



Seattle Design Commission

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

January 5th 2006

Gregory J. Nickels,
Mayor

David Spiker
Chair

Pam Beyette

Adam Christiansen

Karen Kiest

Anindita Mitra

Sheri Olson

Nic Rossouw

Dennis Ryan

Darrell Vange

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Layne Cubell,
Senior Staff

Projects Reviewed

Commission Business
Woodland Park Zoo West Parking Garage

Commissioners Present

David Spiker, Chair
Pam Beyette
Adam Christiansen
Sheri Olson
Nic Rossouw
Dennis Ryan
Darrell Vange

Convened: 10.00am

Adjourned: 3.00pm

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Layne Cubell
Tom Iurino
Alison Maitland Scheetz



Department of Planning and
Development

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05 Jan 2006 Project: Commission Business
Staff Discussion

Presenters: Layne Cubell, Design Commission staff
Guillermo Romano, Design Commission staff
Tom Iurino, Design Commission staff

Attendees: N/A

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 168)

Summary

The Design Commission discussed a number of key business items, namely an upcoming workshop on the Public Safety Building site open space, a letter on the latest draft Central Waterfront Plan, and the upcoming 2004-05 biennial Design Commission design awards.

The Commission discussed key points to be made in a letter of support they will draft and send on the Central Waterfront Plan to the Mayor and Council later this month. They acknowledged that the Plan was still in draft form, but reiterated their desire to send a brief letter with comments as the Plan wraps up, since they have been involved since the start. They also reviewed a draft agenda for their upcoming annual retreat. And finally, they reviewed a program for their 2004-05 Design Excellence Awards event to be held with Mayor Nickels on January 19. This year, they'll be conferring seven awards on teams which the Commission feels have pursued and demonstrated excellence in the design of city projects.

05 Jan 2006 Project: Woodland Park Zoo West Parking Garage

Phase: Pre Design

Previous Reviews: none; related projects include Discovery Village Family Science Learning Center - 3 June 2004 (Design Development), 3 March 2004 (21 Feb 2002 (Schematic Design Update); 17 Jan 2002 (Schematic); Discovery Village Master Plan - 6 Dec 2001 and 19 Aug 1999 (Concept Design); 01 July 1999 (Pre Design)

Presenters: Jim Maxwell – Woodland Park Zoo
Dan Phillips – Woodland Park Zoo
Paul Diedrich – KPFF Consulting Engineers
David Hewitt – Hewitt Architects

Attendees: Ginny Watkins, Resident
Cecile Andrews, Resident
Tim Rowleder, Zoo Neighbor
Paul Andrews, Phinney Ecovillage
Craig Fryhle, Resident
Roberta Nelson, Resident
Diane Duthweiler, Resident
Scott Raynold, Resident
Kathy Mulady, Seattle PI
John Bito, Phinney Ridge Community Council
Steve Sewell, Zoo Neighbor
Scott Ringgold, Land Use Planner, DPD

Time: 2 hours (SDC Ref. # 221)

Action

The Design Commission would like to thank Zoo staff and their design team for this early presentation, and recommends approval by a vote of 4 to 2 of the pre-design stage of design, based on the following comments. The Commission:

- appreciates the update by the Woodland Park staff on the Zoo Long Range Master Plan and local transportation issues related to the Zoo, and also recognize the commitment that has been made, over many years, to inform the Commission of design projects at the zoo;
- commends the presenters for their emphasis on creating a quality environment that meets the particular needs of customers who visit the Zoo, such as small children, and for valuing the physical design implications that this carries;
- appreciates the Transportation Management Program (TMP) that the Zoo is proposing to implement and encourages proponents to continue to sponsor ways to reduce automobile traffic to the Zoo, without compromising membership;
- commends the team for the extensive process of both community engagement and oversight that is proposed for the project;
- agrees that the impact of the garage to the Olmsted Park to the NW and 59th Street deserves careful consideration;

