Minutes

Minneapolis Sculpture Garden

Community Advisory Meeting #3
January 20, 2015

Welcome/Introductions

The CAC group and community was welcomed by Dana Murdoch of the Minneapolis Park Board and Olga Viso of the Walker Art Center (WAC) provided a brief welcome and thanks to all in attendance. It was noted that there were two Park Board Commissioners in attendance and then CAC introductions were made. Margaret Anderson Kelliher, CAC Chair, noted that due to the State of the Union Address, the meeting would try to be concluded around 7:30 instead of the published 8:30 completion time.

Dana Murdoch noted that this is the 3rd CAC meeting with the first two occurring in December. Dana provided an overview of the community process including the online survey and design charrette.

The CAC was reminded that project is a partnership between the MPRB, WAC and the MWMO (Mississippi Watershed Management Organization) and that it contains funding mechanisms of the MWMO and state bonding funds.

In outlining the project schedule Dana noted that we are adding a 4th and final CAC meeting on February 23rd with a singular design and recommendation to move forward for the public hearing and for recommendation. The project will go out to bid June/July/August to compete fall of 2016. The Sculpture Garden will be closed August 2015-Fall 2016 during construction but the team will be looking at construction phasing opportunities for phased opening. The design team was outlined as Oslund and Associates, Snow Kreilich Architects (SKA) and Mortenson construction along with a number of sub-consultants to Oslund including HKGI and EVS who were in attendance. Construction Management as Agency services will be led by Mortenson Construction.

Recap of Charrette & CAC #2

Bryan Harjes of HKGI provided an overview of work done during CAC meeting #1 and the Design Charrette on December 11 & 12.

Overview of CAC Comments:
**High Points:** Lighting is important, edges need control, seating is important, ADA accessibility, it currently feels private.

**Opportunities:** North end of the property. LRT & Cultural Corridor Connectivity at the north, the west side as a gateway/entry.

**Access:** Key connection points on east side could be enhanced and how arrival experience works is important.

**Programming:** Winter, opportunities within the sub-rooms.

Bryan reviewed the rooms that the design team identified in the charrette and each of their functions/opportunities. This then led into Bryan reviewing the two charrette options that were created in the design charrette

**Presentation of Refined Garden Framework**

Tom Oslund provided overview of the design options stressing that we are in schematic design and we have tried to balance the needs and wants of both the MPRB and the WAC while also trying to balance costs.

**Option One Highlights:**
- Plants are important
- Reinforces the idea of formal garden in a Midwestern way
- Moves Spoonbridge and Cherry sculpture (SBC) to north end
- Re-purposing existing materials-Granite ties back to front door of the Walker
- Great Room is open and flexible space
- Arbor moves to become entry feature
- Mini golf has its own dedicated space
- Restrooms and welcome building are shown
- Conservatory is exploring a number of options such as an open air park shelter
- New orientation area for bus drop off, mini golf, restrooms and welcome center at west side
- East edge is cleaned up with new access, new signage

**Option Two Highlights:**
- North end is framed by Lindens at the edge.
- The placement of a wet meadow within the frame objectifies the circular lawn panels
- Circular lawn panels are accessed through fingers off of the main path.
- The expression is much more natural in contrast to the Barnes garden.
- Does not move the arbor or SBC.
- The axis is very important. Nothing is on axis except the SBC
- Gestures to the sixteenth century and moving the garden into the 21st Century. Has interesting story about storm water and sustainability

**Conservatory**

Tyson McElvain of SKA reviewed options for the Cowles Conservatory.
Tyson first reviewed what the bonding covers in the language from an architectural standpoint: Floors which are a hazard, restrooms which are out of date and not to code and trying to make the buildings more efficient by replacing outdated mechanical equipment. However, Tyson noted that doing all three of these things exceeds the allocated budget.

SKA presented options for a reductive strategy to architecture:

**Option One:** Replace heating system, reconstruct the floors and renovate the bathrooms for accessibility.
Option Two: Provide a minimum heating system for snowmelt at the roof and Palm house only. Reconstruct the floors, renovate the bathrooms for accessibility and provide larger doors/openings on the north and south wings and larger doors/openings on the Palm House.

Option Three: Provide a minimum heating system for snowmelt at the roof and Palm house only. Reconstruct the floors, renovate the bathrooms for accessibility and remove galls from the walls of the north and south wings and provide larger doors/openings on the Palm House.

Option Four: Provide no heating, reconstruct the floors, renovate the bathrooms and remove all glass and add purlins to the roof for additional shading.

Option Five: Provide no heating, reconstruct the floors, remove all glass and add purlins to the roof for additional shading and remove the bathrooms and provide them in a new stand-alone building.

Hybrid: A hybrid option was discussed where the Palm House would retain its glass and some level of temperature control while removing all of the glass from both the north and south wings and restrooms would be provided in a new stand-alone building.

