

Design and Landmarks Committee (DRAFT)

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, October 27, 2010

Members Present

Becky Ives, Chair
Patty Wisner
Greg "Frank" Hemer
Jim Perrault

Members Absent

None

Staff Present

Katie Mangle, Planning Director
Zach Weigel, Civil Engineer

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ives called the Design and Landmarks Committee (DLC) meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

2. MEETING NOTES

a. September 22, 2010

DLC Member Wisner noted the following correction:

Line 36 stated that a decision had been made at the November 9, 2010, meeting, which had not happened yet. She requested that the date be changed to November 9, 2009.

Ms. Wisner moved to approve the September 22, 2010, DLC meeting notes with the requested change. DLC Member Hemer seconded the motion. The notes were approved unanimously.

3. INFORMATION ITEMS—NONE

4. WORKSESSION ITEMS

a. Jackson Street Bus Shelter

Katie Mangle, Planning Director, introduced TriMet staff **Young Park, Capital Projects Manager**, and **Bob Hastings, Agency Architect**. She also introduced **Zach Weigel, Civil Engineer**. TriMet was the general project manager for the Jackson Street project and Mr. Weigel was the City's project manager.

Ms. Mangle provided an overview of past DLC discussions about the Jackson Street bus shelter.

- The Committee recommended the Discovery Shelter for the Jackson Street project at their June 24, 2009, meeting.
- The company that produced the Discovery Shelter was going into bankruptcy and the Discovery shelter design, which was supposed to be delivered in December, was no longer available.

- The Committee's second choice in 2009 had been the Cantilevered Glass Shelter. That shelter had been custom designed for TriMet for use in the Portland region.
- Given the need to choose a different high capacity shelter, project staff proposed that the project select the Cantilevered Glass Shelter as an alternative design and requested the Committee's concurrence. Some elements of the shelter could be customized to reflect Milwaukie's unique character.

Mr. Park noted that there were some timeline-driven aspects of the project. The project was in its final stages. On December 5, 2010, buses would begin operation along Jackson St. Some type of temporary shelter would be necessary until permanent shelters could be installed. The type of permanent shelter chosen would determine what type of foundation/base would be poured for the shelter.

Chair Ives clarified that, regardless of the choice, the new shelter would be installed after the street was opened to buses.

Ms. Mangle agreed and stated that the new shelter needed to be chosen within the following 2 weeks. Once the new shelter was chosen, the proper foundation and infrastructure would be poured to accommodate the new shelter.

- The Committee had the option to recommend that the City choose a custom-designed shelter, which would take approximately a year to select, fabricate, and install. The other alternative, the Cantilevered Glass Shelter, could be installed in 3 months or so—approximately February or March 2011.
- **Mr. Park** noted that in order to install a custom shelter, the temporary foundation would need to be removed and a new foundation poured. Buses would need to be rerouted and there would be a disruption in service.

Ms. Mangle clarified that the new bus stops would be functional in early December 2010. The permanent shelters would be installed either in February/March 2011, in the case of the Cantilevered Glass Shelter, or November/December 2011, in the case of a custom shelter.

Mr. Hastings presented drawings of the Cantilevered Glass Shelter. The shelter on the north side of Jackson St was larger, to accommodate greater rider demand, and the shelter on the south side was smaller.

- The Discovery Shelter had the attributes of a low, modern style; transparency so people could see in; and weather protection. The Cantilevered Glass Shelter was a kit of parts, so pieces could be added or removed as desired. The wind screens could be configured in many different ways and could have unique designs.
- The Cantilevered Glass Shelter was intended to be durable and the parts were easily replaceable. The canopy was a clear, tempered glass and was very strong. The wind screens were freestanding but supported themselves on the concrete, so they could be positioned wherever desired.
- Circulation for people getting on and off the bus was a concern, so the windscreens were located so as not to interfere with those movements. Many people get off of the bus and check the transit tracker display to determine whether they would wait inside or outside of the bus shelter.
- People did not like to be right next to others; they looked for ways to be adjacent but a little bit separated. Providing a variety of protected areas allows for rider comfort.

- Windscreen location could be very site-specific and could respond to the winds coming through downtown Milwaukee.

Mr. Park discussed the design of the shelter benches. He suggested using the same benches that had been planned for the Discovery Shelter. The benches could be installed in pairs or multiples.

- Typical bus shelters had openings in the front. Typical prevailing wind was expected to be from east to west, and wind screens would be oriented to accommodate those patterns.

