

PAC Steering Committee

City Hall Room 208

March 20, 2019

Room 208

Draft – Unapproved Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 5:06 p.m.

Present: Lori Wilshire, Judy Carlson, Rich Lannon, Tracy Hall, Brandon Laws, Tim Cummings, Maryann Melizzi-Golja

Absent Member: Lindsay Rinaldi, Marylou Blaisdell, Trish Klee, Mark Thayer, Mayor Jim Donchess

General Highlights of Meeting:

- Overview of Floor Plan Based on Feedback

The updated plan is reviewed on slides showing the differences. A question was asked about the ceiling height. The height as of right now is just over 8 feet. A concern of the architect that was flagged is after the mechanical, duct work, etc. is done, the height may be a little less than 8 feet. Another issue on the basement level is that the area might not be a complete square. The trap room communal dressing room, and back of the house are substantially similar as to what was discussed last Wednesday.

Bob strongly felt that if the theater is properly designed, you don't need a shell. For the instances where you might need a shell, the Symphony owns high-quality shells which could be available for little cost.

Something to be aware of – the vestibule is now cornered so it may affect the basement level. A concern was brought up about the stairway seemed narrow and small to have a lot of people going in two different directions at different times. Bob indicated that most of the seating is on the ground floor. A member noted it is code driven. Another stated you want to have the stage as have as big a visual impact as possible. It was noted to have a larger opening in the proscenium especially if you're using it for other things.

A question was asked if a conversation was had relative to the staircase. The response was it was discussed last week. The comment was seeing if it could continue down to the basement. Someone asked about the cost factor as that's a bigger deal. Is the cost factor appropriately prioritized with other than visual? Alderman Melizzi-Golja said there were staircases in the front also. Someone else commented part of it was the reconfiguration around the elevator. It gave more room in the front by pushing the staircases back. It was noted that with the grand staircase we lose lobby space. The points were well taken and it's been flagged for both the cost issue and code issue that the group is going to have to come to a consensus on.

A question was posed 20 years from now do you think there's a better chance that we're going to look at a staircase in the middle of the room and say that was a terrible idea or have staircases on the side of the room. Tim thought it goes to the overall aesthetic that you're trying to achieve. If it looks out of place because it doesn't conform with the rest of the theme or the brand you're going for, then the answer could be yes. We're going to need to flush that out and that's going to be a conversation later on today.

Alderman Melizzi-Golja asked in terms of the lobby space, when Peter was here I don't remember him having any concerns. We were looking at that whole area that says "support staff and concessions" and were talking about people coming from the entry which has been moved over to the box office and the main entrance. It was talked about in depth. When he looked at it, he was pretty comfortable.

A member loved the idea of moving the wall 4 to 5 feet in off of West Pearl Street to make the sidewalk bigger. However, he personally liked the idea of it being cost effective. You'll gain space and you'll have a covered walkway in bad weather. Tim noted he'd ask that question and see what they say. Alderman Melizzi-Golja indicated they also talked about if the marquee

was integrated and went partially around Pearl Street. Another member said it goes back to how much lobby space do you really use if you're using the angle. Alderman Melizzi-Golja asked if Peter had any comments about how the angle is going to reduce the capacity of the lobby. Tim said it has not come up yet.

Mr. Cummings went over the slides relative to the layout. The bathrooms were flipped around to make it flow better. Then went over the top and fourth level. He was still trying to understand how people are going to access the catwalks. It was made clear that we wanted to have a bathroom on every floor. He had a two hour meeting with Harvey Construction and the architect team this morning to go over various details. The genesis of the meeting was in preparation for next week's meeting on the financing and the New Market Tax Credit.

Operations update. Tim stated he had legal counsel and outside legal counsel on board for the New Market Tax Credit. The attorney asked to put on hold the nonprofit we're looking to create because there may be an efficiency of only needing to create two nonprofits and not three. It will make things seamless. He was hoping to have guidance from the attorney in the next two weeks because they needed to formalize the legal entities for the New Market Tax Credit which will save some money and make it more efficient. Pete Lailey has reviewed the Memorandum of Agreement this group looked at two Wednesdays ago. He's 100 percent on board with it and sent a confirming e-mail. It needs to be submitted to Finance for the April 3rd meeting. Similarly with the Fiscal Agent Agreement but will need Board of Aldermen approval in case we receive a gift of over \$1 million.

