

Meeting Minutes

FROM: EHT Traceries
SUBJECT: Smithsonian South Mall Campus Master Plan
 Section 106 Consulting Parties Meeting #8
DATE: May 3, 2017

The following minutes represent comments received during the May 2017 Section 106 consulting parties meeting for the Smithsonian South Mall Campus Master Plan.

Consulting Parties

Name	Organization
Charlene Dwin Vaughn	ACHP
John Tinpe	ANC 2C
David Maloney	DC HPO
Andrew Lewis	DC HPO
Thomas Luebke	CFA
Pat Tiller	Committee of 100
Kate Perry	Committee of 100
Richard Longstreth	Committee of 100
Darwina Neal	Committee of 100
Rebecca Miller	DC Preservation League
Will Cook	NTHP
Robert Snieckus	USDA
Megan Kanagy	DDOT
Peggy McGlone	<i>Washington Post</i>
Howard Marks	
Cynthia Field	
Barbara Freeman	
David Maxfield	
Lew and Sandy Burkholder*	

Carly Bond	SI
Mike Carrancho	SI
Nancy Bechtol	SI
Barbara Faust	SI
Eve Errickson	SI
Becky Haberacker	SI
Samir Bitar	SI
Marcel Acosta	NCPC
Diane Sullivan	NCPC
Matthew Flis	NCPC
Lee Webb	NCPC
Julia Koster	NCPC
John Gerbich	NCPC
Kathryn Smith	NPS
Aran Coakley	BIG
Alvaro Velosa	BIG
Sara Ibrahim	BIG
Stephen Steckel	BIG
Emily Chen	BIG
Rick Torres	Clark
James Lord	Surfacedesign
Laura Hughes	EHT Traceries
Bill Marzella	EHT Traceries
Liz Estes	Stantec
Cara Schwartz	Interpreter
Mindy Lanie	Interpreter

**Participated via webcast*

Lead/Cooperating Agencies & Project Team

Al Horvath	SI
Ann Trowbridge	SI
Christopher Lethbridge	SI
Michelle Spofford	SI

Introduction

1. Matthew Flis, NCPC, welcomed attendees and reminded them to sign in. He noted that the meeting would be livestreamed and recorded.
2. Al Horvath, Undersecretary for Finance and Administration, SI, thanked consulting parties for attending and NCPC for hosting the meeting.
 - a. He provided an update to the South Mall Master Plan alternatives development. He reiterated the key goals and objectives of the Master Plan.
 - b. He noted that the design consultant team would be presenting Alternative F, which was designed to respond to consulting party comments while also meeting the stated needs of the Smithsonian Institution for the Master Plan. He noted that Alternative F is strongly supported by Smithsonian leadership.
3. Mike Carrancho (MC), Deputy Director for Engineering and Design Division, SI, acting as the meeting facilitator, clarified his role as facilitator and outlined the general meeting structure and protocol for providing comments and questions.

Section 106/NEPA Process Update

1. Ann Trowbridge (AT), Associate Director for Planning, SI, presented an overview of the Section 106 process. She noted that Smithsonian was in the process of concluding its effort to identify historic properties within the Area of Potential Effects, including:
 - a. A Cultural Landscape Report for the South Mall Campus;
 - b. Determinations of Eligibility for the Quadrangle Building and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden;
 - c. The recent, successful D.C. Landmark application for the Quadrangle Historic District, sponsored by the Committee of 100;
 - d. A forthcoming National Register nomination for the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; and
 - e. Ongoing preparation of Historic Structure Reports for the Freer Gallery and Hirshhorn Museum.
2. AT outlined development of Alternatives, including newly developed Alternatives E and F.

Alternatives Presentation

1. Aran Coakley (AC), BIG, provided an update to the Alternatives previously presented to the consulting parties (Alternatives A-D).
 - a. He summarized public comments on the previous alternatives.
2. AC presented an overview of Alternative E, which Smithsonian and NCPC determined would not be carried forward for analysis in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
3. AC also outlined the major components of Alternative F, illustrated diagrammatically in the presentation.
4. James Lord, Surfacedesign, presented the major garden and landscape features proposed for Alternative F.
 - a. He described the existing conditions and character of the Haupt Garden and how those features could be integrated into the new landscape.
 - b. He also described the expansion of the Ripley Garden and the planned connection to the Hirshhorn Museum Plaza.
5. AC described the historic setting of the Smithsonian Institution Building “Castle” and the importance of maintaining a level grade on the north and south sides.
 - a. He noted that, in Alternative F, the level plane would be maintained, with limited vertical interventions to provide access and daylight to the building program below.
 - b. He outlined plans for the restoration of the interior of the Castle.
 - c. He outlined plans to connect the Castle with the below-grade visitor center and providing access and daylight within and between those spaces.