Materials and Precedent Images

Tadd Kreun of OAA presented the CAC with a series of diagrams illustrating both the location and materials currently being envisioned for the project. These included:

1. Turf systems in the sculpture rooms and other high traffic locations
2. Decomposed granite which is a rock mulch compose of granite 1/8” and smaller in size
3. Fescue mixes for the perimeter
4. Deciduous shrub (Euonymous Altatus) for the garden hedges
5. Repurposed granite paving at the entry and Conservatory
6. Linden bosquet (double row of trees formally planted)
7. Permeable pavers at the auto court
8. Ornamental fencing around the mini golf area
9. Ornamental grasses that frame the great room
10. Wet meadow for north garden of Scheme 2
11. Double row of coniferous for the north end along Dunwoody
12. Arborvitae hedge along the west edge of the garden to screen the baseball field
13. Shrubs to frame the mini golf area and welcome/entry area
14. Perennial Gardens
Scheme Pros and Cons

Tom Oslund reviewed a list of pros and cons that were developed for each scheme:

Option #1 Pros/Cons

Pros:
- Provides new drop-off and entry experience from the 67th St.
- Provides better ADA accessibility to garden.
- Provides multiple points of access to the garden from the existing park.
- Opens up area ready for community.
- Taliesin entry into lobby plan to entry experience.
- Provides orientation building and new restroom building.
- Creates open and finished central space.
- Provides a dedicated location for mini-golf.
- Provides new signage.
- Opens up views with physical activity.
- Provides a larger garden with existing spaces due to removal of half areas.
- Provides new spaces for activities.
- New entry is located at the south of the new site.
- Re-uses granite from existing building.

Cons:
- Cost and consequences to move the SIC.
- Scheme is a little out of budget.
- Removal of existing trees and other plants.
- Center space is very large and open.
- Storm water collection and re-use ability is not as strong.

Option #2 Pros/Cons

Pros:
- Provides new drop-off and entry experience from 67th Street.
- Provides better ADA accessibility to the garden.
- Provides multiple points of access to the garden from the existing park.
- Opens up area ready for community.
- Provides orientation building and new restroom building.
- Provides a dedicated location for mini-golf.
- Provides new signage.
- Opens up north end both physically and visually.
- Requires less impervious than existing site due to removal of half areas.
- Additional entry is closer to main point to garden.
- New SIC located to serve SIC.
- North and south axis for stormwater collection.
- More contrast between classic formal Italian garden and northern.
- Line through provides a new type of "room" for sculpture placement.
- Add entry into existing location which saves money.
- Re-uses granite from site and building.

Cons:
- Much of the north end is Meadow.
- Scheme is a little out of budget.
- Remains affecting the current Meadow.
Project Cost
Dana Murdoch briefly discussed the project costs looking how the $10,000,000 breaks down and how quickly site improvement costs can use up the allocated budget. At the next meeting the team will have cost estimates completed for the design work.

CAC Member Design Input

- The question was asked about how art and sculpture can work in both schemes. Tom stated it could work well in either and deferred to the Walker for input. Olga stated that she likes the idea of formal rooms vs. informal rooms of Option 2. In Option 1 the center space is very large and open making it a little more difficult to use/place art and/or program. She felt there is great tension between formality and informality in Option 2. Maybe adding some more bosquets in Option 2 to bring more shade and spatial definition.

- There was a question about the design’s ability to move sculpture in and out after construction is completed and if there is a budget for art from the State. The response by the Chair was that there is no funding in the state bonding for art, it is for infrastructure. There may be a need for additional fundraising to try and do all or some parts of the plan. There are measures being taken in the design to provide access for cranes and large vehicles to have access for moving art in and out of the garden in the future.

- There was a question regarding whether or not donations would be considered to help fund either portions of the project or future art.

- Likes wetland idea and fact that it can open up for new sculpture and art. The things he would like to see is opening up the entrances more and more winter accessibility.

- Taken by idea of moving SBC. Felt Claes Oldenburg would have put it where it is in Option 1 had the original garden been this large to begin with. Concern that the raised plinth in Option 1 might interrupt views to the SBC. Sees an issue with how to fill the space (the great room in Option 1) left by moving SBC. Likes the richness of plantings for the meadow and setting for art and sculpture in Option 2. The Conservatory preference is keeping the Palm House as an enclosed and heated space so it is functional and warm in the winter. People like the conservatory in the winter.

- Likes wetland idea (Option 2) and fact that it can open up for new sculpture and art. The things he would like to see is opening up the entrances more and more winter accessibility.

- Liked Option 2. Thought dead end access into circular lawn areas might be frustrating. Design team needs to think more about people movement in the north garden in Option 2. Also likes the innovative turf grass. Would like to see more garden design that changes over the years. Concern about entry experience. Concern about losing conservatory and restrooms.

- Like scheme 2 and arbor as entryway. Makes it more interesting. Pedestrian flow in the north room (Option 2) is also a concern. Perhaps there are bridges or little east west paths to get out of the circular lawns to the main pedestrian spines. The circular lawns need to be both a destination and something to cut through. Provide more access to the quads than what there is today – perhaps consider access them at the corners. Need to reconcile – is this a park or a place for art? Likes replacing the existing turf with groundcover/flowers as proposed in plans.

