

Lakefront Development Advisory Commission
June 7, 2010
Miller Room at O'Donnell Park

Members present: Nik Kovac, Henry Hamilton, Sue Black, Gerry Broderick, Bill Lynch, Marina Dimitrijevic, Kurt Mihelich, Gloria McCutcheon, Robert Spindell, Lauri Gorton, Mike Maierle (alternate for Rocky Marcoux), Eric Reinelt (alternate for Tim Hoelter) and Tom Frenn

Others present: Julie Esch (staff), Jim Keegan, Chief of Policy and Planning for Milwaukee County Parks, Kevin Haley, Parks Landscape Architect, George Gaspar, Chair of the War Memorial Center Board of Trustees, Dave Drent, Director of the War Memorial Center, and Rich Tennessen and Kevin Van Kirk with Eppstein Uhen Architects.

1. LDAC Membership

Chairman Lynch stated that Ellen Brostrom has resigned from LDAC and that he will contact the County Executive about making a new appointment to replace Ms. Brostrom.

The Intergovernmental Cooperation Council has appointed Oak Creek Alderman Mike Toman, 4th District, to serve on LDAC.

2. Public Hearing on the War Memorial Center's North Entrance and Parking Renovation Projects

Chairman Lynch began the discussion by stating that LDAC would not vote on the projects until after the commencement of at least a two-week public comment period. This schedule may or may not accommodate the Parks, Energy and Environment Committee meeting scheduled for June 15th. However, a majority of LDAC members could vote to suspend the rules to consider a motion that would not require a two-week comment period.

War Memorial Presentation

George Gaspar, Chairman of the War Memorial Corporation Board of Trustees provided a brief overview of the proposed projects. He further summarized that the projects were necessary in order to accommodate WMC visitors and employees and others who need access to the War Memorial building and Milwaukee Art Museum.

Rich Tennessen and Kevin Van Kirk, with Eppstein Uhen Architects, presented the projects in more detail. The existing parking lot has a dearth of trees and does not provide the proper conditions for growing trees. The lack of trees within the parking lot creates a "heat island." There are problems with stormwater runoff and often the grassy

areas are used for parking, as there are not enough spaces during certain events and times of the year.

The existing north entrance is unsightly and does not provide enough space for the amount of visitors wishing to access the building. WMC also wants to improve the entrance for war memorial displays. Modification of the north entrance and parking lot will also provide semi-trailers safer access to the Art Museum's loading dock.

Questions and Comments

Nik Kovac asked how often cars are parked on the grass. Dave Drent replied that such parking occurs every Tuesday during Rotary Club meetings and for special events. This includes special events for the Art Museum.

Bill Lynch asked if WMC encourages people to use the lot and the grassy area. Dave Drent responded that WMC does encourage people to use the lot and the grass and many want to park there instead of other places.

Robert Spindell asked if the parking lot and north entrance projects were mutually exclusive. It was determined that they are mutually exclusive and can be done at different times. He stated that University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee students often park on the grass, similar to the parking at the War Memorial. He also asked if the parking lot could look better without taking additional green space. He understood WMC's need to generate additional revenue.

Bill Lynch asked if WMC had a business plan on how the revenue would help maintain the parking lot. Dave Drent indicated that if the parking demand exceeded the desired 375 spaces, parkers would have to go somewhere else. He further stated that revenues generated from parking would go to maintain the trees and rain gardens as well as the parking lot. According to Dave Drent, WMC generates approximately \$300,000 in annual revenues from parking. They charge \$5/day (with the exception of Art Museum docents who pay a reduced rate) and more for parking during special events.

Marina Dimitrijevic stated that the WMC projects were being paid for by Milwaukee County through general obligation bonds. She wanted to clarify any confusion as to which entity was funding the parking lot and north entrance improvements. She then asked if parking on the lawn was illegal and whether visitors and employees to WMC could use transit instead of driving.

A brief discussion ensued about the temporary parking lot to the north of WMC's lease boundaries. Dave Drent stated that, in his opinion, the existing lease between WMC and Milwaukee County should be modified so that the temporary parking lot becomes part of WMC's leasehold.

Tom Frenn asked what the advantage is of having a rain garden versus a muddy, grassy area. Kevin Van Kirk indicated that muddy ruts created more suspended solids that contribute to greater runoff into Lake Michigan.

The Park People & Preserve Our Parks Presentation

Jim Goulee (The Park People) and Charlie Kamps (Preserve Our Parks) stated that their organizations oppose any lease extension and increase in parking spaces at the War Memorial parking lot. Charlie Kamps summarized the tenets of the Public Trust Doctrine as well as the history of the Northwest Territory ordinance as it pertains to the State of Wisconsin's constitution. He further discussed the ability of entities to charge for parking at the War Memorial or any other lakebed grant property. He argued that parking could not be expanded for legal reasons pertaining to the Public Trust Doctrine and deed restrictions placed on the land by the City of Milwaukee.

Jim Goulee said that he does not want to stymie the north entrance project and likes the rain gardens and enhancement of the lot. He restated that his organization, the Park People, is against expansion of the parking lot that would result in a loss of parkland. There are thirty spots that derive revenue from parkland. They take exception to parking expansion here or anywhere else on the lakefront.

This north lot parking has been allowed despite the lease. O'Donnell is convenient for all patrons and also has elevators. The distance from the front door of the war memorial building, on Mason Street, to the O'Donnell parking structure is about 175 paces. Some parts of the parking lot are further away than parking at O'Donnell. On any given day, 300 parking spaces are available and, on weekends, there are 1,000.

John Lunz also spoke on behalf of Preserve Our Parks. He indicated that the Parks budget has been cut for the past 20 years. He is against any creeping expansion of museums. WMC would have a hard time saying "no" to veterans groups who might want expansion. He mentioned the USS Des Moines and Organ Donor Memorial as examples of the many groups who wanted to locate at the lakefront.

Marina Dimitrijevic stated a motion to suspend the rules to permit immediate consideration of the north entrance improvements.

Robert Spindell seconded the motion to suspend the rules. There was a unanimous voice vote. Mike Maierle, Rocky Marcoux's alternate, voted to abstain. Noting that the north entrance improvements were more a matter of repair and did not change current uses or the footprint of the War Memorial structure, LDAC then considered a motion to recommend approval of the North Entrance improvements. Again the vote was all in favor, except Mike Maierle who abstained.

After the motion, LDAC members requested a copy of the lease between WMC and Milwaukee County. Also, they requested that WMC meet with the Art Museum to work on parking solutions.

LDAC members decided that they needed more information regarding the application of the Public Trust Doctrine to the project. The application provided to WMC was not filled out accordingly. Also, they asked for an indication from the Department of Natural Resources as to its position on the project. They also asked for the footprint of the project. LDAC adjourned further consideration of the parking lot improvements and expansion to a future meeting to be called by the Chair.