

## **PAC Steering Committee**

City Hall Room 208

October 22, 2018

Room 208

Draft – Unapproved Minutes

**Meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Brian McCarthy**

**Present:** Tracy Hall, Maryann Melizzi-Golja, Lindsay Rinaldi, Judy Carlson, Trish Klee, Brian McCarthy, Jim Donchess, Rich Lannon, Tim Cummings

### **General Highlights of Meeting:**

#### Interviews with potential architects and construction managers

An introduction was given from all of the members present.

An introduction was made from the following businesses: KMW Architecture; Centex; Fischer Dax, Measure of Structural Engineers.

Bruce Wood gave a detailed history of KMW Architectures, introduced his team, and listed nearby projects they worked on. Mr. Wood explained what work would need to be done, approved the site location and discussed funding. Noted the City's top priorities are to make it financially feasible as a project. Based on all the materials presented, they identified the following key issues: structural challenge, code issues, cost, flexibility of building, acoustic separation, seating, nature of theater, what kind of lighting grid, and visibility from the street. Bruce's big item for them was how things are moved, how do they span the roof, access to back of building, mezzanine, difficulties with working with a flat floor and creating a stage. Discussed how the inside of the building could be configured and potential first floor performance area. Stated the City wants both theater space and fixed and flexible and will be an interesting study on how you land between the two in terms of manpower, equipment, and machines. Layout of the theater in Stowe was shown and discussed. To recap, Bruce thought the basic proposal was good; the challenges are cost, the structure is important, and how does that ripple through the numbers.

Bill thought the structure should be the first discussion held with how the theater plays out and what you have for an existing building. The following options were decided that should be studied early on: span to this wall or the outside wall, make assumptions on the foundation, and put together some schemes to price. Bruce noted they need to look at the foundation right away to find out right up front and if they're not doing it the right way, we should change direction right now before they get further into the project. Again he stated that they don't have specialists in their office. They work with Fischer Dax who is focused and current on things. Bruce noted they're trying to demonstrate the process.

Mayor Donchess asked if the theater were on the first floor, would the project become easier from an architectural point of view and would it save costs. Bill thought it would be a different project and couldn't give a cost.

Mayor Donchess asked would it add cost to raise the '60s building, use the 19<sup>th</sup> Century building, and build a new structure at the corner instead of the '60s. Bruce indicated he would draw a diagram and have Seamus get an estimate which is typically between \$500 to \$1,000 per square foot.

Mayor Donchess then asked if it would be better and save money or more expensive to start all over. Bill indicated by the time changes are done if the changes are so severe one might question why not just raise the building and build new. It's a process. When done, Bruce had said the estimate will prove that it's probably a wash. If it's close, always go with the new because you're controlling everything. A concept estimate was recommended.

Judge discussed renovations, new theaters, quality of the theater. He believe that a new theater would be better as you can do exactly what you want. The question is what the retail is going to be and the acoustics.

Brian McCarthy asked about a mezzanine supported by columns front and back and asked if there was an opportunity to reduce the spans to support on the roof and reduce costs. Bill indicated he'd put the cost towards cutting the columns out to create a new roof span and not incorporate another cost structure in a floor. Discussed building a new structure over at the higher elevation and take everything out from underneath. If you buy everything new, you bring it in with a crane. Mr. McCarthy's concern was with buildings built in the '60s which are deficient in snow load design for the roof. Bruce noted there's arguments both ways on whether it's a new build or renovation. It was suggested to start with the financial one and decide what you want to get out of this and include the life span.

Lindsay asked how many other major building projects the team would be focusing on during the same time frame as the City's. Bruce indicated worst case two. They tend to not take on more work than they can do.

Rich liked the idea of having flex seating and main floor perfectly flat with a raised stage but asked what was easier. It was suggested to look into the Moses Brown to see what the machines cost, how they operate, and what level of skill needed. If you're starting with a flat floor and you want flexible use including things such as banquets and parties, stay with a flat floor. Different kinds of flexibility and cost was discussed.

