City of Pittsburgh
Art Commission

August 25, 2021 at 2:00 P.M., Meeting called to order by President Moss

In Attendance
Moss
Parsakian
Quintanilla
Young
Hornstein (DPW)
Lucas

Staff Present
Dash (agenda items 2-6)
Minnaert
Cavalline

Agenda Items Covered in These Minutes

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A. Approval of Minutes

Roll call. Moss asks Commissioners to review and comment on minutes from July 2021. Parsakian motions to approve the minutes, seconded by Quintanilla. All ayes. Motion carries.

B. Items for Review

1. **Roof Restoration Project – Phipps Conservatory Conceptual/Final Review**

Brad Clauss of Phipps Conservatory gives the presentation for this project, which is for the restoration of the glazing systems in the Broderie and East Rooms of the Conservatory. This includes the fitting of each room with modern safety glass and refurbishment of the ribbed support structures.

Moss thanks him for the presentation and says that Phipps has done a great job with this facility. He says that for Final Approval they normally ask for greater detail of the construction, but that he has great trust in what Phipps is doing based on previous work and he assumes this is nearly identical work to what was done in their West Wing. Clauss says yes, it is the same work specifications.

Young asks if there is any consideration for place making during the construction period. Clauss says that what is housed in these rooms is easily transferred to other spaces, and this has been their approach through past renovations.
Quintanilla says they are doing fantastic work. He asks if the new LED lighting they've installed will be continued into other rooms. Clauss says that some portions of the old conservatory have been migrated to LED, but it is hard work to coordinate. He says they have received a grant and by the time the restoration work is complete, all their rooms will be converted.

**MOTION: Conceptual/Final Approval**

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

2. **Esser Plaza – South Side Community Council Conceptual Review**

Kitty Vagley of South Side Community Council gives the presentation for this project, which is for the renovation of Esser Plaza at East Carson Street and 12th Street, and includes new pavers, lights, benches, planters, and landscaping.

Parsakian says he knows the history of the plaza and worked with the artist of the adjacent mural. He asks if they are doing restoration of the mural. Vagley says they are not yet, as the building has changed ownership and the new owner has not been cooperative, and there are no legal agreements relating to the mural. Parsakian asks if they are relocating the adjacent bike station. Vagley says they are not sure. Parsakian encourages Vagley to look at Victorian ideas for the signage because of the historic nature of Carson Street's buildings.

Quintanilla says his concern in small spaces like this is to make sure not to create a transitional space. He says that the existing design has a central area, but the proposed design becomes more of a transitional space. He asks if this was intentional. Vagley says that one area of the pavers is designed to be a bandstand area for live performance. She says it is their intent for the plaza to be a community gathering spot, but they want it to be open in the style of European squares. Quintanilla says he understands the intent but their design creates spaces for moving through and does not create internal space.

Lucas asks if they have considered the accessibility of the materials used. Vagley says that all of the pavers were selected in consideration of safety and traction. Lucas says that a lot of texture on pavers may be uncomfortable to those in wheelchairs or strollers. Lucas says that it would be good if they can maximize permeable surfaces to control storm water. She also says that the bike share station may change its format but will likely be staying in that location.

Moss notes that from the plans it looks like the more textured pavers are relatively limited in their use in the design. He says that someone with a stroller has the option of going around the perimeter where it is smoother but if they cross diagonally they will go across more textured pavers.

Parsakian asks if it would make more sense to relocate the stage area to a different corner. He asks if a bordering street is accessible to traffic. Vagley says yes. He says that bands would prefer to unload their equipment there than on Carson Street. He asks if the stage will be elevated. Vagley says it was just a suggestion for a performance space, and would probably be no more than ten times a year. Parsakian says they should think more about bringing life to the plaza through performing arts. Vagley says they are committed to doing that.

Quintanilla says Carson Street is very noisy so they could think about mitigating the sound that comes from the street into the plaza through landscaping or some other means. Vagley says it would be a big ask as that is a very noisy street.

Moss says the project is here for Conceptual Review but they could move it forward as Conceptual/Final if they choose.
MOTION: Conceptual Approval, with the design concepts to be revisited according to the comments of the Commissioners, and the signage returning as a separate review.

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

3. Chartiers Spray Park – Department of Public Works
   Conceptual/Final Review

Andrea Ketzel of the Department of Public Works introduces the project, which is for the renovation project including the replacement of all play structures, spray features, and play surfacing, as well as upgraded signage, picnic tables, benches, and waste receptacles. Bryan Hanes of Studio Bryan Hanes gives the presentation outlining the design details.

Moss asks for more details about the Percent For Art component. Ketzel says that it is intended for the splash pad, like Paulson Spray Park. Moss asks if there is any work to be done on the existing structures. Hanes says that there will not be anything done to the structures but the equipment for the water features will be placed inside the concession stand building. Ketzel says that there may be some cosmetic improvements to the pavilion but that is not a part of the current scope of work.

