



Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #11 Wednesday, November 15, 2006

Present:

Bruce Kuwabara, Chair
George Baird
Tania Bortolotto
Peter Clewes
Renee Daoust
Siamak Hariri
Anne McIlroy
Janet Rosenberg
Don Schmitt
Charles Waldheim

Regrets:

Paul Bedford
Peter Halsall
Greg Smalenberg

Designees and Guests:

John Campbell
Robert Freedman
Christopher Glaisek

Recording Secretary:

Pina Mallozzi

WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the Panel. He then asked Mr. Campbell to provide his report.

REPORT FROM THE CEO

John Campbell, the Corporation's President and CEO, began by summarizing progress made during the past month. He provided an overview of the Corporation's three priority projects.

West Don Lands

- The developer proposal call for the West Don Lands will be released next quarter once approval of the Risk Assessment/Risk Management Plan has been obtained, however Phase One of the developer proposal call has been divided to allow The Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) to go ahead with the first building prior to completion of the Risk Management Plan and flood protection landform.
- The engineering of the flood protection landform (FPL) has become increasingly complex due to the presence of compressible soils below the Don River Park area. Pre-loading of the site prior to park construction and reconstruction of the low-level interceptor located below the park will be necessary in order to avoid future settlement and potential failure of the FPL.

East Bayfront

- The Corporation has hired a new Vice President of Development, Andrew Gray, who will be working specifically on East Bayfront (EBF).

- TEDCO has brought forward a development proposal being considered for the east side of Jarvis Slip. The Corporation will work with TEDCO to ensure integration into the Precinct Plan for the East Bayfront.
- The Corporation will be requesting that TEDCO issue termination notices to lease holders on the lands which constitute Sherbourne Park.
- Zoning for the EBF was approved by City Council in September. The Corporation is working with landowners in order to resolve their concerns. The zoning will likely result in an OMB hearing in the spring of 2007.

Central Waterfront

- The Corporation is in the process of awarding the contract to the West 8 + DTAH design team and is hoping to have design underway shortly.

In addition to those priority projects, the Corporation is pursuing district energy, a broadband network, and vacuum waste for all of the new waterfront communities.

Organizationally, the Corporation is in the process of transitioning away from the Program Manager structure. The goal is to internalize core management responsibilities and outsource areas where intellectual expertise is required.

Mr. Campbell concluded by inviting the Panel members to the Corporation's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 15, 2006 at the Design Exchange. Copies of the Annual Report were provided to the Panel.

The Chair then asked if the AGM is open to the public. Mr. Campbell noted that the Corporation is legislatively required to have one public general meeting per year.

Another Panel member asked about alternative financing mechanisms for sustainability, noting a recent meeting held with Ron Dembo who runs *Zero Footprint*. It was noted that *Zero Footprint* is an organization which is making relationships with builders to finance the additional initial investment required to build sustainable architecture. The initial investment is then repaid through savings from the efficiency of the architecture. The Panel member inquired on the Corporation's thoughts on this type of an approach. Mr. Campbell noted that the Corporation has explored this in the context of its commitment to LEED gold on all public land. It was noted that the Corporation can alert private developers of this opportunity as part of the Developer Proposal Call.

REPORT FROM THE VP PLANNING AND DESIGN

Christopher Glaisek, the Corporation's Vice President for Planning and Design, gave a brief update on project progress over the past month.

West Don Lands

- The Corporation will be issuing the developer proposal call early in 2007. The Panel's sub-committee on the developer proposal call met to discuss integrating design evaluation criteria into the process, and the results of this task will be presented to the Panel once prepared.
- The request for proposals (RFP) for the public realm in the West Don Lands will be issued by the end of the month. Simultaneously, the Corporation hopes to release the RFP for the below grade infrastructure. Once contracted the two teams will be required to present to the Panel.

East Bayfront

- The RFP for the design of Sherbourne Park will be issued in early December. The Corporation hopes to have a design team under contract by mid-January.
- An RFP for infrastructure and public realm is also being prepared and will be issued soon after the Sherbourne Park RFP.
- The Corporation will prepare an Archaeological Management Plan to develop a waterfront-wide strategy for managing any heritage artifacts.

Lower Yonge

- Precinct planning for the Lower Yonge Precinct will begin around the end of 2006. The Provincial Government has highlighted the LCBO block as a future development site.

Central Waterfront

- Adriaan Geuze of West 8 will present at today's Panel meeting, as well as later in the day at the AGM. He will present the winning design for the Central Waterfront Competition for feedback from the Panel on how to proceed with the Master Plan process.

The Chair then opened the meeting for questions.

One Panel member asked how the design of infrastructure and public realm will be integrated with the RFP which has been issued by the City for new street furnishing. Mr. Freedman noted that the issue has not yet been addressed. The Panel stressed the need for integration between the two processes and suggested the possibility of testing the proposed street furnishings on Queens Quay. Alternatively, another Panel member suggested that the waterfront may consider having its own uniquely designed furnishings.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair then asked the Panel for any comments or corrections to the minutes. With no corrections noted, the Chair asked if the Panel felt the recommendations of the Panel are sufficiently articulated in the minutes.