- d. He provided views of the Castle from Independence Avenue and the described the goal to restore an expanded view that existed during the Castle's period of significance.
 - e. He concluded with a description of the excavation proposed under Alternative F and the efforts to reduce that excavation (as compared to Alternative D) as much as possible
6. Rebecca Miller, DC Preservation League, asked for additional information regarding seismic protection for the Castle.
 - a. AC responded that various studies were underway, including alternatives for base isolation and brace framing. He anticipated that those studies would be completed in approximately nine months, beginning in Spring 2017.
 7. Richard Longstreth, Committee of 100, stated that Smithsonian should be commended for its new direction in the design of Alternative F. As a landscape, this alternative appears to be more successful in uniting the buildings around the Quadrangle, although perhaps not as successfully as the existing Haupt Garden configuration. He expressed concern over the proposed removal of the existing museum pavilions.
 - a. AT responded that the Haupt Garden forms the roof of an enormous Quadrangle building, of which the above-grade pavilions represent approximately 4% of the building's square footage. She noted that the Smithsonian education programs and museum directors strongly desired the improvement of the functionality of the below-grade space over retaining the status quo of the existing garden configurations.
 - b. Richard Longstreth later responded, asking Smithsonian to consider a restoration approach to the treatment of the Quadrangle buildings.
 8. Howard Marks, a former employee of the Department of Energy, noted that his former office overlooked the Haupt Garden. He stated that, in his opinion, the garden was a national treasure and a resource for federal employees and others in Southwest Washington. He asked NCPC to continue encouraging Smithsonian to retain the garden in its current configuration.
 9. Tom Luebke, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, asked for clarification regarding the opportunity to offer questions and comments. MC responded that there would be two separate presentations with a question and comment period following both.
 - a. Mr. Luebke expressed appreciation to the Smithsonian for presenting a positive solution for reducing impacts to historic properties, improving connections, and reducing excavation. He noted there may be technical issues associated with such excavation.
 - b. Mr. Luebke reminded attendees that it was necessary for the landscape to be removed, regardless of the plan to replace it. Mr. Horvath later repeated this statement, also noting the integral relationship of the gardens and museums to the visitor experience.
 - c. Mr. Luebke stated the difficult question of removing the Quadrangle museum pavilions. AC clarified that Alternative B included the retention of the pavilions.
 10. Cynthia Field stated that a conservative approach would be to retain the museum pavilions, for possible reuse in the future, even if they were abandoned or underused in the short term. She did not anticipate that it would interfere with the proposed garden plans.

Dismissing of Alternatives Presentation

1. AT opened the presentation for the evaluation of the Master Plan Alternatives, and the decision-making process for dismissing any alternatives before they are carried forward for analysis in the Section 106 and NEPA processes.
 - a. She reviewed the Alternatives individually, noting the pros and cons associated with each.
 - b. She outlined Smithsonian's recommendations for carrying forward and dismissing Alternatives:
 - i. The No Action Alternative forms a baseline from which to analyze the effects of other Alternatives.
 - ii. She stated Alternative A does not meet the stated Purpose and Need for the Master Plan. Therefore, it would be dismissed from further consideration.

