

STADIUM IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, June 13, 2013

4-6 p.m.

333 City Hall

Meeting Minutes

Committee members present: Chairs: **Tom Fisher, David Wilson**; Members: Hussein Ahmed, Judy Yates Borger, Sandra Colvin Roy, Chris Ferguson, David Fields, Clint Hewitt, Diane Hofstede, Peggy Lucas, Wade Luneburg, Peter McLaughlin, Paul Mellblom, Kevin Reich, R.T. Rybak

Committee members excused: Russ Adams, Tim Baylor, Rolf Engh, Sarah Harris, Betsy Hodges, Barbara Johnson, Cory Merrifield, Tom Meyer, Cathy Rydell, Craig Taylor, Jesse Winkler

Guests: Lester Bagley (MN Vikings), Dan Bauer (EVS), Rick Collins, Bob Parr and Mike Ryan (Ryan Companies), Nacho Diaz, Phil Eckhert (Hennepin County), Bob Fine (MPRB), Jenn Hathaway and Michele Kelm-Helgen (MSFA), David Higgins, Lynn Regnier (Elliot Park), Robert Woods (TGB Trust),

Staff/consultants present: Peter Brown, Kevin Carpenter, Lisa Cerney (SP?), Hilary Dvorak, Jeff Handeland, Doug Kress, Chuck Lutz, Marsha Wagner.

1.0 Call to order – the meeting was called to order at **4:04 p.m.** by co-chair David Wilson.

2.0 Approval of Minutes of 5/30/13 meeting – **No quorum**; approval of minutes was delayed until a quorum was present.

3.0 Ryan Companies Downtown East Project Update

Mayor Rybak introduced the discussion by giving some background on the process, beginning with when the stadium was being debated at the Legislature. The single greatest concern besides how we were going to pay for it was how different this would be from the Metrodome. The design is dramatically better than Mayor Rybak's optimistic hope, and he stated that if the financing can be arranged and the project can proceed, it will be a major public amenity and give an enormous boost to development in the area. Ryan's proposal, which will attract additional development and includes a park, works because of the parking ramp. If a parking ramp can be used other than on game days, it will leverage other development with thousands of employees parking on a daily basis. Mayor Rybak's hope and vision is that the park be not just pastoral but a super-active park and public area, year round and not just on game days.

Introduction – Rick Collins, Vice President of Development for Ryan Companies, introduced his colleagues Mike Ryan, Vice President of Architecture and Engineering, and Bob Parr, Director of Development.

Collins gave a brief introduction, explaining that the project is mixed use; the foundation of the project is a very large corporate user. Wells Fargo has indicated their interest in this project, but discussions are ongoing and no commitment has been made. The project would provide about 1 million square feet of commercial office space and be built-to-suit for the corporate user who would be the owner. There would also be about 300-350 housing units and about 30,000 – 40,000 square feet of retail. Ryan is hoping to can gain support from the Committee.

An aggressive schedule is planned and the development will be substantially complete before the opening day for the Stadium in 2016. In response to a question from Tom Fisher about the timetable for Wells Fargo's decision, Collins said that their decision is substantially based on Ryan clearing a number of hurdles and contingencies, many of which should be resolved by the end of this year: i.e., successful completion of environmental review process, parking ramp, skyway connections to downtown, funding of the park.

Presentation – Mike Ryan said that Ryan has had 30-40 professionals working on this project for 6 months. The plan was to encourage development in one phase, connecting the stadium with the park and to downtown. With the stadium being used as a spine for development, parking ramps are centrally located and strategically wrapped, and the blocks will be 75% lined with residential housing. The McClellan parking ramp will be open to the street on three sides. The first floor will have retail, there will be opportunities to enter the street from the second level, floors 3-6 will be commercial, and the top floor will have rooftop decks. In response to a question from Paul Mellblom about the possibility of going higher with the project, Ryan said they think this is the right height.

Showing a fly-around, the park will be a nice front door for the armory, with the city skyline as a backdrop. The existing LRT track will be on the east end of the park. Corporate users will have entry on the park, with 5-story residential on the back side. The stadium doors will open toward the park/plaza, with skyway connections through the new development.

In response to a question from Sandra Colvin Roy, the elevation of the fly-over view is at the level of the upper concourse of the stadium, about 80 feet high.

The public space consists of a 9 acre park. For comparison purposes, Bryant Park in New York is 6 acres, and Millennium Park in Chicago is 12.2 acres. The park as designed would require the closure of Park and Portland Avenues, an idea which is still a subject of debate. Ryan believes that the closing of the streets is imperative, making a park space large enough to accommodate football and soccer fields, as well as other events such as movies, concerts, festivals, and in the winter season ice rinks, sledding hill, cross-country skiing.

The proposed green area is now almost exclusively surface parking. The proposed design will include planting both sides of the street, adding rain garden features to deal with storm water, and implement gray water storage for irrigation.