Financing Plan. Tim had a conversation with Betsy and she did confirm that we're on the same page. The group is going to need to decide how much you want to spend on construction, similarly with the theater, and FF&E. There's a \$900,000 difference. It was noted that the Mayor made a good point the last time we got together and said it was too early to have any substantial conversations because we don't know. Tim needed the group to understand on the flip side that we have construction managers, architects, and consultants on board who do this for a living that are saying we don't know yet but know enough to tell you you're in the game or not in the game.

Other than being conservative, a member asked the \$2.1 million difference in the construction what is the big driver of that difference? Tim said the feedback he got today is 90 percent of the project costs of the building is going to be structural and what goes into it from a foundation and building up the walls. The design team has outlined an opinion in that the Main Street wall and the Pearl Street wall need to come down. That could be a lot of the cost. If it is preserved and maintained, that cost goes down. He's also been told that no matter what we're building a structure within side a structure. Even if the walls do stay up, they will be supported by a structure behind it. The question is where is the savings if you keep the wall because the wall is then just aesthetic. We don't have answers to the questions but it's what is driving a lot of the project costs.

New Market Tax Credits update. Tim noted there's two big meetings next week: one with a CDE coming to Nashua to tour the facility; another with a potential investor who would buy the credits. No commitments have been given but they are good meetings to have. If we did receive an award, the award wouldn't come until mid to late July. The cash wouldn't come for 10 weeks after that. One of the biggest hurdles is the group who does commit to us needs to be comfortable that we are substantially far enough along in the design process that they're willing to make a commitment to us. We need to be showing a good faith effort that we're getting this done. These three variables have led to a change in the timeline but all acceptable.

Private capital financing update. Tim wasn't privy to all the conversations. The group is meeting regularly and everyone is working hard. He and the Mayor are going out and meeting with differing local stakeholders to make them aware of the project. The group is raising money and has either pledged or has in their bank account good receipts. Bob noted that we're holding back on some viable sponsorships because they're asking about design pictures. Tim noted the timeline the 27th is an important meeting. It will solidify the exterior design. The architectural group will be able to produce renderings of certain caliber that the Capital Campaign Committee can use. Within a week or so after the 27th, there should be no excuse for the Capital Campaign Committee not to have the visuals needed. Three options will be presented on the 27th to choose from. Following that, a week or so, you'll have the cost estimates to go along with that. April 7th is the date to have everything in terms of cost and exterior.

Tim wanted to discuss tradeoffs. A member asked the group to come to an agreement about what the most important things are such as the stairway. There may be a cost associated with it. When we make the tradeoffs is visual aesthetics the number

one thing we're going to look at when making the trade off? Cost? Audience comfort? Is it performance, performers, experience, or what they need? There are different ways that can be looked at and ranked. It would be helpful to have a conversation about what those are and come to an agreement.

Another member wanted to take a look at what are the most important things we've always said the bathrooms and comfortable seats are number one and number two. We've always said we want to do it on the ground floor so they can ship in and ship out and want to come and use it.

Tim noted his goal was to ask everyone for one value on how you'd look at prioritizing this project and use that as background to guide us in developing the lens in which we would view this as decision will need to be made. We all agree that we are fiscally conscious. The following are what members wanted: audience experience; artist experience, good sound and lighting, something to make it memorable, comfortable seating, fiscal responsibility, open space, visual experience, and beautiful building for downtown looking at Main Street.

Tim showed the committee different aesthetics at different theaters. One theater they looked at was in Athens, Georgia. A member wanted the theater to be clean, classic and not overly ornate, stylish. The interior should feel like they belong together. One liked concrete floors. Another commented that concrete floors are not a positive for events because they are hard on your feet and they're a noise issue. One like the combination of wood and metal railings. Tim commented on why you do curtains is they don't have a lot of money to spend on budget and it's a budget conscious solution to break it up. Another theater that the committee liked was the Brooklyn Theater. The committee agreed that the number one way to make money is to sell alcohol.

A committee member asked if the architects would like to incorporate sculptures into the building. Another member noted if they did have a rooftop terrace having a piece of sculpture as part the outside visual would be neat. There would be no cost except for installing it. The criteria would be the weight, how does it work, depth, etc. Tim asked where they would be located. A member said exterior. Tim asked in the gallery or not in the gallery space. The committee said outside and something that enhances the visual attraction of the building.

Tim thought the committee needed to discuss programming the gallery space.

(the tape ended)

**MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE AND SECONDED
MOTION CARRIED**

Adjourned at 6:28 p.m.