

PAC Steering Committee

City Hall Room 208

March 6, 2019

Room 208

Draft – Unapproved Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 5:09 p.m.

Present: Tracy Hall, Brandon Laws, Maryann Melizzi-Golja, Mayor Jim Donchess, Trish Klee, Marylou Blaisdell, Judy Carlson, Tim Cummings

Absent Member: Rich Lannon, Mark Thayer, Lindsay Rinaldi, Lori Wilshire

Updates:

Tim Cummings received the presentation of meeting four and will send to all committee members. The goal this evening is to get some direction relative to seating and have a discussion on the **façade/exterior** and the massing to hear the positive comments which will be relayed to the design team in the morning.

A question was asked as to when a more polished rendering will be received. Mr. Cummings believed it will be the last week in March. This is a big concern for the Capital Campaign Committee. They need to get a finalized exterior rendering.

At the last meeting, Mr. Cummings stated they did a Technical Subcommittee update. Discussed was the meeting purpose, decisions needed, narrative, site utilities and more emphasis on telescopic seating, stage and orchestra level, partier, and the balcony floor layout, and next steps. The Technical Subcommittee advised that they are working, developed a good rapport, and another meeting is scheduled in a few weeks and will be looking to put together an inventory of associated costs.

Next is a discussion on the exterior. Tim Cummings asked everyone to pass in their homework assignments. The goal was to talk about positive attributes, characteristics that you like, and highlight a particular **façade**, design, or exterior that you want to have the designers focus on. Next was the site. The big issue is utilities and how the site work will be handled on Pearl Street and the rear of the building. Another was how to handle loading, seating and preference on curved or telescopic. The designers said the price differential is approximately \$50,000; \$445,000 for straight seating; \$481,000 for curved seating. An issued was raised if there was a loss of space if the seating was oriented in a certain way and you'd get better sight lines if curved and less obstruction. Diagrams were shown of the layout of the floors. There was a natural inclination of the group to orient themselves with B and C but nothing definitive was decided. We're on time and we're trying to make the schematic design level decisions by mid-April. The design team has asked to give definitive direction in terms of seating which will dictate the design moving forward and have a conversation to develop consensus relative to the exterior and the massing.

Tim indicated the need to talk about the budget. We won't have real numbers until we get to schematic design. Until then, we're plugging numbers in and guessing. As a reminder, the Dunkin Web report called for construction of \$11.5 million, soft costs of \$1 million, theater and AV at \$950,000, FF&E at \$100,000, land at \$2 million with an approximate \$15.5 million budget. This was pre-new market tax credit and pre-capital campaign funding. At 201 Main Street, we could produce a performing arts center that could get us 750 seats, 1,000 plus or 550 tables and chairs.

Revenue. If we took advantage of what's been fully authorized here \$15.5 million, new market tax credit at about 5.2, Capital Campaign Committee has done a feasibility study and they believe there's confidence to raise \$2.5 million. If we fell short or set a conservative budget number of \$15 million, 4.2, and \$2 million, you'd have an approximate budget of \$21.2 million. The hard construction number was bumped up to \$13.5 million to have a conversation as to is that an appropriate number. To do the curvature, it is a very expensive proposition. Property acquisition is \$2 million. Design was bumped up to \$2 million. AV and technical systems at \$1 million. FF&E at \$1 million. A couple of reserves were put in because we need to have an endowment fund as well as it's good to carry a contingency. We're looking at a \$21 million project. Between 18 and 19 is the construction and soft costs.

A question was asked about the curvature and glass being expensive stating that there are other alternatives of medium that can be used.

Lindsay asked to add another line item that is separate contingency. Right now the contingency is part of the endowment fund. That's not a good choice. Is the reserve a contingency for these things? Tim said yes. A member said we cannot go into the endowment for reserves.

A concern was raised that the capital campaign and public numbers and that we've been using are nowhere near \$21 million and that we'll face some legitimate questions from those we are reaching out to for support for the project in general and financial support. What has been widely referred to as a \$15 million project is now a \$21 million project. That's a big increase.

Another member stated that the endowment was brought up in meetings and the conversation went as we don't need that big of an endowment. We still have to raise the \$4 million by March of next year but it doesn't have to be an endowment. We all must be very cognizant of the fact that we have been talking about a certain set of numbers in what the capital campaign has been talking to with perspective donors and the information put out in the public and that's not that set of numbers.

Maryann Melizzi-Golja asked if all the members could get the material from the capital campaign. She thought very early on they talked about a \$15.5 million bond, we were talking about at some point some of the funds that were being raised offsetting that so we wouldn't need to let the full \$15.5 million. Where are we with all of that? Tim Cummings said you are absolutely right. The question is are you comfortable with only spending 15 of the 15.5. Maryann said we were using some of this money to buy the bond down to offset what we were really actually going to have to let as a bond. We need to be clear and up front about the fact that we've put it out there and it's been out there publicly. Mr. Cummings said it has been talked about but there has been no number discussed. He would recommend 15 and try to hold back \$500,000. He wants to deliver the project that folks are looking for and doesn't want to handcuff us.