In response to questions from Wilson and Clint Hewitt about park development, Ryan replied that the park is not fully envisioned because they can't make that decision; the City needs to determine what they want. In response to questions from Mellblom and Wilson about street closure, Ryan said they have proposed that the streets be closed to create a better public space. Without closing roads the park couldn't accommodate soccer/football fields; that's not a significant impact but it would keep it from being a world-class park. Chuck Lutz added that there has been no decision about closing the roads. Hennepin County has some reservations, and there's the possibility that streets could be closed just on game and MSFA event days.

In summarizing, Ryan said the project should help advance a number of goals in the Downtown Council's 2025 Plan: doubling downtown's residential population, creating a consistently compelling downtown experience, establishing a downtown sports district, leading the nation in transportation options, creating and sustaining a green infrastructure, forging connections to the University of Minnesota, and launching a festival of ideas and civic engagement. Legislation provided for a stadium with a plaza and parking.

Ryan's project includes the provision of a structured parking facility on the McClellan Block that would be shared with the MSFA on game days, requiring that the entire project be complete prior to the opening of the Vikings stadium at the end of the summer in 2016. To meet this aggressive project schedule, Ryan hopes to be awarded the parking contract from the MSFA later this month, which would allow them to close on the property in late September and break ground in April 2014.

Wilson thanked Ryan for the interesting presentation, and said that when the Committee developed its objectives for the district around the stadium, they didn't envision a project of this scale so quickly. The ensuing question-and-answer segment dealt with the following issues:

- Colvin Roy challenged Ryan's statement that the park will be a game changer for storm water, adding that grass is not a lot better than a parking lot. Ryan replied that planters will be adjacent to the curb, and there will be some investment in passive filtration.
- A number of Committee members asked questions related to how the project would connect to downtown via new skyways and where the skyways would be located. The Haaf Ramp will connect to the West Tower, skyways will run internally through retail space with large atriums and escalator access to the street, skyway bridges will connect Towers and the McLellan Ramp, with a skyway to the stadium.
- When asked about handling pedestrians crossing the LRT track, Ryan said that on game days they expect 25% to go through the skyway, which is being designed as very wide, to the parking ramp. Also, with the park people will disperse more evenly. Light rail currently crosses under two skyways, so that shouldn't be a problem.
- Ryan Companies will seek LEED Certification, but can't at this point commit to what level.
- In response to Peter McLaughlin's question about vertical circulation, Ryan said that a vertical tower, elevator or staircase, will be constructed within the stadium.
- In response to Wade Luneburg's question about adding a parking facility later with a third office tower, Collins said that to be able to build later they would need to make decisions now.
- In response to Judy Yates Borger's question about what the frequency of light rail trains (every 1.5 minutes when Central Corridor and Southwest come online) will do to the park and pedestrians, Ryan replied that the transit stop is not on one of the blocks included in their proposal, and suggested that discussions take place with Metro Transit. McLaughlin reported that in other places in the country (i.e. Portland and Sacramento), light rail crossings are much more porous than we allow, with more freedom of movement and more people walking on the tracks. Borger also had a question about retail on the skyway level and how that relates to street-level retail. That is still an open issue between Ryan Companies' and its corporate user.

- Mellblom commended Ryan for their great job with the proposed development, especially the street experience. He questioned the value of the park; in response to his question that if the park doesn't happen will it change the design, Collins said that it won't change the design of the buildings but it will eliminate attractive features for corporate tenants and residents. Fisher disagreed with Mellblom; he believes the park is essential, and that the roads will eventually be closed due to public demand.
- In response to Hewitt's question about the aggressive schedule, Collins replied that as much as deadlines and aggressive schedules are a challenge, they force decisions and action. He said the Midtown Exchange, which included a hotel and parking ramp, took less than a year to complete.
- In response to David Fields' question about who will maintain the park, Collins encouraged the Committee members to be part of the Park Programming Committee that will handle that. Fields added that if the park is not contiguous, there are ways of working around that, but believes that Park and Portland eventually will be closed.
- Diane Hofstede suggested that the project be measured against a scorecard, using the criteria set forth in the Design Principles. Wilson queried the Committee as to whether they wanted to weigh in on the project. McLaughlin said there had been no serious discussions or dialogue between the City and Hennepin County about what could be designed and what it would look like with these roads being left open or made narrower. The County is concerned about what happens to downtown traffic circulation, public safety and other factors. It would be premature to adopt a resolution that didn't say there needed to be a full discussion of whether the streets ought to be closed. After additional discussion, including issues related to financing of the park, it was **MOVED and SECONDED** (Colvin Roy abstaining) **to support the vision of this project with the caveat that actual design configuration and programming of the park would include a study of the street closures.**

4.0 Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority Progress Report – Michele Kelm-Helgen said they are continuing to work with city staff and have had several good productive meetings on the exterior design and landscaping. Final approval dates have been sent to the city and a new schedule will be available shortly. She is continuing to do a lot of public presentations in the metro area, and will be announcing some dates for presentations in Greater Minnesota.

