

## Development Activities Meeting

This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.

Logistics	Stakeholders
<b>Project Name/Address:</b> Esser Plaza/ 1200 E Carson St.	<b>Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident):</b> South Side Community Council (SSCC) Project Development Team Design Review Committee (DRC) Local Review Committee (LRC) South Side Chamber of Commerce Residents
<b>Parcel Number(s):</b> 3-H-15	
<b>ZDR Application Number:</b> DCP-ZDR-2021-00919	
<b>Meeting Location:</b> via Zoom	
<b>Date:</b> March 25, 2021	
<b>Meeting Start Time:</b> 6:00pm	
<b>Applicant:</b> Kitty Vagley	<b>Approx. Number of Attendees:</b> 23
<b>Boards and/or Commissions Request(s):</b> Historic Review Commission approval for exterior work.  Art Commission approval for exterior work.	

### How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?

*Ex: Community engagement to-date, location and history of the site, demolition needs, building footprint and overall square footage, uses and activities (particularly on the ground floor), transportation needs and parking proposed, building materials, design, and other aesthetic elements of the project, community uses, amenities and programs.*

Presented overview and aerial map of site and surrounding location; street views of plaza in 2018 and presently; conceptual design with various features and materials; proposed rain garden has been change to a regular garden; stage space is just a reserved area for performances, not an actual stage structure; current donor sign will be removed; noted street trees pending placement; listed cost estimates.

### Input and Responses

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
Is the lawn real living grass? Is it going to be raised up off the ground level?	At first, it is going to be real living grass. The grass will be 18" at the lowest and mound up.
That's great. I'm glad there is not Astroturf and that the grass isn't on grade for all of the dog in the neighborhood.	

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>I agree with Matt. Seeing these raised planters gives them a defense against holding back the trash. This is a plaza design that overall feels like an appropriate urban plaza. I'm glad you're adding lighting. All in all, I think things are generally good here.</p>	
<p>John Marteen did meet with this group. He was involved with our early on meetings. His early sketches describe it as an European-style parklet and we feel like we're bringing it back full circle to more in line with what it was, with the added context that we wanted it to be more of an area where we can hold a presentation or some type of live event – more in line with our community today.</p> <p>The mural – this renovation doesn't have anything to do with the mural, other than we might be adding some lighting to up light it. That has not been the focus of the project. We are going to look into that afterwards as an after project.</p>	
<p>Who is going to be climbing on these rocks?</p>	<p>I'm not even sure if they are going to be climbing rocks anymore. There is a piece in the City code that says you can't have a playground within 50' of a residence and climbing rocks indicates a playground. I think we're going to modify that and it is going to be some kind of seating.</p>
<p>Who will maintain the raised grass area?</p>	<p>In terms of the entire plaza, we will follow the Western Penn. Conservancy model of stewards and have stewards maintain the gardens and that grass area.</p>
<p>This will go under the Green And That with our other gardens that we maintain. It will happen with the Green And That funds. It will be stewards that handle Esser.</p>	
<p>Is the bike rental station going to be moved? I hope that is the case and go somewhere else.</p>	<p>I don't know that. That is one of many reasons why we are not redoing this curb.</p>
<p>We've always assumed it was going to stay. It's a nice compliment to the park use and bringing people there. Now with the bump outs that will be built, it will nest and protect it. It's intended to stay.</p>	
<p>Have we considered ground cover instead of grass to have the same affect without requiring equipment?</p>	
<p>It came up in multiple discussions. Yes, it was considered. The design group would like to try grass. It's an aesthetic choice for now. If it is not maintained or not having success with it, we would be the first to change it. I guarantee it. We don't want it to be the ugly part of the project.</p>	

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
Thank you for taking this on. I walk through this plaza frequently and am thrilled to know it will be renovated.	
<p>I think this is lovely. The embroidered brown surface, the different patterns of paving and textures, and then the things popping up out of that – trees, benches. The raised planter which is genius for the dog situation.</p> <p>On page 10 of presentation, you have these beautiful light fixtures on this big hunk of concrete blob.</p>	
Yes, that is not the intent.	
Take that concrete blob and make it go away.	
It should be flush with the grade. You are absolutely right. We'll take that back to the engineers to change.	
There's been a lot of progress. It's great.	Thank you.

**Planner completing report:** Anthony Kobak