline is. Minnaert says that it can began as soon as possible following Art Commission approval and pending resolution of the existing legal action.

200 ROSS STREET | CIVIC BUILDING, FOURTH FLOOR | 412-255-2219
Public comment:

Matt Minsky of Bochetto and Lentz speaks on behalf of the Italian Sons and Daughters of America in favor of postponing today’s vote until the legal action has been resolved.

Carmella Mullen speaks in favor of not removing the Christopher Columbus statue.

Prem Rajgopal speaks in favor of removing the statue.

Goulatia says that they have already deliberated on this and she does not feel the need to do so again. Moss agrees and says that the Art Commission has made their point of view clear, and that any legal action is a separate issue that is beyond their control. Luckett agrees. Parsakian says that the Law Department has supported their decision and that their decision should go forward.

The Commissioners clarify the scope of what has been presented, and that it does not include any relocation of the statue.

Moss mentions that many museums have significant portions of their collection that are not out for display. Luckett says only an average of 10-15% of a museum’s collection is on display at any time. Moss says that the Columbus statue could be thought of as a similar situation, with it being put into storage and any future use is to be determined later.

**MOTION: Conceptual and Final Approval**

MOVED BY: Moss
SECONDED BY: Goulatia
IN FAVOR: All
OPPOSED: None

2. **Production Greenhouse Rooftop Solar Project – Phipps Conservatory Conceptual/Final Review**

Brad Clauss of Phipps Conservatory gives his presentation, which is for the installation of solar panels on available roof space of Phipps Conservatory’s Production Greenhouse Building to increase the generation of renewable energy for the facility.

Parsakian asks who is manufacturing the solar panels. Clauss says it is an arm of Sun Power called Solar World. Parsakian asks if there’s anything more local. Clauss says unfortunately no.

Luckett commends Phipps for their ongoing dedication to being energy-efficient and eco-friendly. Moss also expresses his admiration.

**MOTION: Conceptual/Final Approval**

MOVED BY: Moss
SECONDED BY: Parsakian
IN FAVOR: All
OPPOSED: None

3. **Oasis Project Ground Mural – Bible Center Church Conceptual/Final Review**

Luckett recuses herself for the discussion of this project.

Arielle Donelan of the Bible Center Church presents the project, which is a ground mural to be installed on Fleury Way Plaza, an area of pedestrian right-of-way owned by the City. The mural
celebrates Black history and culture with visuals of the Pan-African flag and symbols representing unity, history, diversity, and culture across the diaspora.

Goulatia asks if there will be signage to describe the motifs and symbols in the art so the public can understand it's meaning. She asks how the Nadir Way mural that was shown relates to the ground mural, because it seems to clash. She also asks how they will commission the mural that will go on the nearby wall in the future and how it will relate.

Donelan says the ground mural is part of a larger project in that area, so there will be signage that will lead people through the ground mural and ways that they can interact with it. Donelan says that the art pieces are all separate and not necessarily part of one cohesive vision. She says there is not a common theme or color palette, but they are all part of the Homewood Art Walk. In terms of the wall mural, she says that it will eventually be on a CCAC wall, but they do not have anything to do with the artist selection or the work.

Goulatia asks if there will be something going on the wall next to the ground mural. Donelan says yes. Goulaniya asks if that will be related or will be a separate project. Donelan says that will be a separate project as well. She says that they have already selected a local artist that will be working on that piece, which will highlight children of color and reference agricultural symbolism like this ground mural does. She says the color palette between the ground mural and this other mural will be aligned.

Goulatia says the murals really activate the space but urges Donelan to work with the artist to make the different artworks relate to each other and be cohesive. Donelan says that all the pieces on the Homewood Art Walk celebrate Black and African-American culture and all utilize bright, bold colors.

Parsakian asks about the artist selection process. Donelan says that they were paired with an architect and team by the Remake Learning administrative staff. She says that the architect they are working with identified Graham Coreil-Allen, a D.C.-based artist, and they will also be including a local artist. Parsakian asks how they are choosing the local artist. Donelan says they have someone in mind already, who had submitted a submission to a previous RFP. She says the artist will include students from Westinghouse High School. Parsakian says he likes what they are doing and is familiar with the neighborhood.

Public comment:

Kota-ki-bey, Grand Inca of the Iroquois Confederacy, asks if this is the hearing for Christopher Columbus. Moss informs him that the Columbus agenda item has already concluded. Kota-ki-bey states that he is aboriginal and indigenous. He speaks against colonialism and for the inclusion of indigenous people in any project or mural.