- **have reviewed the project design goals presented today, and concur with and support these goals;**
- **feels that mitigating the visual impact of the structure to the surrounding areas is absolutely critical and will be a key element in future reviews by this Commission; also think that sustainability and green design should be crucial elements in the development of the project;**
- **agrees that the general location of the garage is appropriate, as shown, but asks that in future presentations, the design team provide programmatic elements and concept plans for the balance of the west entrance complex, so that the Commission can evaluate the garage within its larger context; and**
- **recommends approval of the pre-design approach to the West Garage, by a 4:2 vote. One member voted against the project on the grounds of a basic opposition to parking garages, in general, and specifically at this park location. Another Commissioner's opposition was based on the size of the garage and the number of spaces, preferring that the capacity be reduced and that co-location alternatives be studied, as well.**

Proponents Presentation

This was the first presentation on the design approach to the parking garage by the Hewitt/KPFF design team. The Woodland Park Zoo staff provided an update of the Zoo Master Plan and reviewed the approach to public involvement.

Project History and Master Plan Context

The first Long Range Plan (LRP) for the Zoo was produced in 1976 by Jones & Jones, which is not so much a physical plan, but more of an approach with design guidelines. The philosophical essence of the plan still endures today. The new Long Range Plan borrows heavily from this original document. However, the primary changes include:

- an increased emphasis on conservation education.
- a greater priority on guest facilities, such as drinking fountains, benches and parking.
- a plan for greater financial stability.

In 2004, the Zoo highlighted areas for development in the Long Range Physical Development Plan (LRPDP). This plan includes significant new animal exhibits, such as the African Wild Dogs, and basic infrastructure and service support, such as the parking garage.

The need for parking was outlined by an American Zoological Association (AZA) study which identified that the Zoo provides less than half the parking needed for a zoo of its size and the visitation levels. The proponents stated that for over 100 days per year the demand for parking exceeds the onsite capacity. They advised that the average vehicle occupancy is 3.5 and therefore claimed that there is both an immediate need and long term need for additional parking.

In an effort to reduce the level of parking the Zoo has been working with SDOT, Metro King County, Parks Dept. and City of Seattle to develop a comprehensive program of Transportation and Parking Management (TPM), with a goal to maximize people's use of alternative transportation to the zoo, educate, and discourage single occupancy vehicles. The zoo staff presented a copy of the TPM to the commission outlining 36 issues that they are working on. Of particular interest was the Employee Transportation Management Plan (ETMP), which focuses on reduction of staff vehicles, in light of the fact that the garage will displace an employee parking lot, which will not be replaced. Other programs include pilot shuttle programs for special events and concerts.

The zoo staff described how both the south and the west entrances had been identified as potential areas for the new parking facilities. They confirmed that for almost three years the south was favored by both the community and the zoo. However, when they were preparing the proposal to take it before the City for adoption, it became clear the financing would be a challenge. The zoo staff advised that it was significantly more costly to build in the south for two reasons.

- the cost of the underground parking, especially the cost of excavation and trucking.
- an additional cost of replacing the 275 stalls already in existence.

Owing to these reasons the North West corner was deemed more suitable. The zoo presented this new location to the City Council for review. There was both opposition and support for the new location. The City adopted and voted current plan late in 2004, which has become the mandate for this project to move forward.

Approaches to Public Involvement.

The zoo staff noted this process is just beginning, with their first public meeting coming up this Saturday, January 7th. They acknowledged that there is a lot of interest in the project by both the local community and regional users. As the project moves forward they hope to engage these stakeholders in open discussion of what the zoo is able to do within the scope and budget of the project.

They advised that there will be five workshops, the first of which aims to identify the big picture values of the neighbors and users of the zoo. The second workshop, in late February, will be an interactive discussion of the conceptual design proposals. The two following workshops will focus on the schematic design with images to discuss with the design team. The zoo also stated that they intend to work with the local community on construction planning. They hope to get their input on what works and what doesn't in order to put together a responsible construction management plan that addresses the local issues for the community.

