

Meeting Minutes

FROM: EHT Traceries
SUBJECT: Smithsonian South Mall Campus Master Plan
Section 106 Consulting Parties Meeting #5
DATE: January 27, 2016

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

Consulting Parties

Name	Organization
David Maloney	DC HPO
Thomas Luebke	CFA
Sarah Batcheler	CFA
Mina Wright	GSA
Pat Tiller	Committee of 100
Kate Perry	Committee of 100
Barbara Bates	DC Preservation League
Rob Nieweg	NTHP
Robert Snieckus	USDA
Patricia Zingsheim	DC Office of Planning
Joshua Silver	DC Office of Planning
Megan Kanagy	DDOT

Webcast Participants

Joyce Saginaw	Dept. of Justice
Karen DelGrosso	Env. Protection Agency
Bob Craycraft	Waterfront Gateway Neighborhood Assoc.
Elizabeth S. Merritt	NTHP
Rebecca Miller	DC Preservation League
David Maxfield	

Lead/Cooperating Agencies & Project Team

Sharon Park	SI
Ann Trowbridge	SI
Christopher Lethbridge	SI
John Lapiana	SI
Michelle Spofford	SI
Jane Passman	SI
Amy Ballard	SI
Jennifer Hirsch	NCPC
Matthew Flis	NCPC
Catherine Dewey	NPS
Peter May	NPS
Kathryn Smith	NPS
Aran Coakley	BIG
Sean Franklin	BIG
James A. Lord	Surfacedesign, Inc.
Laura Hughes	EHT Traceries
Bill Marzella	EHT Traceries
Liz Estes	Stantec

Presentation

1. Ann Trowbridge (AT) began the meeting, stating it was the first meeting to be webcasted; welcomed meeting attendees, including those watching online.
2. AT introduced John Lapiana (JL), Acting Director of the Office of External Affairs and Deputy Undersecretary for Finance and Administration, to address consulting parties' questions about the status of AIB and answer questions.
 - a. JL expected AIB to be opened on a limited basis at the end of February for events. One or two major exhibitions are planned to begin in spring or summer 2016.
3. AT provided updates since the last Consulting Parties meeting which included:
 - a. Publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) as an EIS;
 - b. Completion of the Determination of Eligibility (DOE) for the Hirshhorn Museum;
 - c. In the process of contracting for studies to compare seismic approaches. This is in response to consulting parties interest in the difference between traditional seismic reinforcement and base isolation. The Smithsonian is also exploring what this will mean physically, as well as issues of constructability, cost, etc.;
 - d. Reorganization of the website to group like documents to make the site more user friendly.
4. AT introduced Sharon Park (SP), Head of Architectural History and Preservation, to present background on CLR.
 - a. CLR overview and presentation with discussion. This presentation included goals and objectives, major periods of development, character zones, characteristics of gardens to be incorporated into new work, summary of findings, and historic preservation findings.
5. SP introduced Barbara Faust (BF), Associate Director of Smithsonian Gardens
 - a. BF presented the Smithsonian Gardens Program, including its Mission, Smithsonian Gardens Operations, Educational Programs, Exhibits, Research and Collections, South Mall Garden Program Needs, and South Mall Programs Need Summary.
6. SP formally introduced Matthew Flis (MF), NCPC, to discuss the project process and schedule.
7. SP addressed several questions posed via email:
 - a. Stated that a number of questions have been asked about the development of the project. The planning and steering committee held a retreat, leading to the development of an internal document, the 2012 Retreat Report. The major part of that document will be made available on the Master Plan website in the next few days, in an attempt to answer many of these questions.
 - b. Question: What are the consulting parties to comment on?
 - i. Role of consulting parties is to evaluate long term goals and implement them project by project for Section 106.
 - c. Question: Should Castle restoration be a priority, with AIB as swing space, and subsequently repair Quad roof and put garden back in place?
 - i. AIB is scheduled for interim and final use. When Castle is renovated, SI will use part of AIB for amenities until a visitor amenities center can be developed. SP Stressed all long range plans will have some phasing to it.
 - d. Question: What is the assurance Castle will not be harmed by proposed seismic work when the studies are inconclusive? An independent engineer should be consulted and justification for using this building as a test case should be provided
 - i. SP responded that SI has worked closely with outstanding engineers and has no interest in threatening the Castle. SI is still studying traditional vs. base isolation approach. Named several examples of similar treatments, including the State House in Columbia, SC and the Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands. Assured that SI will have good engineers and independent analysis.