Ms. Mangle stated that once the shelter design was chosen, more site-specific wind pattern analysis could be conducted.

Mr. Park continued his presentation. The dimensions of the Cantilevered Glass Shelters were comparable to the dimensions of the Discovery Shelters. The small shelter (with either design) was about half the size of the large shelter.

Ms. Mangle noted that in both designs, the lighting was integrated into the structure. On the Cantilevered Glass Shelters, the columns would be internally lit at night and use LED lights, which were energy efficient. There would be pedestrian-scale lighting along the street, and the shelter would have a glow.

Mr. Hastings added that illumination greatly affects the feeling of safety and security for riders. The glass roof was treated with a shade co-efficient to cool the waiting area during the day.

Chair Ives asked if the wind screens would have a design.

- **Mr. Hastings** responded that there would be a design of some kind; likely not pictorial, but a pattern of some sort. Too much pattern could block vision of what is going on inside or outside of the shelter. The wind screens were easily replaceable if they were vandalized.

DLC Member Perrault clarified that the custom-patterned wind screens could be fabricated for installation in February/March.

Mr. Hemer clarified that the Cantilevered Glass Shelter was modular and it would be easy to repair or replace parts as needed, and asked whether the plinth wall would still be installed, and if the columns needed to be gray.

- **Ms. Mangle** replied that the plinth wall was no longer needed because the Cantilevered Glass Shelter was more adjustable than the Discovery Shelter, and would be installed directly into the concrete.
- **Mr. Hastings** stated that the columns were stainless steel covered with a polycarbonate mesh with lighting behind it; it was expensive but very durable. The rafters were made out of stainless steel as well. The stainless steel could be cleaned more easily than paint. There was a structural steel assembly that would be painted, and the Committee could choose a color.

Mr. Hemer asked whether the honey locust trees to be planted adjacent to the shelters would drop seeds onto the shelter.

- **Chair Ives** noted that she had suggested zelkova trees as an alternative to the honey locust trees.

Ms. Mangle reviewed the customizable components of the Cantilevered Glass Shelters: the wind screen patterns; the color of the steel structural beam; and the type and placement of benches and leaning rails.

- The wind screens are laminated plastic with silk screened designs baked into the center of the plastic panels. The design could be colored or neutral.
- The steel structural beam could be painted the color the Committee had chosen for the Discovery Shelter roof.
- The Committee could choose whether and where leaning rails would be installed and the style and number of benches.

Ms. Mangle requested Committee support of the staff proposal to choose the Cantilevered Glass Shelter for the Jackson Street project.

Ms. Wisner stated that she felt the shelter design was acceptable as long as the prevailing winds were considered in the placement of the wind screens.

Mr. Hemer moved to support the staff recommendation for the Cantilevered Glass Shelter. Mr. Perrault seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Mangle stated that staff would investigate design options for the benches and windscreens, and communicate with the Committee via email over the coming month. A special meeting could be set to discuss these options, if desired by the Committee members.

b. Design Review procedures discussion

Ms. Mangle provided an overview of previous discussions about the City's design review procedures and the role of the Committee.

- The Planning Department was in the midst of a "development review tune-up", which would update the City's development review procedures and processes. There was some duplication of staff effort and confusion about public notice requirements in the design review process.
- The City's goal was to streamline the process, utilize the Committee as effectively as possible, utilize City resources as effectively as possible, and make sure design review was effective and resulted in better projects.
- Currently, the Committee was an advisory group to the Planning Commission for design review. It did not have a formal role in historic resources review, but staff practice had been to bring those applications before the Committee as well.
- Currently, the Committee is only involved in design review as part of a minor quasi-judicial application.
- Staff direction was to look at all alternatives, from recommending abolishing the Committee to recommending the Committee become a commission. Staff was recommending a middle ground, which was to suggest making the Committee an advisory committee to the Planning Director. That option would allow the Committee to get involved much earlier in the process, would free the Committee up to have more creative conversations about the application, and would reduce duplication of staff effort.
- There was no design review process in place for commercial buildings outside of downtown; those projects went straight to a building permit. As part of the tune-up

project, the City would create a development review application. The next step would be to adopt design standards for residential and commercial development.

Mr. Hemer agreed that the Committee would have more influence if they were involved from early on in the project, perhaps at 20% design rather than 70% design.

Chair Ives agreed and added that the Committee should retain the ability to influence projects that come before it.

Ms. Mangle clarified that as an advisory group, the applicant would be required to meet with the Committee but that it would be a public meeting rather than a public hearing. The Committee would make recommendations to the Planning Director rather than the Planning Commission.