Moss asks why this project is before the Art Commission, and asks if it is on City right-of-way. Donelan says that it is. Minnaert says that it is on City property and is a project supported by DOMI.

MOTION: Conceptual/Final Approval, with the request that thought be put into the relationship of this mural with any additional artwork that will be put on the nearby wall or surrounding area.

MOVED BY: Goulatia
SECONDED BY: Parsakian
IN FAVOR: All
OPPOSED: None

4. Bus Rapid Transit Project – AECOM Technical Services/Port Authority of Allegheny County Conceptual Review
Steve Auterman of DOMI introduces the project, which is for infrastructure changes to the bus corridor between Downtown and the East End neighborhoods to improve multi-modal connectivity. The improvements include bus stations, transit lanes, traffic signals, and bump outs. The project currently seeks Conceptual approval for bus shelters, bus operator comfort stations, and landscaping.

Dave Haines of AECOM introduces himself as well as Denise Ott of Port Authority and Osborne Anthony, the project architect and gives some background information on the project.

Anthony goes over the details of the bus shelters, comfort stations, and other specifics of the project.

Luckett asks if any consideration has been given to the shelters having any art design features. Anthony says that the route goes through many different neighborhoods, but there has to be some consistency in the design of the shelters. He says they haven’t considered art design. Luckett encourages them to look into this and to look to precedents in other cities. She says there are a lot of different ways to incorporate art and design into these shelters.

Luckett asks about how seating will be incorporated in the shelters. Anthony says all shelters will have seating, but the extent of the seating will depend on the size of the shelter.

Goulatia says that the art design idea is amazing, and brings up the Busnegie project of a few years ago. She says that panels that are normally used for advertising can be used for rotating artists to activate the shelters. She asks if they have thought about incorporating charging stations into the shelters. Haines says that they do not have any solar charging stations at the moment but they can talk to DOMI about that.

Moss says that one potential way to have artist-designed elements would be to pattern the frit in the glass panels. He says that this could customize each shelter to the neighborhood it is in. Moss also says that the comfort stations seem uninspired. He says if they are meant to be utilitarian and unnoticed then this may be okay for the Highland Park structure which is more tucked away, but the structure in Oakland is prominent and it looks like a temporary building. He says if it is meant to stay for a length of time then it warrants further design consideration and potentially artwork.

Parsakian asks about the possibility of using solar panels for electricity in the stations. Haines says they can look into that but thinks that their power demands will exceed the ability of solar panels.

Minnaert says that this application prompted a conversation with DOMI regarding Percent For Art opportunities and that this conversation is ongoing.

Luckett says that lighting can be a wonderful way to incorporate artists. She says that including artists in the early stages can allow them to explore all the many possibilities.

Luckett asks if trash receptacles are incorporated into this plan, and says she sees a lack of trash receptacles at many bus stops. Osborne says that receptacles are planned for each shelter.

MOTION: Conceptual Approval, with consideration to the comments made by the Commission

MOVED BY: Moss
SECONDED BY: Goulatia
IN FAVOR: All
OPPOSED: None

5. Frick Park Extension – LaQuatra Bonci
   Final Review

Dan McDowell of LaQuatra Bonci goes over the project, which is for a park space located in the Summerset at Frick Park residential community. The land is currently owned by the URA. After completion of the project, the City would take ownership of the land and it will be included as an
extension of Frick Park. McDowell goes over all designs for the park space. The project previously received Art Commission Conceptual Approval in September of 2018.

Goulatia mentions that she lives in the neighborhood for which the project is designed. She asks about the plans for the pathways and if it is similar to the sidewalk by the parkview boulevard overlooking the hill. She mentions that using slate and concrete has been a hindrance and many neighbors have fallen since the slate has been dislodged over time. She also addresses the trees in the neighborhood that are identical and planted in a cookie cutter style. She wishes that landscaping and plant varieties were given more thought both from an aesthetic as well as disease and an epidemiological standpoint.

McDowell says that the pavement of this project would be concrete exposed aggregate. He says that they worked with the City Forester for the trees, and the choices were influenced by them. He says they do have a variety of trees, not just one species, and they focused on flowering and bright trees.

