



WATERFRONTToronto

Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #26 Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Present:

Bruce Kuwabara, Chair
Paul Bedford
Tania Bortolotto
Peter Clewes
Renee Daoust
Siamak Hariri
Anne McIlroy
Greg Smallenberg

Regrets:

George Baird
Peter Halsall
Janet Rosenberg
Don Schmitt
Charles Waldheim

Recording Secretary:

Margaret Goodfellow

Designees and Guests:

John Campbell
Robert Freedman
Christopher Glaisek

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed the Panel and provided an overview of the agenda, noting that there will be a presentation on Waterfront Toronto's Performance Management System and how to ensure that Design Excellence is achieved. He and then invited Christopher Glaisek to provide his report.

REPORT FROM THE VP PLANNING AND DESIGN

Christopher Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto's Vice President for Planning and Design, provided a summary of project progress over the past month.

West Don Lands, Phase One Development

- On April 23, 2008, Waterfront Toronto announced that the development team of Urban Capital Property Group, Toronto and Redquartz Development, Dublin with Saucier + Perrotte Architects, Montreal have been selected to lead the development of the first phase of West Don Lands, known as the River Square Neighbourhood.

East Bayfront

- The Request for Qualifications for the mixed-use developments, Bayside and Parkside in the East Bayfront, were released on March 14th, 2008. Waterfront Toronto expects to select development partners by the end of 2008.

Spadina Head of Slip

- The glulam members have been delivered to the site and are being installed. The target date for the opening is still at the end of June, though there is a possibility of an early July opening due to a slightly later than anticipated delivery of the structural members.

Lake Ontario Park

- The final public meeting for the Lake Ontario Park Master Plan will be held in July, after being presented to Waterfront Toronto's Board in June. Waterfront Toronto will be looking for feedback to help decide what Phase One of the park build-out will be.

Queens Quay Environmental Assessment

- The Environmental Assessment is proceeding, and the team is working through the challenges together. Currently, there is a conflict between the desire for high speed transit and the desire for public crossings. The team is investigating what the right number of crossings is, and what the appropriate distance is between them, for the best transit and urban design.

The Chair then asked the Panel if there were any questions or comments.

One Panel member stated that streetcars in Toronto are by nature a community link that encourages the shorter on-and-off trip, where as subways were intended to be a more regional, high speed link, adding that it is important to get Queens Quay right.

Another Panel member urged Waterfront Toronto to carefully consider the closing date for the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the East Bayfront developer calls, as an end of summer date will mean the developers would be working all summer.

Another Panel member wondered what Phase One of Lake Ontario Park was going to be, and if there was money to build it. Mr. Glaisek answered that public feedback will be crucial in deciding what elements will constitute Phase One, adding that there is currently not a lot of money in the budget for it, relative to the overall scale of the project. Mr. Glaisek added that Waterfront Toronto is investigating alternate mechanisms for funding. One Panel member suggested that Waterfront Toronto begin discussions with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and possibly Evergreen.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair thanked Mr. Glaisek for his report.

The Chair then encouraged the Panel to attend and participate in the event being hosted that evening by the Toronto Society of Architects and the Royal Danish Consulate on *Waterfront Design Excellence*. The Chair noted that the Danes have an interesting national architectural policy entitled, "Settings for Life and Growth", that outlines ten target areas to promote the government's vision for Danish Architecture which embeds these notions in every facet from education to infrastructure. The Chair then added that Christopher Glaisek will be presenting, along with four leading Danish Architects their thoughts on Waterfront Design Excellence with a discussion to follow that he has been asked to moderate.

The Chair then cautioned that as the number of proposal calls increase, the number of possible conflicts of interest will also increase within the Panel, adding that maintaining a quorum may become more challenging. Mr. Glaisek stated that the newly adopted “Design Review Panel By-laws, Policies and Procedures” document addresses what does and what does not constitute a conflict of interest, and outlines new procedural measures such as the “Declaration of Conflicts of Interest”, now part of the agenda. Mr. Glaisek added that in terms of possible effects on quorum, that problem will have to be addressed when it arises, possibly by adding Panel members.

The Chair then invited Thelma Gee, Waterfront Toronto’s Director of Sustainability, to present the Performance Management System with respect to Design Excellence.

Ms. Gee introduced the Performance Management System, a strategic tool composed of a series of performance measures and targets which are intended to keep Waterfront Toronto on track, and ensure that sustainable communities are achieved over the long term through the Corporations’ six guiding principles of Sustainable Development, Public Accessibility, Economic Prosperity, Design Excellence, Fiscal Sustainability, and Operational Effectiveness. Mr. Glaisek then presented examples of the Design Excellence measures and targets, and asked the Panel for their feedback and whether they constituted a good set of metrics.