They have received three proposals on the parking RFP; only one met all of the outlined requirements. This is a complex project, but it will be worth it in the end. By the end of July they will call a special meeting to vote on the proposals.

They will be hiring an Equity Director, which will help in the programming process. Businesses and contractors are inquiring about bid packages; Mortenson is working on developing them. The Stadium Equity Oversight group will be assembled by September.

5.0 Draft Staff Recommendation – Schematic Design – Hilary Dvorak, Senior City Planner, explained that the staff recommendations will be developed over the next two to three meetings. The document she distributed is the beginning of a draft recommendation that the Implementation Committee will take action on and forward on the City Planning Commission and City Council, probably at the end of July. The recommendation begins with the background

of how the group came to be, its formation, synopsis of the first meeting, and adoption of vision and principles. Dvorak then walked through the staff's draft response as to how the design reflects the building design principles. In future meetings the committee will review the staff's draft responses to site design and sustainable design principles as well as the planning principles. The Implementation Committee was not asked to take any action at this meeting; its task is to think about and discuss these items from meeting to meeting using this first draft as a template.

Exhibit C2 – Renderings show the front of the building on the west side, facing the plaza. Situated on 2.7 acres, flanked on both sides by trees. There will be five 90-foot doors that open to plaza; 270 foot prow. There will be a team store on this end of the building, possibly two stories with access from upper levels. They are considering a restaurant to draw people on non-game days. The east (back) side is designed for functional purposes. There will be a series of stairs and/or switchback ramp from 11th Avenue. There will also be surface parking (190 spaces) for players and coaches.

Exhibit B – East entrance will be screened for security purposes. Landscaping materials will be used to help screen the parking lot on 6th Street. Media trucks for high-profile games will use the media, which will have boxes for electrical hookups to avoid cables being strewn across the road. The number of curb cuts along 6th Street brings safety concerns for pedestrians and bicyclists; conversations with the City, architects and MSFA to address these concerns are ongoing.

Committee members had the following questions and comments:

- Wilson, citing Tom Oslund's statement that the actual surfaces of the plaza and parking lot will be impermeable, asked if there were any staff recommendations. Dvorak replied that they are still working on that design, considering if they can do something other than laying 2.7 acres of concrete. The parking lot is asphalt. Colvin Roy, conferring with Jeff Handeland, Project Engineer with the City, reported that the Mississippi Water Management Organization might fund storm water management above and beyond what the City ordinance has required.
- Fisher asked where the skyways came into the building, and what impact that would have on landscaping. Dvorak indicated where the skyway access points were from the McClellan Ramp, adding that they are still being worked on; another skyway will connect to the 1010 Ramp.
- Mellblom expressed concern about the design of 6th Street (south side of stadium), with 2-way traffic and bike lanes. He said the city seems set on contra-flow, and wondered why. As a pedestrian he believes that it is very unsafe, and adding bicycle lanes will make it more so. He would like to see it made more pedestrian-friendly. Fisher agreed with Mellblom, adding that with traffic moving both ways it would be very unsafe; people don't know where to look. Dvorak responded that a final decision on where traffic lights would be located hasn't been reached. The number of lanes on 5th and 6th Streets will be reduced, but it's important to maintain access to downtown properties and potential future development on westbound 6th Street. They are looking at a different altitude for bike path locations.

- In response to Hewitt's question about bike parking, Dvorak said that there will be room for 300 bicycles, and that could go up to 500. Wilson asked why bike parking had to be done on site, and wondered if it could be located in parking ramps.
- Fisher questioned whether or not the light rail station is within the boundaries, and said it is wholly inadequate as a main transfer point. Wilson also wondered if the station is within the purview of MSFA and wondered if there were any proposed changes. Dvorak said they are hoping to bring Metro Transit and the Design Team together to discuss this. Nacho Diaz said they have had several meetings on Metro Transit's preliminary concept to modify the station, but he believes it will not be used as much as people think. They will share this information with MSFA by the end of next week (June 21) and will start talking about what is consistent with the vision for the plaza, how it's done and who pays. Peter McLaughlin said there should be more capacity for queuing toward downtown. Fisher disagreed with Diaz' statement on usage, citing the number of University students and St. Paul residents who will be using LRT more when the Central Corridor comes online. Wilson suggested that there be more follow-up on this topic at future meetings.

6.0 Next Steps – Wilson asked Dvorak to outline the process for presentation and discussion over the next several meetings:

- June 27 – Draft response to site/plaza and sustainability design principles
- July 18 – Draft response to planning principles (neighborhood, transportation, region)
- July 25 – Recommendation of the Implementation Committee on how the design responds to all principles (Design: building, site, sustainability; Planning: neighborhood, transportation, region) to be finalized and forwarded on the City Planning Commission and City Council.

7.0 Adjournment – 6:02 p.m.

8.0 Next Meeting – Thursday, June 27, 4-6 p.m. in Room 333 City Hall