One Panel member suggested that the minutes should provide a synopsis of the Panel's recommendations. It was suggested that a set of key recommendations be stated at the end of every project presentation in the meeting and also be included in the minutes.

Mr. Glaisek noted that a schedule for Panel meetings in 2007 has been provided. He asked the Panel to review it and provide feedback to the Corporation on any major scheduling conflicts.

One Panel member noted that he would be abroad for six months in 2007.

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 East Bayfront Design Guidelines

ID#: 1013

Project Type: Precinct/Master Plan

Location: Area bounded by Lower Jarvis and Parliament Streets south of Lakeshore Boulevard.

Proponent: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation
Architect/Designer: Urban Strategies and The Kirkland Partnership
Review Round: Two
Presenter(s): Pino DiMascio
Delegation: Laurie Payne, Angus Cranston

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Mr. Glaisek introduced the project, noting that Pino DiMascio and Michael Kirkland together with Angus Cranston from the City of Toronto have done an impressive amount of work in preparing the design guidelines in a short period of time. The main issues on which the advice of the Panel was sought include:

- Appropriateness of guidelines as evaluation criteria
- Effectiveness as a tool to ensure excellence in design
- Desirability of striking a Panel Sub-committee to provide a detailed review.

1.2 Project Presentation

Pino DiMascio, Partner with Urban Strategies, provided a detailed presentation of the Urban Design Guidelines document that was circulated to the Panel. He began by outlining the context and purpose of the guidelines. He then provided an overview of the document, highlighting the goals for the public realm, land use, built form and massing, parking and access, and architectural detailing.

1.3 Panel Comments

The Chair then asked the Panel for comments.

One Panel member asked whether there was any economic incentive being considered for developers who achieve architectural excellence. There was a concern that if there was no financial incentive, developers might look for ways to circumvent the urban design guidelines. Mr. DiMascio noted that because half the land is publicly owned, developers will be required to follow the design guidelines as part of the developer proposal call process. On the north side of Queens Quay, where lands are privately owned, the zoning places an “H” on all the parcels, to be lifted once the developer has presented to the Panel and has demonstrated their integration of the comments received from the Panel.

Another Panel member asked if the developers can go back to the OMB to amend the approved zoning. It was noted that the developers on the private land can submit a minor variance but that the developers on the public lands will be bound through the conditions of the developer proposal call. The Panel asked how much of the site was in public ownership. It was noted that approximately 50% of the site is in public ownership.

One Panel member noted that the discussion of financial incentives for design excellence is not dissimilar to what is happening in Regent Park, where the LEED Gold requirements are adding approximately 10% to the cost of construction. Another Panel member suggested that design excellence should be incorporated into the Section 37 requirements. Mr. DiMascio explained that it was decided to incorporate the urban design guidelines into the comprehensive zoning as a requirement to the lifting of the “H” rather than as a component of Section 37. As part of this process the Panel will provide formal comments which will go to the City as a component of site plan approval.

One Panel member felt that the 36 to 38 metre height requirement along the main streets seems quite high, and some members of the Panel thought the density should be distributed somewhat differently.

One Panel member asked about the ownership of the lands that encompass the north parcel of Sherbourne Park. It was noted that it is privately owned, however the owners are open to discussing ways of accommodating the park on their site.

Another Panel member felt that the urban design guidelines document seems complicated. It was suggested that the document be simplified to ensure it is used accurately. The Panel noted that a summary of all the rules/guidelines may help users, and the guidelines prepared for Back Bay in Boston were cited as a good model. Several Panel members felt it would be useful to organize the document on a block-by-block basis. Other Panel members felt that there were too many contradictory precedent photos, and suggested the document include fewer pictures that more precisely describe what is being sought.

Other Panel members felt that the urban design guideline document does not compellingly integrate the Corporation's Sustainability Framework. It was recommended that each section of the urban design guidelines include language about the Corporation's sustainability objectives.

One Panel member suggested that the document include an overview of how developers will interact with the Design Review Panel. It was agreed that a very systematic approach for design review should be developed and included in the urban design guidelines document. Mr. DiMascio recommended that the Panel develop this protocol so it can be integrated into the urban design guidelines document, noting that the landowners are anxious to have these details as the design review process is an unknown to them currently.

Another Panel member felt that they would like to see increased density overall, as it might provide the financial incentive necessary to support the goals of the urban design guidelines. Mr. DiMascio explained that the density is already high, with a precinct-wide floor area ratio equal to 8 times the site area.

Several Panel members expressed continued concern about the viability of the colonnades. One panel member suggested that the Precinct Plan may be over-projecting the amount of retail that the East Bayfront can support, and asked that the East Bayfront Business and Implementation Plan be presented to the Panel for information. It was noted that while the highest priority should be Queens Quay, the retail in the western end of Queens Quay is struggling. Another Panel member suggested having a "back-up plan" for the ground floor space in the event there is more retail square footage than the community can support.