Parsakian asks about the materials for the benches and picnic tables and how many of them there are. Hanes says they are using the City standard benches and tables. He says there are four new benches around the upper play area and two picnic tables in the existing pavilion. He says that the splash pad will be concrete, the path will be asphalt, the play surface is poured-in-place, and there are concrete steps. Parsakian asks if the poured-in-place is recycled rubber, and Hanes says yes. Parsakian says it is important to have as many benches as possible.

Lucas asks how people will enter the area and asks about parking and transit shelter options. Ketzel says they have a proposed accessible parking spot. She does not know about the closest bus stop and says they can work with DOMI on that. Ketzel says they have not included bike racks but they can add those in.

Young asks if there was any consideration for asphalt art in regards to wayfinding throughout the park. Ketzel says they have not released the RFP yet for the public art and they could consider that.

Parsakian asks if the park will be open at certain hours and whether lighting is required. Ketzel says lighting is not required and they unfortunately do not usually have the budget for it. She says park hours are dawn to dusk and that there will be no lighting associated with the playground.

Quintanilla says he assumes that parallel parking would be out of the question. Ketzel says that their scope of work is limited to the playground and spray park. She says that most users of the park are walking from nearby, but they have heard from the community that parking for football is an issue. She says that they are meeting the requirements of their scope by providing an ADA-accessible spot and do not have the budget required to address parking for the entire park. Hanes clarifies that there will be two accessible parking spots.

Quintanilla says that having artwork on the splash pad will add a new dimension to it in a great way.

MOTION: Conceptual/Final Approval, with the Percent For Art project returning as a separate review.

MOVED BY: Parsakian
SECONDED BY: Quintanilla
IN FAVOR: All
OPPOSED: None
4. **Fifth & Dinwiddie Pedestrian Bridge – GBBN Architects**  
**Conceptual/Final Review**

Quintanilla recuses himself from reviewing this project due to a possible conflict of interest.

Amanda Markovic of GBBN Architects introduces the project, which is for a pedestrian bridge over the public right-of-way as part of a large mixed-use development. Stephen Mrdjenovich of GBBN Architects gives the presentation.

Moss asks about the width of Our Way, the alley that the pedestrian bridge passes over. Markovic says that the roadway is currently 15 feet wide, and will be increased to 20 feet. Mrdjenovich says that building to building it is 48-49 feet.

Derek Tillman, the property owner, describes the programming of the site.

Moss asks where the community events would be taking place. Mrdjenovich says that the road would be closed temporarily during events to create pedestrian space.

Moss says it looks like a good and thoughtful addition to the neighborhood and the public space.

Parsakian asks if the roof of the bridge is accessible. Mrdjenovich says only for maintenance, not for the public. He shows in the presentation where the building includes a roof that the public can access. Lucas asks if this is space for the public or for tenants. Mrdjenovich says that rooftop area is for tenants, but they want the rest of the outdoor space to feel open and welcoming to the public.

Parsakian asks if they will have electric lighting for the outdoor events. Mrdjenovich says there will be exterior power receptacles, as well as public wi-fi in both plazas. Parsakian asks if there will be street furniture. Mrdjenovich describes the stadium seating benches, as well as café tables and children’s seating in various areas.

Parsakian says he is familiar with Charlotte and Mo and is glad they are engaging them as artists. Mrdjenovich says they are also engaging with Pittsburgh Glass Center.

**MOTION:** Conceptual/Final Approval

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

5. **Emerald View Park Master Plan – Department of City Planning**  
**Courtesy Review**

Moss confirms that this project is coming to the Commission for Courtesy Review because it is a Master Plan and there is no physical construction proposed. Kara Smith of the Department of City Planning says yes, and any implementations would come to Art Commission for Conceptual and Final Reviews.

Smith gives the presentation of the Master Plan for Emerald View Park. The Master Plan is meant to communicate the community’s vision, outline goals, and guide planning for future park implementations.

Parsakian asks if the plan addresses the history of indigenous peoples on the land of the park, and why it is called Emerald View Park. Smith says the Master Plan includes a timeline that includes Native American history, although they do not have a lot of information about it. She says it also discusses the industrial history of the area. She says that ‘Emerald View Park’ is a recent name created from community input.
Parsakian asks if any of the trails are Native American trails. Smith says not that they are able to say with certainty. Parsakian says that it would be a good acknowledgment to find that history.

Quintanilla says it is a fun project and says there is a lot of history that could be explored. Smith agrees and says that there is a lot more of the history included in the Master Plan. Quintanilla suggests using virtual reality.

MOTION: n/a

C. Correspondence

None.

D. Public Comment

None.

E. Director & Staff Report

Minnaert says that they currently have a call out for artists for the Homewood Park Public Art project.

F. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:19 P.M.