Goulatia clarifies that there are some park benches and some swings. McDowell says yes. Goulatia asks about the new gazebos and how big they are. McDowell says that they are smaller than the existing pavilion in order to maintain the view and also be big enough for gatherings. McDowell says that the neighborhood wanted the swings. He says the swings and the benches are from the same manufacturer. Goulatia says there were concerns in the neighborhood over everyone wanting to sit on the swings, and asks if there was a way to incorporate swings for everyone in the center portion. McDowell says the swings cost about four times the amount as a bench. He says they wanted to include some but did not know how many they could include within the budget.

Goulatia mentions the Percent For Art, and asks how it is incorporated into the planning. McDowell says they are trying to focus on the design of the park space, and have been having discussions on issuing an RFP when the construction documents are complete. He says they will be happy to include the Office of Public Art and City Planning staff in that process when the RFP goes out.

Moss says he is not sure if he’s comfortable giving this project Final Approval without the art being a part of it. McDowell says they want to include art, but the reasoning for approval now is just that they need to finalize the design and get it out to bid due to grant funding.

Goulatia agrees with Moss and says the art needs to be included in any approval they give.

Moss says he doesn’t want to hold up the progress of the project, but it’s disappointing that the art hasn’t been considered yet, and that it seems apparent it is an afterthought. Moss asks Minnaert how they can be assured that the project has funds in the budget dedicated to the artwork.

Minnaert says that there is currently a line item for $13,000 in the project budget, which is 1% of their total projected cost, although this does not speak to the Commissioner’s comments regarding the art being put in as an afterthought. She asks McDowell if, since the funds are already a line item in the budget, the call for artists can be moved up in the timeline to better coincide with design development. McDowell says that he thinks it can, and states that the URA is still waiting on funding from a grant that will allow the realization of the project.

McDowell shows the possible location of art in the slide presentation, and says that there has been a lot of discussion about coordinating the art before the project is finalized, but that they were waiting for finalized funding to make sure that the project can actually happen first.

Goulatia suggests looking at the Wightman Park project, which includes art that was thoughtfully connected to the design and themes of the park. She says that the art needs to be an intrinsic part of the process, not an embellishment.

Luckett says that LaQuatra Bonci and the URA have a track record of working with artists from the beginning, and so it is disappointing that in this project the art has been sidelined. She asks that...
they not make excuses, but instead they embrace the integration of artistic elements from the project’s beginning.

McDowell says he apologizes, and they are not trying to skirt the issue of art. He says it was not part of the original discussion with the neighborhood.

Craig Dunham of Dunham reGroup LLC says that he understands the Commission’s concern. He says that the funding has several components, including tax increment financing, neighborhood association funds, and a grant that is still forthcoming, so they have tried to work through the project incrementally as funding has been received and as they have received the necessary permits. He says they could issue an RFP at this time but would be hesitant to engage an artist in work because of the funding that has not yet been finalized.

Luckett thanks Dunham for his input and says that it is better for the Commissioners to hear upfront that the applicants understand that Percent For Art is a necessary City policy and that it is being approached holistically as funding becomes assured. Goulatia says that even if the funding is low then there would still need to be art included, so it may be necessary to do smaller projects that are integrated progressively as the project moves through its stages.

Parsakian adds that in terms of incorporating art into the existing design, the terraced seating could be made into a mosaic installation, or it could be incorporated into the paving. They should have a discussion regarding how they can elevate what they currently have in the design into art pieces.

Haines says they have always been thinking in terms of integrated elements. Parsakian says that a mosaic could be a possible solution. Goulatia says there could also be art, possibly using words, on the walking path. Luckett suggests the retaining walls or the pergola. Goulatia says that there is a good example of a walking space at CMU.

Haines asks about the relation of Art Commission approval to other City approvals. He states that the project has received Planning Commission approval and asks if they would be able to receive approval based on the condition of them issuing an RFP even if they do not engage the artist yet. Moss says this seems reasonable.

Cavalline says that support from DOMI or DPW is needed for the project. He asks Lucas to speak to DOMI’s support of the project. Lucas says she is not sure if the project affects public space. Cavalline asks Newman if this would be under DOMI or DPW purview. McDowell says that he sent the request to Katie Reed, who reviewed the project at DOMI. Lucas says she can ask their Director. Newman says she has not received any notifications but she can check with Director Gable. Cavalline says they just need it on the record for this project. He says that the Commission can move forward but they would just need that support as a condition of approval. Lucas says that she just received word that the Director did approve it and the letter has been issued.