The zoo staff identified that the success of these efforts relies on the outreach they do. The ways they are reaching people are through a monthly neighborhood news letter, which reaches the nearly 2,000 people who live in a 4 block radius around the zoo. They also contact people through a list serve with 27,000 members, and have a website. The zoo is also in the process of recruiting for a smaller project advisory team, which will comprise of a smaller group of individuals, businesses and regional users to work a little more closely with the design team.

Design Approach

The design team will be lead by David Hewitt, with the technical support of Paul Diedrich.

The current technical issues are

- parking function - issues include:
 - accommodate the unusual high vehicle occupancy of 3.5
 - stall size
 - no sloped flooring
 - pedestrian path ways.
- Security - issues include,
 - access control
 - night closure
 - open/visual transparency
 - lighting
- sustainability – issues include,
 - energy usage
 - maximize natural day light to garage
 - durable materials, both recycled and recyclable
 - water usage, especially in relation to landscaping

The design team identified that this is a critical and sensitive project, since for many zoo visitors this area will be the beginning and end of the visit, and as such must be integrated. They emphasized that the facilities has an obligation to connect and reduce its impact. The team submitted a list of the project goals, which include establishing a framework for

the development of west entrance. They emphasized that they do not or ever have, see the parking garage as a grey box and identified their strategy to

- immerse the facility into the landscape
- erode the form to create scale
- site the facility to accommodate optimal opportunities for the future

Commissioner Questions

- Asks how the garage will be accessed.
 - Not yet specified. Probably from Phinney Ave. Other opportunities are still being explored.
 - Challenge is to immerse garage in landscape, while maintaining the visibility of the entrance
- Questions the number of ticketing points
- Requests details of future developments adjacent to the proposed garage on the west side of the zoo.
 - West entry ticket sales, events center, store, plaza plus another major animal exhibit yet to be finalized, but likely to be penguins viewed underwater.
- Asks proponents to clarify other options explored for the parking garage.
 - South and West locations were both included in the long range plan of 1999. South location proposed and favored initially both by park and community.
 - However, a garage in the south would be significantly more costly, due to the excavation costs of an underground structure and the replacement of existing 275 stalls.
 - Decision made that west was the best choice. Put in proposal and presented to the city council. Reviewed with support and opposition.
 - October 2004 City unanimously voted to adopt the long rang plan and garage financing plan, which became mandate for this project.
- Wonders what function the botanical collection and landscaping may serve.
 - Wish to expand the collection
 - Intend to have plantings, linked to the botanical collection, screen garage.
 - Will work diligently to reduce the scale and impact of the garage.
- Asks if the design team is still considering some of the creative ideas to mitigate the impact of the garage that they presented in the selection interview.
 - Yes, are considering all ideas – will screen the light from the neighborhood.
- Likes the idea of putting the long side of the garage facing south to maximize use of light.
 - Actually the siting has not been determined yet, but do intend to keep the shorter façade facing Phinney Ave.
- Asks what currently happens to the overflow parking.
 - People park in the surrounding neighborhood. Goal is to accommodate most visitors on zoo grounds.
 - Feels on busy day people cruise the neighborhood looking for a parking space, therefore more cars on the street.
 - The neighborhood of choice for street parking is to the north.
 - One of the goals is to reduce traffic in the neighborhood; see TPM plan.

- Asks how SDOT's stringent parking requirements fit in the plan for larger stalls to accommodate high vehicle occupancy.
 - Have already asked and advised of plans for parking stalls of 8.5'.

Public Comments

The Commission noted the presence of several community members at the meeting and appreciated hearing their comments. Public comments were asked to be kept brief.