Trish asked if going with raising the building would the cost estimates take into consideration demolition, etc. of the building and what's the timeframe. In the document it stated 20 to 24 months. Bruce made two versions of the estimate and stated it would take 24 months for construction. Demolition was cheap but was dependent on hazmat. Bill noted demolition wouldn't increase the time of the project.

In a job this size, Brian McCarthy asked what the typical experience was with RFIs and change orders. Bruce indicated CM was better as you pay more in the beginning but not in the end. Daily discussions are held as well as staying ahead of the urgent items. Mr. McCarthy's experience showed the quality of the drawings determines the happiness of the overall project at the end. Bruce indicated they don't have contractors claiming there's any issues producing RFIs as they engage in the construction directly and are on site.

Lindsay asked what aspect of the design yields the best return on investment and what is suggested the City invest in for our particular building. Bruce indicated the group/people define the success of the project – typically more seats is not it. Programming and schematic design is where you depth the parameters of what the project is. Options are where you set what the building will be.

Brian McCarthy asked about litigation history. Bruce indicated they've been sued once in 50 years. They were part of a joint venture for a court house for things to do with construction that they were not involved in. They have paid on occasion for things that were done wrong but they volunteered to pay for it but they

do have insurance. They produce durable buildings so they don't have after the fact issues. A more in depth discussion ensued over the Charlotte project.

The interview ended with KMW Architecture.

Brian McCarthy called the meeting back to order at 8:26 p.m. There was an introduction of the members of the committee as well as the following company to be interviewed: Guido Hartray with Marvel Architects; Melissa Soe, Partner at Marvel Architects; Jonathan Marvel, Founding Principle; Caroline France, Architectural Designer at Marvel Architects; Scott LeClaire, Partner with Fitzmyer and Tocci Engineers.

Jonathan Marvel introduced himself and told the committee about himself and the company. They focus on public spaces. They're an option based studio and believe in team dynamics. They are budget and schedule driven with concept. Jonathan spoke of six projects and the relevance to the City's project. Specifically New Jersey Institute of Technology, New Lab in Brooklyn Navy yard, Anchorage of the Manhattan Bridge in Dumbo. Also discussed food and beverage and believed it's a year round experience with a performing arts center. Described why theater is a beacon for the city. Believed in a community base practice and talked about their designs in Puerto Rico. Thought Main Street should be celebrated for its collection of architecture.

Caroline France discussed herself and her personal history growing up in Nashua.

Melissa Soe focused and discussed two similar projects – Saint Anne's Warehouse; TheatreSquare in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Mr. Hartray indicated they work with existing buildings, understand its fabric, understand how they can polish parts of it, and how they can effectively modify it where we need to modify it. Noted Main and Pearl are vital streets and a place to put a mark in Nashua. There are functional challenges. Thought Pearl Street is where it needs to come together with the possibility of the entrance off Pearl Street. Discussed what kind of structure to achieve inside the building and compared the structural differences between TheatreSquared and Saint Anne's Warehouse to Nashua. Talked about different options for the building – build theater at grade on Main Street; create a hybrid where it becomes a split level for smaller retail and restaurant.

Rich asked if there was a potential of tearing down Alec Shoe building and building new. Jonathan thought going with the more intensive option essentially you're building new.

Melissa stated there's a budget to the project and the real consideration of whether to keep or take down the building and build a new building. Indicated there could be a lot to be gained by keeping the existing structure and going with a simpler scheme. Guido advised it depended upon if the committee wanted to recycle an existing building.

Tim asked how they would handle being in New York, and having a client in Fayetteville, and how they'd approach it logistically with the City of Nashua. Melissa stated they become partners with their clients and are at the job quite often and use video conferencing. Marvel wants to maintain the local connection and limit their projects. As the direction is set, things happen remotely with bi-weekly check ins. It makes them better architects to look at the country in a big picture.

Mayor Donchess felt that creating a theater that reaches out and interacts with the neighborhood and the downtown and brings people in is an exciting concept. Talked about the Palace Theater in Manchester. This opportunity open up possibilities of something grander. Donchess asked which concept would help to achieve the reaching out, drawing in, and interacting with the entire downtown. Would one work more

successfully that any of the others? Guido thought the fluidity of strolling into the theater was the simplest and has the most direct connection with Main Street. The question is how do you build in enough activity that there is something happening there when somebody is rehearsing for a show or setting up sets. Thought it needed to be flexible.