**MOTION:** Final Approval for the purposes of funding and bidding out the project, with the condition that the Percent For Art project associated with the Frick Park Extension be presented to the Art Commission prior to the start of any construction.

MOVED BY: Goulatia
SECONDED BY: Moss
IN FAVOR: All
OPPOSED: None

6. East Liberty Fire Station – Department of Public Works
Conceptual Review
Claire Mastroberardino describes the renovation project at the East Liberty Fire Station, which as a major renovation is required to comply with Net Zero energy goals. The application is for energy efficient insulated exterior facades.

Sam Roberts of Garland Company speaks about the details of the construction and the design of the rain screen system.

Rick Avon of Avon Design Group describes the two design concepts shown in the presentation, and the future possibilities for public art.

Moss says they should focus the discussion on the current proposal and not on possible future proposals. Luckett agrees but tells Avon and Mastroberardino that what they are thinking about is important.

Moss says that he is tremendously disappointed in this proposal. He says that this is an Art Deco limestone building and it seems like the completely wrong approach to clad it with another material. He says that cladding limestone with aluminum is probably one of the less sustainable options. He says that, although the City’s Net Zero policy is important and should certainly be applied to new buildings, trying to apply it to this existing building is the wrong approach. He says there can be substantial energy improvements made to this building without recladding the exterior and he cannot support an application making this kind of change to this building.

Goulatia agrees that they need to respect the original structure. She asks if there is a way to incorporate solar panels on the roof to make the building more energy efficient. She says that the proposed change would be regretted in a few years.

Avon says he understands their comments. He says that he was brought on to the project with the understanding that this building was going to be cladded on its exterior and turned into a passive house, and that thermal bridging would not allow them to reach the energy goals they wanted. He said that he was hired to make sure this was executed and his job was to design this system and make sure that it works. He says that he understands their objections, but in order for him to complete a design he needs to know what the goals are, because exterior cladding was the only way to reach the goals that were previously set.

Moss says that he thinks the City is applying an inappropriate goal to this building. Mastroberardino says that they have worked with the Rocky Mountain Institute to assess all City buildings and worked out what buildings need to be optimized to meet 2030 energy goals. They have worked with the Auros Group, who is the certified passive house designer on this project, to figure out how to meet those goals with this building. She says they are trying to reach the goals that were set by City Council for all major renovations and new construction.

Moss suggests that they remove all the limestone from the building and start from scratch. Mastroberardino says that was discussed and they had a quote on demolition and reconstruction.

Parsakian asks what the future use of the building is. Mastroberardino says it is a public safety utility. It currently has a fire station, and formerly had a police station, which would move back once the renovation is complete. Parsakian says there is community resistance to having that police department move back and asks if they have addressed that. Mastroberardino says they have not, and it is not in the purview of DPW to address this. Parsakian says that the building needs to retain its integrity and it is sad that this is the only solution for this energy problem.

Luckett says that she does not think this is the only solution to meet these energy goals. She says there are other dynamics at play as well, as more affluent areas get more attention from the preservation community. She says they need real leaders who can step up and offer solutions. She says this sits at a nucleus of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and the rendering shown of the building is appalling. She asks what the presenters really think of this approach, beyond just the City’s goals.

Goulatia says that Duolingo did a phenomenal job with the mural on their building, so there are ways to incorporate artists to make the building inviting to the community. She asks about a section...
of the building on the roof in the images. Mastroberardino says this is the hose tower, which had structural damage and had to be taken down. Goulatia says that they mentioned that a lot of the building is not being used right now, so it would not matter if the building was insulated from the inside and lost space. Mastroberardino says that there are plans for that space to be used. Goulatia says that aluminum cladding is just not an option.

Moss asks what the energy savings might be with another approach that maintains the limestone exterior. Felipe Palomo of the Department of Public Works says that the inside-out option was at about 50 UIs but the cost was prohibitive. He says there are other problems that need to be addressed in this building. He says there is a historic courtroom in the building which would have to be removed to do an inside-out retrofit. He says they have evaluated all of these things, but in terms of what can be achieved and the cost, the current proposal is what they had to choose.

Lori Moran speaks on behalf of the East Liberty Chamber of Commerce and the East Liberty Historical Society. She says they object to putting any kind of covering on the building and she agrees with all of the Commissioners’ comments. She says the current proposal is inappropriate and there are other energy options. She also says they support the Zone 5 police but do not think that the building should be used for the police department.

**MOTION:** Denial of Conceptual Approval, with the request that the applicant reconsiders the project and returns to Art Commission with an alternate approach.