Discussion/Questions

AIB Discussion

1. Rob Nieweg (RN), NTHP, expressed thanks for the announcement of the AIB's temporary uses; asked if there was any information about planning for the building's long term permanent use.
 - a. JL replied that legislation hasn't been introduced yet, but may be introduced in the future that the building may be used as the Museum of the American Latino. Regents in 2007 promised Congress and the Obama Administration that the Smithsonian would not do anything to the building that would preclude its use as a museum if Congress determined.
2. Pat Tiller (PT), Committee of 100, asked that based on the report from the Commission, an excess of 300,000 sq. ft. is needed for the Museum of Latino, given AIB's size at approximately 40,000 sq. ft., asked how is the Smithsonian is reconciling those differences.
 - a. JL qualified that AIB is 146,000 sq. ft. If AIB is designated as the museum's potential site, the Smithsonian would conduct a feasibility study to determine the pros and cons of the location.

Cultural Landscape Report/Smithsonian Gardens Discussion

1. PT asked if the walls of the plaza were determined eligible in the Hirshhorn DOE. SP responded yes.
2. RN referred to the portion of the presentation which stated that changes in the landscape over time left flexibility for future changes, wishing the speaker to elaborate on the types of changes and degree of flexibility.
 - a. SP responded that there were a variety of changes have gone in the garden: material changes, bedding/plant changes, Quad construction, excavations around Castle, support buildings, etc. Reminded that SI is a master planning stage and is considering how to accommodate master planning objectives in a compatible way.
3. Sarah Batcheler (SB), CFA, asked about point two (slide 41, regarding hardscape changes and circulation patterns), especially as it might relate to Jefferson Drive.
 - a. SP stated that Jefferson Drive evolved over time, but that the master plan will address Jefferson Drive as the perimeter of the landscape.
 - b. SB replied that SI had previously presented altering the path of Jefferson Drive. SB asked if the CLR left open the possibility of relocating Jefferson Drive, as previously presented, or is it established as something that should not be moved.
 - c. SP replied that the next iteration of the landscape concepts will be looking at alternatives and how Jefferson Drive is comported in those.
 - d. SP does not recall a specific comment about Jefferson Drive, the Smithsonian has accepted Jefferson Drive as an existing boundary, through earlier consultation decided that at this point Jefferson Drive will not be moved, although additional perimeter security or other elements may be incorporated, which will be considered when it comes forward.
 - e. Kathryn Smith (KS), NPS, stated that after reading the CLR and other reports, Jefferson Drive has been identified as a contributing resource to the National Mall and to the South Mall Campus. If the Drive were relocated, adverse effects would result.
4. KS asked if SI intends to proceed with the Master Plan as if the Quad and Haupt Garden were eligible, or did they intend to have a DOE completed soon enough to inform decision making.
 - a. SP replied that they have referred to the National Mall Historic District National Register nomination during the planning process. A DOE would further inform the level of significance.
 - b. (Speaker's voice muffled) asked if the gardens adjacent to the Sackler pavilion would be included. SP confirmed that they would.
5. RN stated that he looks forward to providing written comments on the CLR.
6. AT stated that the Hirshhorn DOE would be released after internal review, in approximately March.
7. RN asked how the CLR recommendations guide development of alternatives for the Master Plan, citing the treatment of the Hirshhorn walls as an example.