Craig Fryhle, Resident

- Thanks the Commission for this public process, acknowledges the commitment the commissioners make to serve on this committee, and advises that the public sees them as their representatives. Acknowledges that the Zoo has wonderful animal exhibits and is a great place, especially to live by, but are concerned about some of the development directions.
- Asks why the Commission is not pressing for an underground garage, as was recently the case with Seattle Center's Lot 2 Garage.
- Feels that the North Meadow, as a remaining part of Olmsted's plan, should be protected
- Is concerned about the impact that the proposed garage (the size of a football field and four stories high) and additional buildings, such as the administration buildings, will have on a city park. Presented an architectural rendering depicting the scale.
- Asks if the Commission had received answers to its previous questions regarding the zoning that is in place at the Zoo and whether it allows for an office building in the park.
- Questions the location and length of the new, proposed west entry path and access point and asks if this is the best way for pedestrians to enter the zoo, especially if encouraging the use of public transport.
- Disputes the parking needs proposed by the Zoo and gave the Commission detailed graphics that support this challenge. Feels the city is spending a lot of money on a parking garage that will not be used.
- Provided city-supplied parking data and WPZ-provided attendance data showing that on-site and immediate neighborhood parking accommodates attendance on all but approximately 20 days out of the year, casting doubt on the need for and economic viability of the garage.
- Asks for the building to be scaled down and consolidated with some of the other proposed buildings.

John Bito, Phinney Ridge Community Council

- Expressed strong concern that the switch in location was done behind closed doors.
- Feels that the garage will significantly impact the Olmsted drive that begins on 3rd Ave.
- Argues that the cost is well over the projected revenue and asks if the city should be spending money on a parking lot of this scale.
- Asks that the Commission focus on the goals that make sense and that serve the park and the city.

Paul Andrews, Phinney Ecovillage

- Feels that the public process has already been lengthy, the public is united in its opposition and disputes the need for the garage in this neighborhood and feels it should not be built.
- Argues that there was little public notice when the garage suddenly changed location.
- Advised that the public has exhibited its opposition by attending City Council meetings and submitting signed petitions.
- Questions how sustainability can be listed by the Zoo as a criterion for the garage, which is unneeded and economically unviable and will encourage the public to drive to the zoo while routing more traffic deeper into the Phinney neighborhood. By encouraging car use the garage violates Kyoto Protocol directives on global warming and the City of Seattle's pledge to reduce greenhouse gases in accordance with Kyoto guidelines.
- Questions how the Zoo can assert public involvement is "just beginning" when residents emphatically opposed a garage in two design hearings in May and June of 2005; in a petition bearing more than 1,300 signatures gathered over a two-week period in July 2005, and in a Phinney Ridge Town Hall meeting held in October 2005.

Diane Duthweiler, Resident

- Advises that residents do not mind the on street parking for the zoo and worries about metered parking that may come into affect in the neighborhood with the construction of the garage.
- Is worried that the 4-story structure will block afternoon and evening light in the North Meadow and blight this historic park.

Proponents Response to these comments

- The City Council meetings were advertised and members of the public who both approve of and oppose the garage attended.
- Confirms that studies show that on 100 days the on site parking cannot handle demand.
- Advises that the community has included 500 on street parking spaces in their calculations.
- States that the size of the parking garage reflects future forecasted demands.
- Clarifies that the issue of a residential parking zone is the responsibility of a neighborhood, and not something that the city imposes.

Commissioner Questions

- Believes, from personal experience, it is difficult to park at the zoo more than 100 times a year.
- Is surprised that the neighborhood opposes the parking garage.

- Agrees that the south Parking Lot is not an option.
- Has confidence that this design team will successfully integrate the garage.
- Sympathizes with both the local community and the zoo.
- Feels that the parking garage here would be used, but is against parking garages in general.
- Worries that the garage will only attract traffic to the neighborhood.
- Skeptical and feels that city parks should not be parking lots.
- Has mixed feelings about the garage, but has confidence in the design team.
- Supports the desire for a transparent and creative design.
- Is confused about the use of the parking garage on a regular basis. Feels that current demand is only in the summer, but appreciates that visitation may increase.
- Feels the issue is cultural and questions if we should provide for the car or do more to get away from it.
- Appreciates the efforts of the TMP, but feels proponents could do more.
- Feels the public involvement process is impressive but worries that those who get involved may not actually make a difference. Advocates that this should not be the case.
- Agrees that the design team's instincts are excellent.
- Questions the number of parking spaces and scale of the garage. Asks if it really needs to be so large.
- Darrell Vange offered a disclaimer about his comments and former involvement with the Zoo, noting that he was on the Zoo Society Board for several years and the Zoo Commission Task Force for the Mayor to develop a program for the bond issue. However, that involvement ended 8 years ago.
- Feels that the Commission is not in the position to question whether there should be additional parking or not, or a garage or not. However, does believe that the Commission can assess the type of parking i.e. above or below grade parking and its design quality.
- Find it curious that members of the public can oppose an above-ground facility, while at the same time asking why the Commission is not pushing for a below ground facility. There seems to be mixed opinion out there.
- Feels the true issues are how the garage is situated on the site, how its visual impact is mitigated and how it can positively contribute to the overall environment of the zoo.
- Hopes that the design team will make big moves to address the bulk, scale and size of the structure.
- Strongly agrees with the community that this should not have a visual impact on the Olmsted Park.