One Panel member stated that they were very encouraged to see a system such as this was being developed. Another Panel member agreed that this system provides a consistent framework to make sure that Waterfront Toronto practices what it preaches.

Another Panel member asked if this system would result in a compliance checklist for monitoring. Ms. Gee stated that it was part of the system.

Another Panel member asked if it would make sense for the Sustainability Department to come under the Planning and Design fold. Ms. Gee answered that the Sustainability Department is the conscience of the entire organization and reviews projects and initiatives from all departments.

One Panel member wondered if public safety and access to the waterfront should be considered as part of the system. Another Panel member wondered if there was a way that the system could ask how projects contribute to overall city building, and whether there was a way to gauge how the project is ultimately accepted by the users. Ms. Gee answered that user surveys can be a component of the process, adding that the system is intended to be dynamic and allow Waterfront Toronto to step back and assess if targets are too easy or too hard to meet, and enable the system to evolve and find the right balance.

One Panel member stated that it seemed difficult to achieve some of the targets when there are external forces such as intergovernmental cooperation, or working with the TTC, citing the Queens Quay revitalization as a case where mandates can often compete with each other.

One Panel member stated that the best way to ensure design excellence was to hire great designers, hold competitions, and promote up-and-coming young designers, adding that when you have great design, you know it right away. Another Panel member stated that the intention was good, but wondered if this chart was the best tool to measure design excellence. Another Panel member agreed that the chart attempted to codify the design process in a potentially limited way, adding that competing goals and value engineering can often put the best intentions awry. Mr. Glaisek agreed, adding that what constitutes a success is also in the eye of the beholder. One Panel member stated that if Queens Quay and the seven bridges and heads of slip are built, then

the waterfront will be a success. Another Panel member agreed, feeling that the “wow” gestures, connected by a unifying public realm, as well as a critical mass of projects will reinforce the waterfront.

The Chair asked the Panel if there were any questions or comments on last month’s meeting minutes. There being none, a motion was made and the minutes were then adopted by the Panel.

The Chair then opened the project review portion of the meeting.

PROJECT REVIEWS

I.0 Sherbourne Park

ID#: 1020

Project Type: Park/Public Realm design

Location: Area bounded by Sherbourne Street to the west and future development to the east, from Lake Shore Boulevard south to the water’s edge.

Proponent: Waterfront Toronto

Architect/Designer: Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg (PFS)

Review Round: Four

Presenter(s): Greg Smallenberg, PFS; Jill Anholt, Jill Anholt Design; and Stephen Teeple, Teeple Architects Inc.

Delegation: Jennifer Nagai, PFS; David Leinster, The Planning Partnership (TPP)

2.1 Introduction to the Issues

James Roche, Planning and Design Project Manager for Waterfront Toronto, introduced the project noting that since the last presentation to the Design Review Panel in February 2008, the team has been fine tuning the overall design, developing the UV filtration system, and coordinating with adjacent projects.

The main issues on which the advice of the Panel was sought included:

- Feedback on the evolution of the park pavilion and the public art,
- Overall response to the revised park design.

2.2 Project Presentation

Greg Smallenberg, Partner with Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg, introduced the project, recapping the issues raised by the Panel at the February 2008 meeting, and outlining how the design addressed the issues raised.

Jill Anholt, Principal with Jill Anholt Design, then described the art pieces, envisaged as a series of three totemic elements and two bridges encapsulating ideas of interaction, revelation, celebration, and purification of water, as well as acting as a connection between the City and the lake, humans to water and actions to consequences.

Stephen Teeple, Principal with Stephen Teeple Architects Inc., concluded by outlining the pavilion’s response to the revised park design and art pieces, including the framed views to and from the water’s edge promenade, adding that they were currently considering opportunities for increased sustainability including grey water usage and solar energy collection.

2.3 Panel Questions

The Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification only.

One Panel member asked if there was an indoor portion of the pavilion for the public. Mr. Teeple answered that there was a covered portion of the pavilion, but not a fully enclosed or heated space.

Another Panel member asked where people would change into their skates. Mr. Teeple answered that there will be seating around the edge of the rink. Another Panel member asked if there was a place to change into skates underneath the roof. Mr. Teeple answered that yes, that would also be a place to change into skates, noting that currently a skate rental is not part of the program.