- a. SP replied that Hirshhorn walls are a significant feature. To achieve east-west passage, perhaps there are certain aspects of the wall that can be modified to accommodate those goals, for any variety of other reasons, enough justification to modify. Will be a later discussion when design is further developed.
1. RN asked about SI Gardens' program and how it relates the master planning program.
 - a. BF replied that their planning and renovating is continuing as usual, in the interim before Master Plan implementation. Cited changes to Folger Garden as an example.
 - b. AT stated that gardens are integrated in the planning all of SI projects; for the Master Plan, BF has spent a lot of time with BIG and Surfacedesign to assess needs, etc.
2. PT asked how SI would reconcile intimate nature of existing gardens with BIG design.
 - a. BF replied that is a concept, more about the buildings than the landscape.
 - b. AT states that the project is at a master planning level. Earlier renderings were produced to test planning concepts such as circulation and service.
3. SB asked what would be done with the findings from the CLR report now. Stated the Master Plan had substantial design changes to areas of the gardens deemed contributing or individually eligible in the CLR.
 - a. AT stated as part of the EIS process, SI and NCPC will assess alternatives for how well they meet program criteria and desires, as well as the impact to historic structures and how do they relate to the recommendations in the CLR. Emphasized that the final plan going to NCPC may be different from the plan given to the public a year ago, and will also look at the each project as it develops in the future
4. PT cited the recent Washington Post article on the gardens, and encouraged SI to heed recommendations. He stated that he understand the utilitarian and circulation needs, but to seriously consider the quality of the gardens before implementing BIG designs.
 - a. AT stated that eventual designs will balance the qualities of the existing gardens with their needs for the Master Plan.

Next Steps Discussion

1. RN asked if accommodation would be made for additional scoping comments.
 - a. MF replied that, yes, with a conversion to an EIS, NOI was published on Federal Register with a comment period until February 22. The purpose of scoping comments is to identify issues to be evaluated through the EIS.
 - b. RN asked if the current website for the Master Plan process would feature a copy of the NOI previously published to the Federal Register. MF confirmed that it would. RN requested that the timeline be expanded, as most people do not regularly read the Federal Register. MF confirmed that it could be.
2. Peter May, NPS, asked about specifics on timeframe for refining alternatives.
 - a. MF responded there was not a specific date. Still forthcoming information in certain areas. Have had several consulting party meetings already. Thought process is to use the next several months to begin preparing basis of document, then moving towards alternative. Hoping to have additional information from the DOEs to inform.
 - b. MF clarified that it would be a couple of months, within the summer or fall.
 - c. SB asked if the informational briefing to CFA would include alternatives. MF replied that this was the intention.

End Discussion

1. PT followed up on seismic by stating that SI Castle is different from South Carolina Capitol because of its iconic nature. Asked if an independent peer review of Silman report was analyzed for code compliance. Also asked if other engineers were being consulted.
 - a. SP stated that the intent of the Silman report was to analyze varying types of traditional and base isolation treatments. It was commissioned as a pre-study for Castle renovation, and therefore

