December 8, 2021 at 2:00 P.M., Meeting called to order by President Moss

In Attendance
Moss
Leach
Loftness (arrived during first presentation)
Parsakian
Quintanilla (arrived during first presentation)
Young
Hornstein (DPW)
Lucas (DOMI)

Staff Present
Dash
Minnaert
Cavalline

Agenda Items Covered in These Minutes

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A. Items for Review

1. Art in Parks: OOA Designs in Emerald View Park – Department of City Planning Conceptual Review

Oreen Cohen of OOA Designs gives the presentation for the planning of a public art project in Emerald View Park, with a proposed location in the park space at the intersection of Grandview Ave and PJ McArdle Roadway.

Moss thanks Cohen and notes that OOA has taken many of the Commission’s previous comments into consideration. He says that he understands the intention of the heart (option #1) but still feels it is too literal. He appreciates the other two options (#2 and #3) and says they could be beautiful sculptures. He says the location also makes sense. He asks what the approximate height would be for the other two options. Cohen says about ten feet. Moss asks if OOA has a strong preference between options #2 and #3. Cohen says they like both and would like to spend some more time on the site and do more research. Moss says the lighting is a detail that needs to be studied carefully.

Parsakian says he is drawn to option #2 and says the way it addresses the history of women in the steel industry is a powerful statement. He says he loves the materials they are using and asks if the sculpture would be an interactive space that people could walk through. Cohen says yes and the spacing
would allow wheelchair access. Parsakian asks if the public will get a sense that the sculpture is honoring women in the steel industry. Cohen says she has reached out to the Rivers of Steel archives and she wants to research this more and incorporate some relevant imagery cut into the steel. Parsakian asks if there are any women of color that worked in the steel mills. Cohen says she hopes to be able to research this more.

Leach thanks OOA for responding to the previous suggestions. She says she is also drawn to option #2.

Loftness asks if they will be doing mockups on site to give a sense of scale. She says it is a compelling idea and wonders how they will let the shape of it evolve onsite. Cohen says they have discussed whether the shape would be better in a circle or on a diagonal and they will be working with maquettes as part of their process.

Leach mentions the artist Fran Gialamas as a good resource, as she has done a lot of work celebrating women and women of color who worked in steel mills. She says the location they’ve selected could really benefit from this work, as it is fairly dark and an illuminated sculpture would work well.

Loftness says that the red shown in option #3 evokes the steel mills and wonders if that could be integrated into option #2. She also says she is unsure of the canopy on option #2 and asks if there needs to be a roof element and how could that relate to the message of the piece. Cohen says they will think about that.

Moss says option #3 will be understood by the public as referring to the steel industry, and #2 may not be communicated as easily. He says if they go with option #2 they may need to work toward delivering that message clearly.

**MOTION:** Conceptual Approval with the condition that the artists pursue a combination of the ideas presented as options #2 and #3

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

2. **Art in Parks: Ali Ruffner & Gwen Sadler in Emerald View Park – Department of City Planning Conceptual Review**

Ali Ruffner and Gwen Sadler present their proposal for a public art project in Emerald View Park, with several possible locations.

Parsakian says he loves the first site and the integration of the existing boulders. He says they should be careful with the positioning of the hands. He asks if the back is stainless steel. Ruffner says it will be aluminum. Parsakian asks if it will absorb heat in the summer. Sadler says it will not absorb heat more than any other material. Parsakian says he loves the colorization and says that the rainbow colors are a way to embrace various people’s identities. Sadler says they will be careful with the hands, and the ones they have molded so far are all in expressive gestures. Parsakian thanks them for reimagining the project and says it is a huge improvement.

Moss says they should think of the overall height of the piece and suggests it be lower rather than higher. He says that visitors will likely want to interact with the hands. He says that they mentioned concrete and aluminum as materials and says they should be considerate of materials that people will want to sit on or interact with. Sadler says that they haven’t narrowed down the exact materials yet and are influenced by the slope of the hillside in thinking about the materials and the angles they can create with them. Ruffner says they will be doing comparisons with existing public sculptures in determining materials and will be keeping the sculpture low enough to maintain the view of the city and trees.
Loftness says that both sides of the wall will need to be designed. She says she likes the stones emerging from the concrete. She says if they colorize both the aluminum wall and the concrete base there may be an awkward colocation. She says she might prefer the starkness of the bare concrete, although it may not stay white as this would be liable to be tagged with graffiti.

Leach says she also likes the cleanness of the concrete, and suggests there could be a way to imprint hands in it. She asks why the hands have to be on top. She asks if there is a way to integrate wayfinding. Ruffner says that she likes the idea of incorporating the hands into wayfinding, and says there is some signage there already but she would like to incorporate some more that includes the names of the students involved.

Young asks for clarification of what the space looks like. Sadler explains the orientation of the site. Ruffner describes the disparate layout of Emerald View Park and how it contains a number of small trailheads and pull-offs with views of the city through the trees. Sadler says they are interested in utilizing what already exists in these spaces in their planning, and Ruffner says they are mindful of working with the vistas and not hiding them.

**MOTION: Conceptual Approval**

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

3. **Art in Parks: Hutabut LLC in Frick Park – Department of City Planning Conceptual Review**

Matthew Geller of Hutabut LLC describes the proposal of a public art project in Frick Park, including proposed locations.

Moss says that what the proposal is lacking is how the sculpture relates to Pittsburgh and Frick Park. Moss says that a direct way to address this could be within the shapes in the crown of the piece. Geller says he can consider that, although the piece is presented as a folly.

