

PAC Steering Committee

City Hall Room 208

October 25, 2018

Room 208

Draft – Unapproved Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Brian McCarthy

Present: Lindsay Rinaldi, Maryann Melizzi-Golja, 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 made from the following business: Elkus Manfredi Architects – Elizabeth Lowrey, Ross Cameron and Angela Chan.

An introduction was given from all of the members present.

Elizabeth Lowrey thanked the committee for allowing her company to attend the meeting and put together a presentation. Unfortunately David Manfredi couldn't attend tonight but if they get the project, this would be his project. Ms. Lowrey introduced the members of her team and each described their position - Ross Cameron and Angela Chan.

Ross Cameron thought the site the City chose was a great cultural arts anchor.

Elizabeth Lowrey thought it was all about the guest's perspective, and how they feel in the space, and get them to come back. Examples of their projects were discussed and how they transformed various buildings such as the Paramount Theater in Boston, Colonial Theater, Booth Theater for BU, Celtics lounge, New Brunswick, NJ, theater, etc. They do a lot of hospitality work, specifically for Disney. Cameron Ross noted performing arts center lobbies are a way to create memories. They plan the space so it acts as double duty so they can be rented out, and used for all kinds of acts, etc. Various projects were viewed and discussed how buildings were transformed into performing arts theaters and how they were similar to Nashua's building.

Ross Cameron discussed fundraising and said they do assist in gaining funds.

Trish Klee noted the comment about fundraising and visualization stating: "We propose an hourly upset limit giving the uncertain durations" and asked what is an upset limit? Mr. Cameron stated they would gage how much is spent on that effort and that sets the limit. The limit is not exceeded without approval and if the upset limit isn't used, it's only what is spent.

Lindsay asked how many other projects of this size and scope will they be working on in the same timeframe approximately. Ross stated Angela would be working on this project solely and he might have three or four. Elizabeth indicated they have no other big theater projects that they know of today. Everything that was shown is in construction administration.

Mayor Donchess stated the one thing they've discussed in the past is the two building facility – the 19th century building and the front building. There's a \$15.5 million budget. What are your thoughts on either improve the front building to create the theater or to raise it and build a new front portion of the facility? Ross stated when the look at how much work and effort would be needed in the front building, they would raise and build new. It would get you what you want, go quicker, less risk for unidentifiables, and do a pricing test. From a design perspective, Mayor Donchess thought build new in the front and Ross agreed from a design perspective.

Rich asked for an opinion from a construction standpoint of the cost. Ross Cameron stated they've saved a lot of buildings and it becomes more expensive to try and knit things together and add new functionality. One of the challenges is raising the roof and extending the columns which would require remedial measures to sure the walls and keep them from falling out when the roof goes up. Angela Chan stated it takes a lot of effort and time to make sure it doesn't fall over.

Maryann Melizzi-Golja asked what do you envision for street scape at the corner if they built new. Mr. Cameron thought the food and beverage retail could spill out onto Main Street. All of the storefront should be used for food and beverage for retail to maximize the income.

Alderman Melizzi-Golja asked about thoughts on the public garages. Ross thought you take a lesson from the past and that's what the marquee is doing. The more lights the better.

Rich asked if the main entrance was on the side street should the marquee should be on Main Street? What's your opinion? Ms. Lowrey thought you have to do both. You have to do lighting on the building and reach out towards the garages to make it closer and connect them.

Mayor Donchess asked what could you do to make this a place for people to visit in the off hours. Also having the theater on the first floor instead of the second it may interfere with the aesthetics of the building and the tenants aren't so great. What are your thoughts? Ross Cameron thought having a theater on the first floor is phenomenal because you'd need to be able to fit a piano in the elevator and ideally connected to a loading dock. There are functional aspects that make it key.

Lindsay asked if they were involved with the Colonial restoration from the beginning and were there hidden challenges that you solved. Ross stated the Colonial was in fairly good condition so a lot of it was decorative. The main thing changed was the stage rigging system. You can never know too much on an existing building before you start working on it.

Lindsay asked if they were able to start on budget. Mr. Cameron said they trended a little over.

Brian McCarthy asked on a project of this size what do you expect for volumes of RFIs and change orders. Ross said it was a tough question because it depended on the nature of the contractor. They anticipated around \$300 to \$400. In terms of change orders, a lot less if it were all new build as they'd be in control. Elizabeth stated they go above and beyond and put as much information as you could possible could as it's better to have more.

Judy asked if renovating the old building or building new how would you fit in everything that was talked about in a 700-750 seat theater and incorporate all the back of house things needed and how you would utilize the brick building next to it. Mr. Cameron explained the older building behind would house the ancillary space that you would need to support a performing arts center. For instance your box office support, different size changing rooms, storage, and costume. It will be a small span structured column.