Trish Klee noted the first time she heard of the pay down on the bond was when they discussed the New Market Credit at the Board of Aldermen meeting. Every time she brought up the \$15.5 million and going over that with Betsy, she was under the impression that they were raising more than the original \$4 million. In seeing the \$1.2 million in the endowment, she thought part of it was reduced because we didn't need it because of Mr. Lowry. When she talks to constituents the one promise she makes them is that bond will not be bigger than \$15.5 million.

Mayor Donchess indicated we're talking about a hypothetical set of numbers. Rather than debate, we should wait until we get cost figures. The architects keep saying they can deliver this for \$11.5 million.

Tracy's concern is that we're being asked to make decisions especially if exterior is discussed tonight and massing. We heard somewhat may carry a significant price tag. If we postpone making those decisions until we know what the status of the New Market Tax Credits is, which is bigger than the endowment, we are making design decisions that have financial implications without knowing whether or not the money that we are planning to spend for those add ons will exist.

Mayor Donchess stated the way it is structure now without the bond issue and the New Market Tax Credit, we will not meet the conditions necessary to move forward.

Brett agreed when looking at the design that bells and whistles should be avoided because of the cost. Certain decisions would have to be made to allow the architect to do the design and the construction manager to price it out. Two things – 1) we want to do this right. If we can't afford to do it right, then maybe we shouldn't do it at all. If we're going to cut things that are going to make this much less attractive/much less usable, then that's a problem. If we do it, we do it right and see how much that costs.

Tim Cummings said part of the problem with the construction manager is the power lines on both sides of the building are going to be moved. The question is whose paying for that. Tracy said this is required. Curbing the front of the building isn't required. Utility poles required. Comfortable seating with sight lines so it's a good experience for the audience, that's a requirement. The more aesthetical items on the outside which will cost a lot of money is where she sees the budget increasing without a demonstrable difference in the experience of a theater goer.

It was noted that Michael Buckley was here last meeting and as a downtown patron he thinks this building out to stand out coming down Main Street.

Mayor Donchess said the architect has stated over and over we know we have to deliver this within budget. They have assured us that they think they can deliver this on budget.

Tim Cummings explained slides B and C. The goal tonight was to remind everyone about the different budget numbers and re-orientate to the general pathway forward because a decision needs to be made tonight about seating. There are two goals tonight about the seating and whether there's a comfort level to tell the architect that we are interested in the curved seating. This will dictate other design decisions. The number was much lower than anticipated. The architects believe that the AV and FF&E which we projected at approximately \$2 million will be coming in what they believe around \$2 – \$2.3 million which includes the curved seating at \$480,000. The takeaway is price neutral for curved to straight.

Trish Klee indicated she preferred curved seating.

Maryann Melizzi-Golja going with the curved will be as comfortable and sight lines are of major importance. It gives the space a nicer look.

Marylou said in the fundraising we haven't drilled down to this point yet of selling seats. We can easily sell a seat for \$1,000 and pay for that.

Rick was 100 percent on board with curved seating.

MOTION BY MARYANN MELIZZI-GOLJA, SECONDED BY JUDY CARLSON, THAT WE GO WITH THE CURVED SEATING WITH THE PROJECTED BUDGET OF \$481,022

ON THE QUESTION

Rick stated in his travels the curved seating gives you the impression you're in a theater. I don't like the impression I'm in a gymnasium. If we're going to spend this kind of money and have a performing arts center, we ought to make it look like it's the real deal.

Lindsay also stated she was in favor of curved seating noting that there's not a lot of budget differentiation. These aren't all the seats, right? There's additional seating budget for the other 300 some odd seats that we need to keep into consideration. 481 isn't the total number for all the seats. Tracy indicated floor seating only. Lindsay asked is there a brand or quality difference between the eligible seats that we can buy for curved versus straight. The answer was they discussed that and said it was very similar. The same seats. Lindsay asked what's the difference in quality between the seats that are available within this model versus the ones on the partier or the balcony. Tim said the same. Partier he didn't know because that discussion hadn't happen yet but the balcony will be the same seats but fixed. The fixed seating for 350 is going to cost approximately \$122,000.

Lindsay also asked just because the seat is curved doesn't mean that the wall they recess into has to be curved is that correct? Trish indicated it goes flush. Lindsay noted in the past they have shown it as a curved wall and a straight wall. She wanted to make sure by making one decision we weren't tied to this has to then be a curved wall. Trish Klee noted on the addition in the center they were talking about doing curved and said they would try to mimic some of the curve on the inside. Tim said he would double check.

Maryann Melizzi-Golja asked what do we lose in terms of storage in packing them back in and the storage from the curve. Are we losing some floor space? Tim didn't know if the curved wall was necessary.

Mayor Donchess asked do you have reservations about a curved wall in the back. Lindsay said if we can afford it. Her understanding so far is that curves are generally more expensive. She didn't want to put us on that track unless we could see it outright. If there's supposed to be a trend from the inside wall to the outside of the building if that's something that would

mean success, then we'd want to be aware of that now. She didn't see it necessary to the success of the building to have curves on the outside. She was just trying to get continuity to the flow for when people come in. Tim Cummings indicated that the exterior walls do not need to be curved.

