

MILWAUKIE

Dogwood City of the West

To: Planning Commission
Design and Landmarks Committee

Through: Katie Mangle, Planning Director *KM*

From: Beth Ragel, Community Services Program Specialist

Date: February 26, 2010, for March 9, 2010, Worksession

Subject: City Hall Sculpture Garden

ACTION REQUESTED

None. This is a briefing for discussion only. Staff is seeking feedback on the overall design and on the relocation of the Centennial Memorial Rock ("Memorial Rock") and the replacement of two dogwood trees in the front of City Hall.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. History of Prior Actions and Discussions

In the spring of 2009, the City of Milwaukie was awarded funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (commonly known as "stimulus") to expand upon plans to improve the bus stops on Jackson Street in downtown Milwaukie, adjacent to City Hall. The Jackson Street Improvement Project will beautify, modernize and consolidate the City of Milwaukie's long neglected on-street landscape and bus facilities. City Council has taken several actions to approve the Jackson Street project.

One of the problems the Jackson Street project is trying to solve is the sprawling nature of both the bus stops and the waiting areas. Several ideas were discussed to reduce loitering on the City Hall lawn, and in the end the project was expanded to include a sculpture garden with associated landscaping. The Sculpture Garden will maintain public access to the area, which is a requirement of the City Hall block, but will eliminate the open lawn that is used for loitering by members of the public.

The project will formalize the south lawn of City Hall along Jackson Street into the first art garden in Milwaukie. The garden will feature 6 permanent concrete sculpture pedestals to display a rotating sculpture collection.

A call for proposals was published in October of 2009. In November a selection committee comprised of members of the Arts Committee and the Main Street Milwaukie group selected two designers who had submitted proposals to interview. The committee agreed unanimously that they preferred the design submitted by *Gardens by Rebecca*.

The design concept submitted by *Gardens by Rebecca* has a natural, open, 'northwest' feel. Her proposal includes the placement of basalt boulders around and within the garden, installation of regionally appropriate shrubs and trees, and a winding gravel pathway that mimics the looks of the region's rivers. Ms. Ives' design demonstrated an excellent vision for tying together the Sculpture Garden with Milwaukie's history as well as the Riverfront Park currently being planned.

This new feature will be complimented by the improvements the City is making to Jackson Street. As part of the Jackson Street project, new ornamental lighting and well-lit bus shelters will provide additional light along the street. Combined with the low-voltage accent lighting in the garden, the area will be well lit.

Tryon Creek Landscape firm will be constructing the project under *Gardens by Rebecca's* management in conjunction with supervision by City staff.

B. Design Concept and Features of the Sculpture Garden

Concept:

This design reflects the historical importance of the rivers and streams surrounding Milwaukie. The larger path running north to south represents the Willamette River with the remaining existing pine tree represents Elk Rock Island. The smaller east - west paths represent Kellogg and Johnson Creek. Native basalt boulders (3-6 ft in size) will be placed to resemble river banks and the pathways made of decomposed granite (a fine light colored gravel) mimicking the natural look of the streams. No small rocks will be used to reduce the possibility of vandalism (picking up rocks and throwing them or removing them). The way the pedestals and sculpture pieces are placed will bring focus to the space without overwhelming the natural open feel of the space (see Attachment 1, Sculpture Garden Concept Plan).

This project supports the Downtown Design Guidelines to integrate art with consideration to context and will meet the following recommendations laid out in the Downtown Design Guidelines:

- Artwork designed specifically for and integrated into the building or site.
- Professionally designed.
- Durable, low maintenance materials that are vandal resistant.

Materials:

The pathways will be constructed with irregular edges to mimic the stream beds and will be made of decomposed granite. The project will also remove a small portion of the front driveway to expand the sculpture garden area and will remove the existing concrete path that connects the parking lot behind City Hall with the front driveway. The concrete pathway will be replaced with a decomposed granite pathway—a fine gravel that packs hard and is ADA compliant.

Plants will be regionally-appropriate, native and native-compatible. Trees will include *Tsuga mertensiana* (native Mountain Hemlock), *Cornus kousa* (Dogwoods), and *Acer circinatum* (Vine Maple) which grow to a height of 20-25 feet with a spread of less than 10 feet. Trees will be placed so that sculpture pieces can be placed on the pedestal's easily.

Smaller shrubs and ornamental grasses will include a combination of Mahonia (Oregon Grape), *Sarcococca* (Sweet Bay), Sword Ferns, *Hydrangea 'Pia'*, *Carex testacea*, and *Spiraea 'Magic Carpet'*. These have been selected as they are easy to maintain and provide a nice variety of textures (see Attachment 2, Landscaping Mock-ups and Attachment 3, Plant Materials).

Lighting:

Low-voltage accent lighting will be included in the beds that will point up at the pedestals and highlight the sculpture pieces.