Your costs will be your envelope costs, your structure, and whatever infrastructure and acoustics go into the space. Ms. Lowrey added they come with alternatives at every meeting to show the pros and cons.

Brian McCarthy asked about litigation past and present. Elizabeth stated they have very little legal. Their quality control systems are very good.

The interview ended with Elkus Manfredi Architects.

The next interview started with a new firm and introduced the team: Jonah Sacks of Centax; Tony Forman of Nextstage Design in New Haven, CT; Jason, Karen Greene, Jason Forney, and myself Scott from Bruner/Cott & Associates; Rich Roberts of Foley Buhl Roberts & Associates (Manchester, NH); Scott LeClair of Fitzmeyer & Tocci Mechanical Engineers; Bob Ulich of Everson Design Landscape Architect.

Jason Forney discussed the transformation of the two buildings and their projects they transformed. Karen Greene further described smaller scaled projects they completed. Noted there are a lot of opportunities at the corner site in Nashua.

Scott and Karen explained different transformational opportunities and what might happen on the site such as: raising the roof, opportunities for graphics and marquee at different scale, visible connections. In the feasibility study and what was budgeted at the time was to raise the entire footprint (10,000 square feet).

Tony Forman talked about shifting the raised roof portion to the northeast and preserved an L shaped stretch of low roof area at the elevation it is today. It will be a cost savings as well as preserve interior columns. Improvements and intent were discussed, different kinds of events that could be held. It was noted that a flat floor room is a money maker. The key is to be able to change the room over fast and with few people. More slides were shown of different footprints.

Jonah talked about connections with acoustical design and flexibility.

Karen Greene closed by talking about how to maximize the ground level if the theater is pulled up off the street by offering food and drink which brings Main Street in. Discussed how can we have performance outside of the performance hall and activate that corner too. Their goal is how to expand and extend the reach of the audiences.

Rich understood but asked that they're not expecting to keep residential in the performing arts center building. Tim Cummings explained to all the vendors and consultants that they have yet to make a formal decision on how they want to handle the residential. His expectation was the decision will come about through the design process and in the direction they want to go in. None of the apartments are under lease right now. They tenants were informed that they would be leaving but given a long window so they could make alternative arrangements.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja indicated she and Trish had a conversation about having the performers stay there or for offices.

Mayor Donchess asked 1) would it help to achieve the objectives if they had the option of tearing down the old building and building a new theater in the front and 2) what if the theater was on the first floor rather than putting it up above retail. Scott said you could remove the building and build new which would address the corner. His instinct was the cost benefit of saving the building is high. They feel that they could transform the sides of the building and there's material there that they can work with. The second question about bringing the theater to the ground floor, he thought they could do that and have seen it in other

places. Having a theater with closed off and opaque walls you miss out on the opportunity of engaging with the street scape.

They are surprised at how much capacity there is in the building. They gravitated toward that in the study was that it was very well maintained, large capacity in the basement and clean, footprint is 100 by 100. Mayor Donchess asked if the theater was on the second floor what would you do with the basement. Scott said there's a loading dock and elevator toward the back so the theater is dying for storage.

Lindsay asked how many other projects of this size and scope would the leads be working on at the same time as our project. Scott indicated only this one. They staff the projects appropriately and they make sure they're available to their clients at all times and talked about their focus and leadership teams.

Judy asked about the 700 to 750 seats. Scott said they tried to clarify that the 700 to 750 was a cocktail party or a rock concert where people were standing. He believed the seating capacity was targeted closer to the 500 seat level. There's a fundamental difference between a 500 seat theater, and a 700 seat theater, and a 750 seat theater for a fixed seating arrangement. With 500 seats, seats can be raised on a rake for proper sightlines. For 750 people, they would have to go higher and a bigger footprint.

Judy also asked with a combination of some seating and some standing for rock concerts would that bring it up to 700 to 750. It was answered any combination is going to produce seating and limit standing. You're not going to get to 750. Over 500 seating, it's a demarcation point of being able to turn the room around quickly and end up with a satisfactory performance space. Another indicated bringing the theater manager on board as they would have an intuitive understanding of how many people were attending each show and the revenue being generated from it.

Tim Cummings clarified that the feasibility study read it was 1,000 standing, 550 tables and chairs, and 500 fixed seats.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja thought early on in the process they were looking at 500 seated and maybe another 150 to 200 in the balcony. What are your thoughts about moving the theater to the first floor, raising the roof, and putting in the balcony and leaving it permanent seating? Scott said they can increase the capacity by a larger balcony and would require more height in the balcony.