- goes beyond the level of detail of the Master Plan. SP said that no independent review had been conducted on the report. AT clarified that on major SI projects it is regular practice to have peer review consultants outside of the A/E firm.
2. SB asked for clarification on the statement above, as base isolation and an expanded Castle sub-basement *does* appear to be a master planning question.
 - a. Christopher Lethbridge (CL), SI, stated the seismic studies address protection of the Castle by conventional means, both with and without base isolation (in both cases, internal structural bracing would be required to stabilize the building). Other forms of conventional strengthening can be very invasive to historic fabric. Another factor is the difference in cost. Any work done would include underpinning of the building, which would mean excavation under the building because of the footings and low ceilings. Continuing studies because need to move into conceptual design or it won't get done, keeping options open but making intelligent decisions along the way.
 - b. SB asked SI to clarify if the seismic studies were informing the building design or the Master Plan. She noted the correlation between the Master Plan program and the expanded sub-basement achieved through base isolation. CL responded that the needed program space could be added with either approach.
 - c. SB again responded that there is confusion over the outcome of the structural studies and how this portion of the design relates to the greater master planning effort. This confusion creates a difficulty in the assessment of adverse effects at the master planning level.
 3. Thomas Luebke (TL), CFA, asked if there would be another 106 meeting regarding the Castle seismic treatment.
 - a. SP stated that the future meeting identified will address infrastructure, including HVAC and consolidated service. However, SI will allow time for discussion of the seismic report.
 - b. TL expressed confusion regarding the Castle Condition Assessment report, conducted to assess the damage from the 2011 earthquake. SP noted that the document had been posted to the website. TL again expressed confusion and doubt that the material posted to the website was all the information SI had available regarding the 2011 damage. CL and SP clarified the material posted to the website, and that they would review and correct the material for the next meeting, if necessary.
 - c. TL replied that it was fundamental for assessing the proposed treatment alternatives and should be incorporated into the meeting on infrastructure.
 - d. SP stated that SI understands the need to fully understand program and how it applies across the campus. TL replied that a better understanding of program and treatment alternatives was essential, and requested that they be addressed more in the next consulting parties meeting.
 - e. Later in the meeting, TL raised the question again, asking SI to clarify between several documents posted to the project website, and to provide the requested information if it is missing. SI responded that they would investigate the matter.
 - f. *Note: The 2011 Field Observation Report for the Smithsonian Institution Building by SmithGroup was added to the project web site on Feb 1, 2016. This 2 page report summarizes KCE Structural Engineers' 2011 Initial Damage Reports.*
 4. PT asked SI to clarify if NCPC had confirmed schedule has presented, and also if individual projects would undergo a full section 106 review.
 - a. SP confirmed that they would, over a period of 20 to 30 years. SP clarified that NCPC would accept the Master Plan, and SI would bring individual projects to that Commission separately.
 - b. SI would continue to work closely with HPO for guidance with how to move forward with implementing Master Plan concept ideas in actual planning and design.
 - c. SP confirmed that a similar approach would be used for NEPA.
 - d. AT clarified that SI not be submitting a lot of design aspects that are not part of a Master Plan acceptance by NCPC; the Commission will accept what the Smithsonian shares as the submission, which may be less detailed than some rendering that have been.

5. PT requested additional clarification regarding the level of garden design between the Master Plan alternatives and renderings released early. Asked SI and NCPC not to rush the process, considering the level of discomfort that some members of the public have with the previous garden design.
 - a. MF responded that alternatives were being developed at the master planning level. The EIS process and subsequent EA processes would address public comment at each stage.
6. SB stated that she remains confused about the level of detail the EIS alternatives will be developed to when they are submitted to NCPC.
 - a. AT responded that the Master Plan will include elements of the BIG design but with a lesser degree of detail. This is reflective of the nature of NCPC submission requirements as well as the prolonged implementation schedule for the project.
7. Kate Perry, Committee of 100, stated that she remains confused. The timeline states the draft EIS will be completed in fall 2016, which will encompass all the refinement and examination of alternatives dependent on information that has not yet been provided. Is this when the Smithsonian will seek review from NCPC?
 - a. MF responded that this is correct; the draft EIS for public comment and NCPC review is intended to be prepared by this time. The final approval will occur later.
8. Jennifer Hirsch, NCPC, clarified that draft EIS will be a series of alternatives. From the series of alternatives a preferred will be selected, and that is what will be forwarded to NCPC as a draft Master Plan.

Conclusion and Next Steps

1. SP closed the consulting parties meeting.
2. SP stated that the meeting minutes and additional materials will be posted on the website (www.southmallcampus.si.edu).
3. SP asked for written comments to Michelle Spofford at SpoffordM@si.edu by Wednesday, February 10.
4. SP stated a tentative meeting for April 13 has been scheduled. The meeting will focus on the landscape design alternatives.

Minutes prepared by Kimberly De Muro, EHT Traceries, February 2, 2016 (revised February 10, 2016)