B. Design Concept and Features for the Front of City Hall

Concept:

The design for the front of City Hall will tie the two side spaces together aesthetically. The intention is to enhance the front entrance of City Hall and the triangle bed as part of this project per attachment 4-A, "Planter Detail". Funds at this time will not allow the full redesign imagined in attachment 4-B. Staff thought it made sense to have *Gardens by Rebecca* develop a full design now—even though funds would not enable the entire re-landscaping right away.

Basalt boulders will be placed around the Memorial Rock—relocated to the center of the triangle flower bed—and the same shrubs and ornamental grasses used in the Sculpture Garden will be planted in the triangle and on the sides of the main entrance. A lawn strip would be added curving along the front of the property which ties the lawn on the north side of City Hall with the front and mimics the green Willamette Valley.

The proposed design calls for the moving of the large Memorial Rock over approximately six feet to the north—placing it in the center of the triangle flower bed. Currently the rock is just to the south of the triangle and pathways. This will make the design more symmetrical and also make the Memorial Rock more prominent (see Attachments 4A and 4B).

City library staff and *Gardens by Rebecca* have done research to determine the history of Memorial Rock and the four plaques that are on the rock. News articles found at the Milwaukie Museum and in the library indicate that the rock itself was dug out of the Waverly Heights area of Milwaukie for the express purpose of holding the plaques now mounted on it. From what we can tell from the newspaper articles, the first plaque from 1947, which honors the arrival of early Milwaukie residents Henderson and Alfred Luelling in 1847, was installed on "City Hall grounds" and later mounted to the rock. The second plaque, was installed in 1950 in celebration of the centennial of Milwaukie's founding. In 1953, a third plaque was attached to honor Milwaukie's first City Council, which was formed in 1903.

Staff believes that moving the rock to the center of the area—about six feet from its current location—does not diminish its significance and will, rather, make it more visible and distinct.

Two landscape contractors have looked at the rock and both believe the rock can be moved without cracking or damaging it. The rock would be moved with a crane that has attached straps to gently cradle the rock and move it. The rock would be placed on gravel in the center of the triangle.

The design also proposes the removal and replacement of the two dogwoods on each side of the City Hall entrance. These trees were examined by City Wide Tree Service and are in poor condition. The design calls for replacing them with maple trees. See attached arborist report (Attachment 5, Arborist Report.)

Lighting:

There will be no additional lighting installed in the front of City Hall.

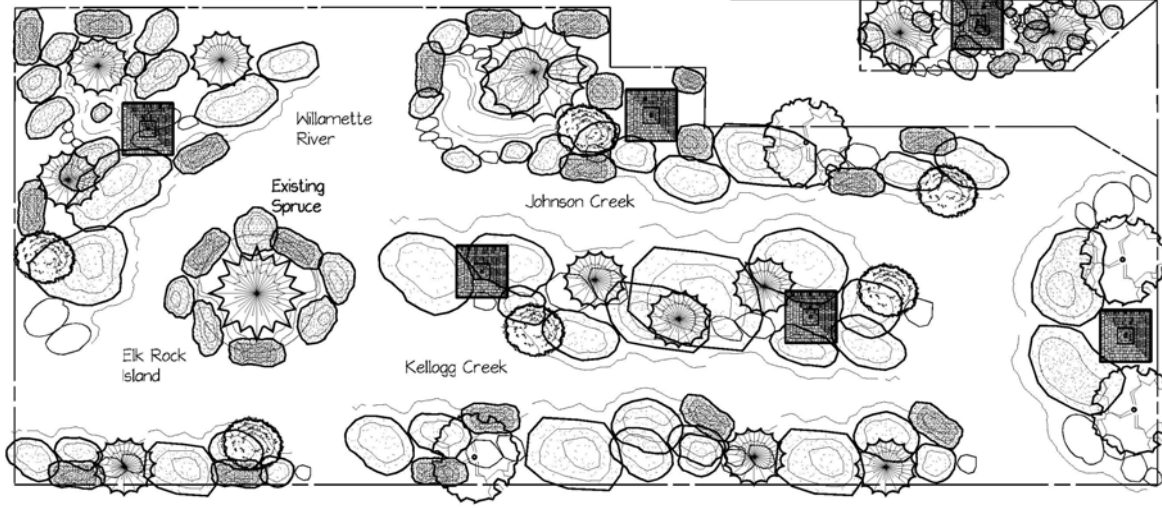
ATTACHMENTS

Attachments are provided only to the Planning Commission unless noted as being attached. All material is available for viewing upon request.

1. Sculpture Garden Concept Plan (attached)
2. Landscaping Mock-ups
3. Plant Materials
4. Front of City Hall Concept Plan
 - A. Entrance/Planter Detail
 - B. Complete Frontage Re-design
5. Arborist Report

ATTACHMENT 1

City Hall



KEY



Sculpture
Pedestals



Tsuga mertensiana (12)



Cornus kousa (4)



Acer circinatum (7)

Gardens by Rebecca

www.gardensbyrebecca.com

503.522.0579

Sculpture Garden
City of Milwaukie

DRAWN: f

DATE

10.23.09

SCALE

1" = 10'