MOVED BY: Moss  
SECONDED BY: Goulatia  
IN FAVOR: All  
OPPOSED: None

7. Beechview Park Monument – Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation & Beechview Area Concerned Citizens  
Conceptual/Final Review

Keith Wehner, Executive Director of the Office of Senator Wayne Fontana, presents this revised proposal for a new monument to be placed in the park honoring those who served in all wars. The Senator’s office is working with Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation & Beechview Area Concerned Citizens on this project. The project first presented at Art Commission in February 2020, where it was tabled. The current submission represents a reconsideration of the project after receiving Commissioner feedback at the Feb hearing and during a follow-up conference call.

Goulatia asks about the wording and if it will be engraved. Wehner says it will be engraved in granite which will be embedded into the concrete. Goulatia asks if they’ve tried rephrasing it to make the phrase shorter and less wordy. Wehner says they’ve gone back and forth with different options but this was a phrase suggested by Commission members and they liked it. Goulatia says that she recalls that meeting but now that she sees it in print she wonders if it can be more succinct. Parsakian says it was a suggestion of his but he would support editing it. He applauds the applicant for rethinking the project and taking the Commissioners’ suggestions. He appreciates the light and the contemplative nature of the benches. He thinks there could be some tweaking of the fonts and wording. Goulatia says that two of the words could be engraved on the benches as well.

Luckett appreciates how the project has evolved in a much more thoughtful way. She asks about the scale of the sculptural elements and says they appear somewhat oversized for the space. She asks if they’ve thought about the scale and proportion in relation to where its located. Wehner says they are limited by the slabs, which have already been cut, but they’ve tried to space them out and make the cement base a bit wider and less condensed. Luckett asks if there is also grass outside the paved area. Wehner says yes. She asks how much the pavement will be raised above the ground. Wehner says it will be flush with the grass, and the bases of the tablets would sit a bit above. Luckett says this will make a better transition from the grass to the pavement.
Goulatia says she hopes the engravings will be on both sides of the tablet. Parsakian agrees that it should read from both sides, even if the words are different. Goulatia says they are happy to make suggestions if additional words are needed.

MOTION: Conceptual/Final Approval, with the condition that the monument utilizes words on both sides of the stone as discussed in the hearing, and that the font and wording on the base of the monument be revised. The Commission ask that the applicant works with the Public Art & Civic Design Division via email to allow the Art Commission to give final approval on these elements.

MOVED BY: Parsakian
SECONDED BY: Goulatia
IN FAVOR: All
OPPOSED: None

8. Swiftmile Charging Stations – Move 412
Final Review

Tosh Chambers of the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure introduces the project, which is for charging stations for electric scooters in the public right-of-way as part of a system of Mobility Hubs. The proposed design and locations guidelines are submitted as a proposed City standard. The project previously received Conceptual Approval in July 2020.

Ted Sweeney of Spin goes over the details of the modular system of charging stations.

Goulatia asks if the information given on the poles will be available in Braille. Sweeney says that their strategy is usually to use Braille to direct the reader to a screen-readable website, but says they can provide more information within the Braille if that is the Commission’s preference.

Luckett asks how many stations there will be. Chambers says they are planning on installing fifty within the next two years.

MOTION: Final Approval as a City standard.

MOVED BY: Moss
SECONDED BY: Goulatia
IN FAVOR: All
OPPOSED: None

C. Correspondence

Non additional received correspondence. Luckett notes that Commissioner Moss and she sent correspondence via email to Chief of Staff Gilman regarding the Mayor appointing additional Commissioners and the urgency around that. This was sent over a week ago and they received a response that morning that the correspondence was received. Moss says that the Chief of Staff acknowledged the urgency. Luckett says that he was going to talk to the Mayor and Director Dash and get back to them. She notes the Commissioners have already put forward recommendations.

D. Public Comment

None.

E. Items For Discussion

1. Executive Session
Luckett states that the reason for the Executive Session is for consultation with City attorneys regarding information and strategies relating to litigation or potential litigation arising from the possible relocation of the Columbus statue.

**MOTION: Commission to enter into Executive Session**

MOVED BY: Luckett  
SECONDED BY: Moss  
IN FAVOR: All  
OPPOSED: None

F. Adjournment

**MOTION: Adjourn**

MOVED BY: Moss  
SECONDED BY: Goulatia  
IN FAVOR: All  
OPPOSED: None

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 P.M.