- As an advisory group, meetings with the applicant could happen earlier in the process and could be more informal.
- Committee members have expressed frustration at seeing projects so late in the design process and its limited ability to make adjustments to the design.

Ms. Wisner clarified that as an advisory group, the applicant would meet with the Committee earlier in the process and asked what the role of the Committee would be in later stages of the project.

- **Ms. Mangle** stated that the role of the Committee would depend on the complexity of the project. Some projects might need only one meeting with the Committee; some might need additional meetings.

Ms. Wisner clarified that the Committee would no longer recommend findings and conditions to the Planning Commission.

- **Ms. Mangle** explained that the meetings would be informal and the Planning staff would integrate the Committee's suggestions into the staff report for the Planning Commission. Staff would not prepare findings for the Committee. This would allow staff to more comfortably meet the State's 120-day land use decision deadline.

Ms. Wisner noted that she found the staff findings very helpful because she looked to the Planning Department to be the experts regarding the criteria to be met. Staff sends up the red flags about what the Committee should review. She questioned whether the Committee would be able to do its job as well without that level of information.

Mr. Hemer noted that the Committee is currently advisory to the Planning Commission but did not have the final say about whether to approve a project. Meeting with applicants earlier in the process would allow the Committee to provide more input regarding color, details, and other design features.

Ms. Wisner expressed concern that the role of the Committee in the design review process had not yet been defined and suggested that the Committee remain an advisory committee to the Planning Commission but add a meeting earlier in the process.

Ms. Mangle noted that the City could strongly suggest a meeting with the Committee early in the process, similar to the suggestion to meet with the NDAs.

- The other issue with the process was that design review decisions are generally decided at the Committee meetings even though the code did not contain provisions for public notifications of those meetings.

Chair Ives suggested that when a downtown property owner came to the Planning Department with a proposal for a new building, their first stop should be the Committee.

Staff should suggest items to present to the Committee so it can comment on the choices.

- Felt rushed by the need to remain within the 120-day clock when the applicant did not present the materials needed for the Committee to make its condition.

Mr. Hemer noted that if the Committee remains advisory to the Planning Commission, they were required to follow the Downtown Design Guidelines and did not have the ability to make comments about specifics of the project. If it was involved earlier in the project, comments and input could be more wide-ranging.

Ms. Wisner noted that the design guidelines are flexible and gave the Committee the responsibility for ensuring that new design was sensitive to Milwaukee's character. Members could use good judgment and discernment to shape projects under review.

- Agreed that the Committee should come in earlier in the process, but would not want to be deprived of staff findings. The findings educated the Committee about the application and allowed them to perform their roles more effectively.

Ms. Mangle suggested there may be a simplified version of the findings to provide an outline of how the application met the design standards and guidelines.

Mr. Hemer suggested that a Committee member should attend Planning Commission hearings where design review applications are scheduled and explain the Committee's recommendation to the Commission.

Chair Ives asked if there was a timeline for making changes to the design review process.

- **Ms. Mangle** stated that the decision about the procedures would need to be made very soon, but there would be another opportunity to review the procedures with the downtown code "refresh" project in 2011. Small clarifications and changes could be made with the development procedures project, such as public notification requirements for Committee meetings.

Mr. Hemer suggested the Committee meet twice per year as a Historic Resources Commission.

- **Ms. Mangle** noted that the Committee does not currently have any role in historic preservation applications, although she did not know why.
- The Committee could act as both the Design and Landmarks Committee, in an advisory design review capacity, and the historic resources commission, as a decision-maker on historic preservation applications.
- **Ms. Wisner** noted that if they were members of a commission, they would have additional personal reporting requirements.

Ms. Mangle stated that she appreciated the discussion, and felt there was more work to do. She would not recommend any change to the Committee's role right now. The Development Review Procedures code amendments would be limited to clarifying the existing process. Staff would send the proposed Committee-related code changes to the Committee before the application moved forward for adoption by City Council.

5. APPLICATION REVIEW ITEMS—NONE

6. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Next meeting

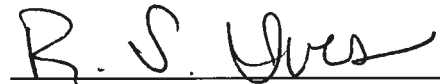
The November 24, 2010, meeting was cancelled.

Ms. Mangle suggested the Committee members attend the November 15, 2010, light rail design meeting in lieu of the regularly-scheduled Committee meeting.

The next meeting was to be scheduled via e-mail for early December.

7. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.



Becky Ives, Chair