Brian McCarthy asked is the balcony exclusive with using the second floor or can they get the theater on the second floor. Scott indicated the needed for creating the height was you need the volume for music. With the theater on the second floor, Mr. McCarthy commented you could have a mezzanine of 150 seats. How many seats are on the floor of the theater? Scott said the layout right now is about 300-350.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja clarified when talking about 500 seats, we are not seating just on the floor. We are talking combined. What would be needed for a larger number on the floor with the present footprint? The speaker indicated a number of things can be done such as making a smaller stage to get more seats, increasing the height to get more seats in the balcony, and decrease the stage side to side and put people on the sides. Scott noted to get more theater volume, you could increase the footprint and expand it.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja asked about if in the mezzanine would there be room to get rid of loose chairs and put tables in. Scott stated making it wide enough for a two or a four top and they'd have the room to do it but it reduces the capacity.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja asked what are you seeing in terms of connecting the outside with the parking lot, the garage, lighting, etc. Bob Ulich stated the side street sidewalk is narrow so they'd widen the street scape and make the pedestrian the priority, and make people safe.

Rich Lannon noted that going through the interview process it's been a split decision on whether to tear the building down and start new or to renovate. Scott thought it was based on people's experience. A process is being set up now which will be able to answer your questions much better. Jason added they've worked on both buildings where it was cheaper to remove the building and start over and others where it was cheaper to keep it. Rich Roberts thought if they build foundations inboard of the existing foundation wall, they'd use that as an earth retaining structure instead of temporary support which creates a lot of cost savings. New foundations and new columns will be needed and to put them inboard and into the basement gives them a working environment that's accessible and utilizes the existing building foundation as a retaining to separate and hold the street and the sidewalk in place. This same principle would work in a new structure or renovating the old.

Bob discussed Mayor Donchess' question about the rendition of how the back of the building would look and how it would be utilized. A question also arose about the transformers and it was stated that they it is feasible to be cleaned up.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja asked how do you envision the loading dock and other obstacles in the back as the space is tight back there. Scott noted they've have to find out how big of a truck they're going to use and study the radiuses.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja asked do they want to look at building an elevator shaft on the outside of the building that had a loading dock – possibly a freight elevator that would be more appropriate. Scott thought they could do it more internally to the building as it would be more cost effective. Their job is to make sure that it stays on budget.

Lindsay noted what she was nervous about was creating a logistical headache by making the theater on the second floor. She didn't want acts to not come back. Do you think it would be a viable sight to explore doing retail, restaurant, or auxiliary performance space? Speaker thought there was a way to pull theater space back to the corner so you could have a wider lobby or public space along the front. It would need to be programmed really well with a coffee shop or a bookstore that would get people to space outside of the performance.

A question was asked if they thought having the theater on the second floor would be potential problem for theater users. Jason noted it depends on the mix of what is going on. They have to get a clearer picture of what's going on in the building and leave elbow room for change.

Brian McCarthy asked what is done in the development phase to minimize change orders and RFIs during construction and what is your litigation history. Scott stated you have a great process going on in that you brought on a CM early on and it is written that concept design will be produced with cost estimates. The same thing will be with schematics. The risk is being reduced with the integrated team. Jason noted they were named in one law suit which was an injury on a project site that they had no responsibility for and were not liable.

The interview concluded with Bruner/Cott & Associates.

Tim Cummings discussed the Moses Brown site and went down visit it in Providence, Rhode Island. He thought it was the most liked that he's heard the group talk about.

The next meeting is on the 30th in Room 208 at 7 p.m. with three vendors in one night – Windover, Northbranch, and Harvey.

Mr. Cummings wanted to make clear that the street scaping is above and beyond the project. It's a well worthy conversation to have but wanted to make it clear and on the record that it is not part of the project but may be one to discuss.

Alderman Melizzi-Golja thought that some street scape could be done on Pearl Street where it's pedestrian during certain hours of the day and other times it has traffic. We need to think about widening the sidewalk along the building.

Brian McCarthy mentioned it leads to a discussion of are we going to reverse Pearl Street and get more sidewalks.

Alderman Melizzi-Golja thought with TD Bank building being on the market soon is there a way to get access through that parking lot and getting pedestrian access.

Brian McCarthy thought they needed to discuss general improvements, i.e. the transformer block, TIFF paying for improvements along Garden Street.

Tim Cummings stated he was working on trying to get a Special Board of Aldermen meeting with the Performing Arts Steering Committee and the fundraiser. The only date available and is subject to confirmation is Monday the 29th.

Brian McCarthy confirmed another meeting is scheduled on November 1 at 7 p.m. with the last 2 architects – ICON and Design Lab/Gazmeyers. The 10/30 is the CMs. Tim Cummings stated he would confirm and send out the dates and availability.

MOTION TO ADJOURN BY ALDERWOMAN MELIZZI-GOLJA

MOTION CARRIED

Adjourned at 9:45 p.m.