Another Panel member asked if the pavilion could be climbed. Mr. Teeple stated that that was currently not intended.

Another Panel member asked how a Zamboni ice resurfer would be accommodated. Mr. Smallenberg stated that the City has a traveling Zamboni that can be driven onto the site.

Another Panel member asked how the art pieces were working together, and what their response was to the site. Ms. Anholt replied that the three pieces work as a series, one as a gateway from Lake Shore, one as a central marker, and one piece that relates to Queens Quay, adding that they are dynamic in appearance and change depending on where they are viewed from, appearing as one or three pieces.

One Panel member wondered what the screen or “scrim” of the waterfall was made of. Ms. Anholt stated that they were using stainless steel. The Panel member asked if they had considered Mylar, noting that even stainless steel can corrode. Ms. Anholt stated that they had considered Mylar, but were concerned that the Mylar would not weather well when exposed to the waterfront conditions.

One Panel member asked whether the interface with the water’s edge promenade and Queens Quay had been resolved. Mr. Smallenberg stated that the interface is continuing to be coordinated with the West 8+DTAH design.

Another Panel member enquired as to whether the project as presented meets the budget. Mr. Smallenberg replied that they are over, but very close to the budget and hope to utilize some of the storm water management infrastructure budget (namely the UV system), adding that conversations held to date regarding this, have not been discouraging. Mr. Smallenberg added that they are also hoping that the public art component will be placed within a separate East Bayfront public art budget.

2.4 Panel Comments

The Chair then opened the meeting to Panel comments.

One Panel member commended the team for addressing all the issues that the Panel had raised.

Several Panel members remarked that the art pieces really work in context with the Gardiner Expressway, appearing almost as remnants of this larger infrastructure. Another Panel member stated that the art pieces and pavilion were both great work.

One Panel member felt that the three art pieces should be one larger piece that would act as a signature piece for the City, adding that there should be more opportunity for engagement with the water. Ms. Anholt replied that the pieces are intended to be iconic identifiers and are currently thirty feet tall, adding that there is a critical volume of water that needs to be treated in the park, and that the three pieces work together to accomplish this. Ms. Anholt noted that although the water will be ninety-nine percent clean after being treated, that it is still not considered potable, and children will not be allowed to play in it. Another Panel member felt that the pieces were strong, dynamic and very elegant, and that the sequence of these pieces leads up to the pavilion, adding that the pavilion is really the singular “big” move. Mr. Smallenberg agreed, adding that the art pieces help to elongate the park, noting that it reads as a singular piece that stretches the length of the park.

Another Panel member felt that the impact of the pieces was diminished by cladding them in granite, wondering if other materials had been considered. Ms. Anholt replied that they had also considered stainless steel, but felt there was already a lot of metal being used in the pavilion, and that a possible analogy to a “faucet” was not desired.

One Panel member wondered if the programming for the pavilion could be flipped to allow the concession to face the pond or rink, and the washrooms to be closer to the promenade. Another Panel member questioned the need for a concession when there will be café’s lining the promenade. Mr. Teeple stated that the concession was an opportunity for the City to generate revenue for the park, and allow people to purchase hot chocolate without taking their skates off.

Another Panel member felt that the detailing of the metal on the pavilion would be very important as it is such a critical element of the structure, and hoped the team had enough budget to do it well. Mr. Teeple agreed that this would be very important and felt they could do it right for the budget allotted.

One Panel member felt that the nature of the engagement with the water will be very important to the success of the art pieces, citing the waterfall in Yorkville Park as a place where people desire to passively engage with the water. Another Panel member agreed that engagement with the water could also take the form of watching the filtration process after a rain fall.

The Chair then canvassed the Panel to gauge their support for the number of art pieces. Four of seven Panel members present voted to keep the design with three pieces. One Panel member suggested constructing a perspective from the north to help clarify what the right number would be. Another Panel member stated that the materiality of the pieces is of greater importance than whether there is one or three pieces, and urged the team to study the materiality at the human scale.

2.5 Summary of Panel’s Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- i. Overall support for the direction of the project
- ii. Study the organization of the programmatic elements in the pavilion
- iii. Re-consider the materiality of the art pieces, considering the human scale.

2.6 Proponent’s Response

Mr. Smallenberg, Ms. Anholt, and Mr. Teeple thanked the Panel for their comments.

2.7 Vote of Support/Non Support

The Chair asked the Panel for a vote of support or non support for the project. The Panel voted unanimously in support of the project.

CLOSING

There being no further business, the Chair then adjourned the meeting.