- iii. Alternative C, although it meets the Purpose and Need, is similar to the more successful Alternative F, and therefore would not be carried forward.
 - iv. Alternative E was determined to be unsatisfactory from a design perspective and would be dismissed from further consideration.
 - v. Therefore, in addition to the No Action Alternative, Alternatives B, D, and F would be carried forward for further evaluation.
- 2. Kathryn Smith, National Park Service, asked for confirmation regarding the decision not to relocate Jefferson Drive. SI confirmed that this action was no longer being proposed under the Master Plan.
 - a. She asked if plans for the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden were similar under Alternatives D and F. AC confirmed that they were.
 - b. She asked for clarification regarding the statement that the garden area would be expanded under Alternative F, as compared to the existing conditions. AC described the differences in the area of the Haupt Garden under Alternative F.
- 3. Megan Kanagy, DDOT, noted that her office had been working with the SI team regarding the consolidation of loading on the campus, including proposed changes to the curb cut locations. She noted SI had provided analysis to document and better understand the impacts of moving the curb cut adjacent to Twelfth Street.
 - a. She noted their recommendation to submit an application for review to the DDOT Public Space Committee. AT responded that those materials were being prepared currently.
- 4. Diane Sullivan, NCPC, thanked SI for the range of Alternatives they had presented, and she noted that they would support the stated Alternatives being carried forward for analysis in the EIS.
- 5. Andrew Lewis, DC HPO, noted that concerns had been expressed throughout the Section 106 consultation process, particularly the degree of effect associated with Alternative D. He asked if the desire to carry Alternative D forward was to achieve a range of alternatives. AT responded that this was partly the case, but also that it represented the original conception of the Master Plan design.
- 6. Charlene Dwin Vaughn, ACHP, expressed concern over the dismissal of Alternative A, as it represented a more preservation-minded approach. Carly Bond, SI, responded that Alternative B would retain two of the three Quadrangle pavilions.
- 7. Mr. Longstreth stated that Alternative B could be the basis for a workable solution, including the proposed treatment of the Castle, and it could be considered a preservation approach.
- 8. Ms. Smith asked if Alternative B proposed large-scale excavation beneath the Castle. AT responded that it did not, but some excavation would be necessary for a mechanical plant.
- 9. David Maloney, DC HPO, asked why Alternative B would not allow a full mechanical plant. AT responded that it was directly related to the amount of space available. Some additional analysis might result in less differentiation between Alternatives B and F.
 - a. Mr. Maloney asked if Alternative B would allow for a direct connection between the Quadrangle and Castle below grade. AT responded that a service connection exists now and would remain, but no visitor connection would be possible given the current configuration of the Quad. David Maloney suggested that some minor interior reconfigurations could occur to achieve a direct visitor connection, and requested additional information to that effect.
- 10. Andrew Lewis, DC HPO, echoed appreciation of the Smithsonian's efforts. He stated that often a hybrid approach for alternatives is pursued, and asked if that would be possible in this case. AT responded that perhaps Alternative B could be further developed to better meet the logistic needs of the Master Plan. Mr. Lewis stated that this would be beneficial.
- 11. Mr. Luebke stated that he appreciated the comments, including the retention of a preservation-focused alternative. He reiterated his concern to excavate extensively beneath the Castle, including the excavation proposed under Alternatives D and F. AC noted that studies to configure the loading beneath the Castle had derived the current alternative, and those studies could be shared.
 - a. Mr. Luebke agreed with others' statements that degrees of coherence varied amongst the alternatives and that additional work would be necessary at the design stage to ensure coherence.

Section 106/NEPA Processes and Discussion

1. Carly Bond (CB), SI, presented an overview of the Section 106 process and the subject of the following consulting party meeting, to identify and begin to resolve adverse effects on historic properties.
2. CB outlined the criteria for adverse effects, the Area of Potential Effects, and the identification of historic properties within that geographic area. She provided examples of adverse effects and invited consulting parties to attend the following meeting to participate in that assessment effort.
3. CB presented the next steps for the completion of the Section 106, EIS, and Master Plan review processes.
4. CB noted that the presentation would be posted to the South Mall Campus Plan website, and she welcomed any additional written questions or comments by May 17, 2017.
5. Ms. Dwin Vaughn, asked for additional information regarding the schedule of the NEPA process.
 - a. AT responded that the scoping period for the EIS was held approximately one year ago, and that the EIS preparation was underway by the Smithsonian and its consultant team.
 - b. Ms. Dwin Vaughn questioned how the EIS would be coordinated with the drafting of an agreement document to ensure broad public input.
 - c. Matt Flis, NCPC, confirmed that the goal would be to coordinate the NEPA and Section 106 processes and integrate the findings of the Section 106 process into the EIS.
6. Mr. Lewis asked for additional information regarding the scheduling of the Hirshhorn Museum National Register nomination and Cultural Landscape Report. CB responded that the CLR was completed and available on the project website, and the Hirshhorn Museum nomination would be completed over the next 4-6 months.
7. Marcel Acosta, NCPC, thanked attendees for their participation and for Smithsonian and NCPC's efforts to develop and refine a range of alternatives. He repeated CFA's point that the Master Plan would later be reviewed by CFA and NCPC as individual projects were brought before their commissions.
8. Ms. Smith asked how a potential new alternative would be integrated into the process moving forward. AT responded that there was potential for such alterations, to be addressed in a single meeting if possible.
 - a. Ms. Smith asked if a link was available to submit written comments through the project website. SI confirmed that there was.
9. Mr. Longstreth noted that it was a constructive meeting and noted the value of public and private engagement.

Conclusion and Next Steps

1. SI requested that consulting parties provide written comments on the project website, www.southmallcampus.si.edu, by May 17, 2017.

Minutes prepared by Bill Marzella, EHT Traceries, May 5, 2017 (revised May 30, 2017).