The Panel recommended that a full-scale mock-up of a typical section of the colonnades be prepared and retailers asked for their feedback before the Panel makes a final determination on the urban design guidelines. Mr. Glaisek noted that the Corporation is considering hiring an architect to design the colonnade prototype and requiring developers to build to those specifications. Written comments from one of the absent Panel members were reviewed, which echoed the concerns about the colonnades. There was consensus

that no example of a successful retail colonnade exists in the city, and that they should be removed from the plan until “proven” through testing.

1.4 Summary of Panel’s Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- i. Consider the issue of providing incentives to ensure design excellence is obtained;
- ii. Reconsider the height of the streetwall along Queens Quay as 38-meters appears high;
- iii. Critically reevaluate the colonnades and the retail strategy;
- iv. Restructure the document to include a summary and block-by-block requirements;
- v. Provide information on how the Design Review process will work.

1.5 Proponent’s Response

Mr. DiMascio thanked the Panel for its input, and requested that members formally submit comments to Mr. Glaisek before December 15, 2006.

2.0 Central Waterfront

ID#: 1007

Project Type: Park/Public Realm Design

Location: Area bounded by Parliament and Bathurst Streets, including Queens Quay and the water’s edge promenade

Proponent: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation

Architect/Designer: West 8+DTAH

Review Round: Four

Presenter(s): Adriaan Geuze

Delegation: John Hillier, Adam Nicklin, Mark Ryan

2.1 Introduction to the Issues

Mr. Glaisek introduced the project, thanking Adriaan Geuze for coming and welcoming him to Toronto. The main issues on which the advice of the Panel was sought include:

- Appropriateness of the various elements of the design proposal
- Recommendations for developing the master plan.

2.2 Project Presentation

Adriaan Geuze, Principal with West 8, then gave a detailed presentation of the winning Central Waterfront design submission. He began by noting that the project is just starting and will benefit greatly from the Panel’s comments. Mr. Geuze noted how impressed he was with the level of support and involvement from the Mayor for the project and the temporary landscape installation this past summer.

Mr. Geuze described the team’s philosophical approach to what Toronto’s lakefront should be. He explained the concept of creating a layered waterfront consisting of a floating waterfront of pontoons and floating maple leaf shaped bio-topes; a primary waterfront of 18 meters of public promenade along the water’s edge complemented by large native trees; and a civic esplanade and Martin Goodman Trail extension intended to occupy the two south lanes of Queens Quay complemented by eight new public spaces at the heads of slips.

2.3 Panel Comments

The Chair then asked the Panel for its comments.

One Panel member congratulated the team for providing a wonderful scheme. It was noted that design competitions are great for developing rich, creative solutions. Another Panel member suggested that one strength of the design is its critique of the waterfront which helps to reveal short comings overlooked by locals. Another Panel member appreciated the perspective of foreign eyes highlighting the opportunities that exist. The Panel asked what it could do to help make the project a reality and create momentum to ensure the project gets implemented without losing the magic.

Another Panel member felt that the project is fantastic, but asked how the Corporation intends to maintain the essence of the overall vision if the mandate is to implement only the heads of slips. Mr. Glaisek noted that the competition has shifted the priority to Queens Quay, and that the available funds for Phase 1 will be allocated to reconstructing a complete section of Queens Quay and building out one slip head. The Corporation does not, however, have enough money to compete the entire project and is in the process of determining how to allocate additional funds.

One Panel member felt that the scalability of the plan is smart. It was suggested that the basic components are Queens Quay, the water's edge and the heads of slips and they can be implemented over time, incrementally. The rest of the components are optional and discretionary. Another Panel member noted that Queens Quay would be their priority and that it should happen as soon as possible.

Another Panel member noted that the public is looking for something to believe in, and that the level of doubt is so high that this project gives people hope. It was suggested that Queens Quay alone may not be enough of a critical mass. It was noted that the momentum is building. Others felt that the new boardwalks, HTO Park and the Music Garden together are starting to create a critical mass but a strong linkage on the street edge, along Queens Quay, is missing.

The Panel suggested that the Queens Quay strategy should be applied right across the waterfront through the East Bayfront. Mr. Glaisek noted that although the funding is not in place for reconstruction of the entire street, the Corporation will contract the West 8+DTAH team to prepare a comprehensive master plan for the entire Central Waterfront.

The Panel asked how the Corporation intends to phase the implementation of Queens Quay so as not to have to rebuild the street after development occurs. Mr. Geuze responded that the team needs to develop a clever strategy for implementation that maintains momentum while recognizing the reality of building it out over time.

2.4 Summary of Panel's Key Issues

The Chair congratulated Mr. Geuze, noting that the project has the support of the Panel.

2.5 Proponent's Response

Mr. Geuze thanked the Panel for its input and support.

CLOSING

The Chair then adjourned the public session of the meeting for an in-camera session.