Speaker thought they should recycle because you get a lot more bang for your buck. By keeping the layout, it gives a lot of flexibility by having it be a front door to the theater. Noted the great canopy and beautiful light weight store front that you can see inside the space. It's an event/party space.

Brian McCarthy stated his concern with that proposal is not having retail on the first floor. Main Street is light on attractive uses next to the sidewalk. Concerned about not intensifying the sidewalk use at the same time of renovation. Jonathan thought there was a whole set of options between full second floor retail if businesses don't have to pay for space that's 100 feet deep. Retail has to be something that is creating an experience that people want to participate in. Relieving retail of a deep space can work well to support the activating retail in Nashua. Discussed other opportunities that engage the lower level.

Mayor Donchess noted the idea of smaller retail rings true as the smallest spaces are mostly occupied on Pearl and Main Streets such as a small boutique, martini bar, etc. The bigger spaces sit there indefinitely.

Tracy asked for feedback on flexible events. Would love to hold the Chamber's annual gala downtown. Asked if any of the configurations lend itself better or worse, for example, to accommodate 300 to 350 at round tables with chairs in this configuration or does something come off the table with different layouts. Architect thought they are quick on their feet because they think in numbers. Believed 5,000 square feet could accommodate those types of functions.

Speaker said they wanted to minimize the fixed rate. The key was a flat floor as it was hard on double level events space but it's the raked seating that's hard to get multi-purpose use out of. Melissa commented about the width.

Judy asked with this configuration where is the maximum seating for concerts, etc. Melissa thought if they did a balcony they could get in that 700 range but it would need to be studied. Without the balcony, closer to a 500 seat.

Lindsay asked what aspect of the design do you think yields the best return on investment and suggest what should be included in ours with that in mind. Speaker noted they wanted people to love the space and that would be your best return. Creating as many mixed uses, as much flexibility, and make it lovable so people come back over and over again. Caroline talked about when Saint Anne's opened. Said its creating space that's unique and providing something that other spaces don't have in the region.

Scott added there's also a cost to operate it which they need to be cognizant of as the City has a fixed amount of money to operate it and the manpower needed.

From another perspective, Caroline thought events like the Holiday Stroll creates a place where people can come back to and are memorable.

Brian McCarthy asked what do you expect to see for RFIs and change orders in the duration of the project. Guido noted the hidden conditions create change orders. The more discovery and probes, the more known about the building, recycling HVAC all represents money that's there that doesn't need to be spent again. Not knowing what's there is useful becomes the big ticket.

Melissa indicated where the CMs are brought on board early work through constructability issues, understanding the project are much smoother and result in a lot less change orders.

Caroline added being a New York based firm, the majority of their projects are renovations of existing work and challenges that come along with that.

Recommendation was to set aside a contingency of about 5 percent.

Mayor Donchess thought the point about creating space that is unique to the region will draw people back repeatedly is good and achievable.

Brian McCarthy asked to speak on their litigation history. Guido stated they are a 100 percent litigation free firm. Problems are worked through. Completely covered with liability insurance. There was a lawsuit that they won which was a payment issue and client withheld \$75,000 in fees. They have not been sued for any errors and omissions in damages.

Lindsay asked how many other major projects of this size and scope you would be working on simultaneously within the same time frame approximately. Guido stated they have a lot of other projects but a cultural project is different. This would be a priority.

Mayor Donchess noted there's one hotel near Saint Anne's Warehouse and asked if they designed the one hotel. Caroline said yes and Pier House that goes all along the waterfront.

Lindsay asked how could you use the space for live music in terms of rock concerts. Caroline indicated Saint Anne's has rock concerts and they open up the space for a standing configuration which can fit over 800 people.

Judy asked how does the flexibly seating work there and how much labor is involved every time you change it. Caroline stated its typical theater decking. The catwalk minimizes all of the overhead effort. Noted Charcoal Blue is their consulting partner in all the theater projects.

#### **MOTION BY TRISH KLEE TO ADJOURN**

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

Adjourned at 9:25 p.m.