- Likes option 2 and doing the wetland/meadow perennials. Pedestrian circulation in the north room is also an issue. Less wild about conifers being planted at the north end of the north room. Consider something deciduous perhaps like Cherry or Catalpa. The Conservatory not heated in any way seems
like it could become a crisis. Repurposed granite is a good idea, opening west quads and keeping SBC in existing location is good.

- One and two are essentially the same and like what's happening. Likes the idea of opening up the two wing buildings flanking the Palm House and retaining the glass on the Palm House. The design of north room provides many opportunities for placing art. It doesn't constrict future users or curators. Likes flexibility of scheme 2 for artists and curators.

- Likes option 2: Important to have the Palm House and restrooms. Consider the year-round functions of the garden. Concerned about how wet meadow functions and is managed as a 'natural area'. Wants assurance that during a drought it won't look very bad. Does like the ability for the meadow area to be habitat for birds and butterflies.

- Likes Option 2: likes the bus drop-off plaza and places for kids. Likes keeping SBC in existing location. Likes stairs at Lyndale. Loves the yin yang effect of Option 2 (formal and informal). Concern about how people move in the north room of Option 2. It seems too controlled. Wants to go Lilly pad. Wants those connections in the north room to be more flexible.

- Likes Option 2. Consider a curving boardwalk in the meadow in the north room. It needs to connect well to the northwest and northeast corners. Plantings should attract birds and butterflies. Quad should be a modern nod to the 16th century. Thrilled people have a place to be dropped off.

- Loves option 2: Keeping SBC in its location is good. Moving it too far from WAC could be problematic. Likes the idea of moving the arbor. Would like to consider opening up views to Dunwoody. Cowslips as a possible flower which is a native. Consider other native plant materials. Accent lighting would be appropriate....lighting sculpture perhaps. Part of the conservatory should be heated.

- Likes option 2 and how it better fits into the budget constraints presented to the team.

- Likes option 2: Art and Sculpture works well. Consider the relationship between the WAC and the MSG more. Way Finding is important and hopes to see more next time. Concerned about turning heated building into non heated building. Are there code issues with this? Should look at how buses use the entry space for loading and unloading.

- Likes option 2: Nice dialogue between nature and culture. Organic design of SBC mediates. Likes moving arbor for entry way. Would 'Kill' the conservatory. It's an old idea. Lighting is important. Beautiful, LED lighting, integrating lighting into furnishings.

- Garden is Mpls, Walker and Park Board's garden. Appreciates the thoughtfulness and innovation and thought that went into moving the SBC, however, prefers Option 2. Likes big open spaces for the city. Consider options to renovate the conservatory. Solar energy might be an option to heat the buildings. Wants us to be more green and innovative beyond just the plantings. Thinks the arborvitae may bring in mosquitos.

- Big fan of option 2. Thinks that connectivity between circles is important. Attention to water quality is great. North end access is important and can do better there. Can we have 2 arbors? Keep the perennial arbor as is and make a new one for the entry. Captivated by the deconstructive design for the conservatory. There are a lot of venues in the city that can replace it if it is not enclosed.

Public Input

- Likes option #2 but concerned about not having shortcuts through the park. Lillypad connectivity is an important feature to have. Is the meadow very fragile...can it work in the city? Likes how it opens up to Dunwoody. Competition for constructing a second arbor at Dunwoody?
• Wife is a tour guide so it's important to understand people work here and need to flow people through and dead ends don't work very well. Tours are on a schedule that they need to keep so better connectivity of the Lillypads (circular lawns) would work better.

Wrap Up

The consensus was that there was a clear direction for the team to proceed with Option #2. It's less clear on the conservatory. People liked keeping the main building heated and glassed with opening up north and south wings as well as keeping the restrooms. There was also interest in the deconstruction option with new bathrooms added elsewhere on site.

Important issues to address: Pedestrian movement in the north garden (circular lawn panels), the meadow function in wet and dry periods, the connection to Dunwoody, better articulation at auto court and how the buses and people use the drop off area and finally the cost.

Next viewing will come with ranges of options/uses/costing for the conservatory addressing how it functions for each of the alternatives.

Parting Question: Is noise is an issue. Are we inviting more noise in by removing the existing green fence? It’s difficult at some of the sculpture locations to have a discussion because of the traffic. Mature plants, fescue ground cover and the bosquets hopefully will help to mitigate some of the roadway noise. Tom stated that there will be noise...no doubt. It may be better with some of the plant selections. The questioner did acknowledge that it is a goal to make the edge along Lyndale more permeable (visually).

Next Meeting

CAC #4 will be held Monday February 23rd, 2015 from 6:30-9:30, Walker Art Center. The design team will present the final garden framework plan and associated costs.

A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for March 4th, 2015 at 6:30pm at the MPRB Headquarters Board Room. 2117 West River Road, Minneapolis, MN.