Male member noted the other key thing is if you give them a budget to design of \$11.2 million, that's what the design will reflect that cost. Working with a construction manager who has to build it. If you say 11.2 is your budget, whatever they're showing you has to fit into that 11.2. Also it was brought up last week that they have human factors engineer that's working on their staff as far as leg room, sight lines, space.

Tracy asked is there enough concern about the impact of the curved seating on walls that we want to make that part of the motion or are we comfortable. So there's not enough concern.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Exterior massing. Tim Cummings asked for comments on what was liked and what they didn't like. We'll start with the massings and then transition to the exterior expressions.

Likes:

Trish – liked B (first choice) – the tower as it make the corner round and would limit to glass; liked C but preferred B over C. Comments are predicated on the true costs of the massing.

Jim – preferred B and C because they made a more dramatic point of the corner and they connect Main more with Pearl. If it added millions to the cost, then go with A.

Maryann – like the idea of lighting up that corner in some way. Thought that glass façade on the corner may look like it's been pasted on the building and not integrated into the building. C – liked the fact that there is glass going around Pearl Street so you get the sense of light and not curve the top and keep the box straight. Look at something with screening and lighting to enhance that structure up top so it has a presence and more integrated into the rooftop design. Thought it was important to have the flow of glass around the building to make your eye go down Pearl or from Pearl onto Main. She like C better with the curve gone on the box and make it straight and make the rooftop integrated with the building.

Lindsay – was happy to go with whatever is budget friendly. Is there a way that the design could be adjusted so you get the same height differentiation between the front portion and where Alec Shoe Store is? Did see where the rooftop was fully defined but could be easily. Add public art against the boxes instead of the curved approach. When it comes to finishes, this building is going to stand out no matter what. The marquis could tie up around the corner. Thought that having the opportunity on the sides of the building on West Pearl to hang banners and light them would bring the same kind of energy and would be cheaper. Preference is A.

Brandon? – liked B and instead of having the building be curved and the tower be rectangular, have the building rectangular because it's cheaper and have the tower curved. Thought A would be the wiser bet and timeless. No C.

Tracy – liked B and didn't like C. Fine with A. The difference comes down to how much more expensive it is to have a partial curve which she liked. Tower could become outside greenery, behind a marquis, functional space for service for the terrace area.

Judy – liked B. It brings the tower section up to the level of the bank next door and fits with the architecture going down Main Street. The glass is important around the base as there's glass in the back of the building and important to see people inside. Didn't make a difference if it was curved or straight on the outside. Gives definition to the patio area.

Marylou – Liked C. It's an updated and modern feeling, the heights as outlined fits. Didn't like B but could accept A.

Jim – Worried about what Lindsay's suggested – make it more classic.

Tracy – Things she liked were the bright red letters on the building because they were starkly modern. They were classic and clean and felt like they would still fit with the overall look and feel of downtown. The mesh over the front or the sheer glass, those felt more dated. The one that was classic and clean was the one that Lindsay pointed to that has the banners out front.

Trish liked the one that read “art house” because it had a little bit of glass without being too modern and was classic.

Judy thought it should fit into downtown and not so modern that it’s going to stand out. It should stand the test of time so in 20 years we’re not going to say we made a mistake. Like the tower because it would bring visual up the level. Glass above the ground is unnecessary but thought on the lower level important because it will draw people in.

Rick – didn’t like the mesh or the banners. Pointed out there was too much glass. Glass on the first floor and including and going down Pearl Street to light of the corridor for two reason: 1) to light it up, 2) people will be coming in from the parking garage and you need that lite. Art can be displayed. Preference was B. Can live with C but too much glass. Preferred square rather than round. Liked A but too boxy.

Maryann thought both sides should be lit, buildings need to be integrated, a square entry on the corner is going to keep the lobby space big.

Brandon thought the façade and the banners could be done cheaply using LED lighting and projection.

Lindsay piggybacked on what Judy said about seeing if we could throw to the designers using the older building as the inspiration and tie that forward. Would love to see what they come up with. Chose the art house with glass on the bottom as it reminded her of 100 Main Street.

Discuss with the designer and note the key items – overhang, glass bottom, etc. and how would they design that.

Operations Update. Tim handed out a draft MOA entering into with Spectacle Management. It will be submitted to the Finance Committee for approval.

The overall plan is to have a private nonprofit overseeing the performing arts center, stewarding the building, and having the service contract directly work for that private nonprofit on behalf of the City. Starting the incorporation of that private nonprofit needs to occur. Names suggested to be on the Board: Director of Economic Development, Rich Lannon, Lisa Bissonnette, Judy Carlson, Deb Novatny, Marylou Blaisdell, Jay Minkarah. These are the folks who have been at the very beginning of this be the incorporators and then continue to build out the Board of Directors of approximately 11 members to oversee the service contract.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE AND SECONDED BY MARYANN MELIZZI-GOLJA
MOTION CARRIED**

Adjourned at 6:57 p.m.