Loftness says for the Commission to understand how the colors relate to the object, they need to see the colors rendered on the structure of the work. She says the presented canopy ideas do not seem to relate to Pittsburgh, the park, or a carousel, so that aspect of the design should be worked on. She addresses the movement of the seats and describes pivoting benches that are on the Carnegie Mellon campus. Geller says he will show the colors at the next review. He says the movement Loftness is describing is possible but his idea for the piece was more contemplative and should possibly not be overly active. He is concerned that the mechanism to make it turn more would be expensive, but he will look into it. Geller says the design of the canopy is not finished and will be given more thought.

Geller says (in regards to the pivoting CMU bench) that this is an entirely different mechanism and there may be safety issues.

Moss sums up the comments as clarification on the incorporation of the colors, further iteration of the canopy design, and further opportunity for dynamic/kinetic movement.

**MOTION: Conceptual Approval, with the conditions that 1) additional dynamic elements be considered for the canopy; 2) additional movement be considered overall; and 3) the color scheme be presented on the renderings for Final Approval**

MOVED BY: Leach  
SECONDED BY: Quintanilla  
IN FAVOR: All  
OPPOSED: None
4. **Art in Parks: Mariana Adele Vassar in Highland Park – Department of City Planning**

**Final Review**

Vassar gives her presentation for a public art project in Highland Park, with a proposed location in the main entry garden.

Loftness asks about the materials, and whether the sculpture is 3D or 2D. Vassar says it is 3D and it would be made out of bronze. Loftness confirms it would be a hollow bronze statue. Vassar says yes. Loftness asks what the circumference would be, and what the base would look like. Vassar says she originally had the bottom as circular, but it may need to be slightly narrowed for this location. She says it would be no more than 3’ on the bottom.

Moss says he does not feel the application has the complete details needed for Final Approval.

Loftness says she thinks the statue will be a delightful addition to the park, but there are still a few unresolved questions, such as what it looks like from all angles and what coloration the bronze will be. Moss adds that they also need details about the foundation and how it is attached.

Parsakian says he thinks it is great but they would like to see more detail.

Leach says that the gaze of the sculpture meets the viewer’s eyes, while the earlier renderings were more introspective, and asks if there was a reason for the change. Vassar says most of the design changes were due to not knowing where the final location would be. She says she had considered changing it back and can reconsider that as she moves forward.

Parsakian says showing a human next to the piece for scale would help.

**MOTION: Table**

MOVED BY: Moss  
SECONDED BY: Leach  
IN FAVOR: Loftness, Parsakian, Young  
OPPOSED: None

5. **Lawn & Ophelia Green Infrastructure Project – Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority**

**Final Review**

Maria Natoli of PWSA and Damion Weiss of Ethos Collaborative describe the proposal for a rain garden, seat walls, and landscaping to replace decommissioned playground equipment. The green infrastructure elements will capture and manage stormwater.

Loftness clarifies that there is hard pavement currently on site that will be replaced with gravel. Weiss says this is correct. Loftness asks if there is a reason the walkways are so wide at the north end. Weiss says that there are existing retaining walls there which they would not be touching, and there is an area to the east of the rain garden which would be a focal point and gathering space. He says the wider areas are due to the rain garden taking an oval shape and the retaining walls enclosing that space. Loftness says it is great to turn these underutilized areas into rain gardens and says the landscaping is beautiful. She says she is always concerned when there’s too much pavement. She says the less pavement that is included, the more effective the rain gardens are. Natoli mentions that the pavement areas are sloped to direct runoff.

Parsakian asks if the concrete that is removed will be reused as gravel. Weiss says he doesn’t have a lot of experience with that process but they could consider it. Natoli says she does not know if the contractors have the ability to do that. Parsakian says he doesn’t know if its possible either but wanted to bring it up for sustainability. He says he loves the possibility of the sandstone benches.
Millie Sass, resident of Oakcliffe, speaks from the audience. She says she appreciates the inclusion of color in the project. She asks if there will be mowing on the site. She asks if there will be any development across Ophelia St, as the plans show trees there. She says she doesn't like the stone seats as they are hard and cold. She asks what a bumpout is and if they will lose parking. She asks if the community is allowed to replace plants in the garden. She asks if they can expect wading in the pool.

Weiss says there will be occasional mowing. He says the water in the collection area would be expected to drain in 2-3 days and they wouldn’t encourage wading. He says regarding planting he would defer to the City, though PWSA would be maintaining the garden. He says he would prefer that the plants be allowed to establish themselves before replacing them is considered. He says that the area at the top doesn’t have a lot of stormwater functionality so it could be reimagined in the future, which would be up to the City. Weiss says the bumpouts are no longer included in the design so no parking will be lost. He says the choice of stone bench was for aesthetics and durability. Natoli says that City Planning has said they can save the benches from the park and reinstall them in a different location.

MOTION: Final Approval

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

B. Approval of Minutes

Moss asks Commissioners to review and comment on minutes from November 2021. Loftness motions to approve the minutes, seconded by Quintanilla. All ayes. Motion carries.

C. Correspondence

None.

D. Public Comment

None.

E. Director & Staff Report

Minnaert says that they conducted one Over-The-Counter review since the last hearing, which the Commission received a summary of via email.

Minnaert says that there is currently a public art solicitation for Homewood Park Public Art, which is open on the City’s procurement website. She says she will share the relevant links for the Commission to see and share with their networks.

Dash says that this is the last Commission meeting of the year and of Mayor Peduto’s term. He passes on the Mayor’s thanks and appreciation to the Commission for their service during his administration. He says that he has had no discussions with the incoming administration regarding a change in the Commission, but if any new information arises they will be informed. He discusses expectations for the new year and the transition to the new administration.

F. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 P.M.