- Advocates that the design team consider utilizing a green roof, like other park buildings, for the parking garage.
 - Current proposal has an open top deck with parking to keep the scale down
- Feels it is very important how the garage is sited, and how it relates to the public street edge.
- Suggests that the south side of the garage should be upholstered with zoo buildings.
- Appreciates that water quality issues can be more easily addressed with a structured garage.
- Shares the angst of whether the garage can be justified and worries about financial aspects of this project.
- Appreciates that the design team is considering both the pedestrian experience to/from/by the garage, and the fact that they intend not to use sloping floors.
- Thinks that the proof will be in the design and how it develops and what strategies are used to mitigate a large bulk of building.
- Requests that in future presentation the proponents share programmatic elements and early concepts for the balance of the west entrance complex, so that the Commission can evaluate the garage within its context.
- Is not as worried about the height as much as the bulk.
- Is amazed at how many buildings there already are, therefore assumes that a facility like this could some extent be made to disappear and thinks that this is a goal.
- Thinks that we would all prefer not to build more garages or have more cars but we do, so the sense from the Commission is that this garage is a potential way to accommodate growth in visitors at the Zoo, recognizing the role of the automobile and endeavoring to minimize its impact.
- Generally, the Commission approves of the garage in this location with some caveats about the quality of the design and need for mitigation, both of which will get further review in the future.
- The Chair of the Commission reminds everyone that the Design Commission itself does not have a mandate to overturn City Council decisions. The Commission is an advisory body, relative to Council decisions. The Commission's purview here is not to revisit Council's decision about whether to build the structure, but rather to focus on its design.



Map provided by Woodland Park Zoo

Composite of LRPDP Plan and Existing Zoo Facilities

- Zone 1 – ARC and Rain Forest Food Pavilion
- Zone 2 – Important Trees
- Zone 3 – Phinney Avenue
- Zone 4 – W. Woodland Park, 57th St., and North Lot
- Zone 5 – Fir Grove
- Zone 6 – North Meadow, Main Loop Path and Carousel

Relationship of Garage to Other Zoo Facilities

Facility	Required Relationships	Desired Relationships
North Meadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access by 40’ semi trailer and 40’ RV Diesel Cruiser for special events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to move visitors quickly into garage after events • Minimize sound and overflow (car doors, alarms, squealing tires) • Minimize visual presence of garage from North Meadow
Main Loop Path		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize visual presence of garage from main loop path
Event Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access to Event Center by guests for daytime and evening events, bypassing zoo ticketing functions. • Provide for supply and service access for catering functions: rentals, food delivery, garbage pick-up, etc. (WPZ to provide specifics, truck heights, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event Center to have easy access for guests to North Meadow (path character TBD) and carousel
Aramark Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple access to/from Phinney Ave. for service and deliveries is required. Deliveries should not inconvenience guests (notably on pathway from Phinney) • Provide easy access to zoo grounds for catering support, including North Meadow, Event Center and Carousel 	

Penguin Exhibit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an immediate experience for zoo guests entering from the New West Entry 	
Carousel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service access 	
Zoo Offices (trailers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must accommodate office space footprint, may include electric carts used by staff. • Minimize noise from garage mechanical, if used • Provide for adequate business visitor parking 	
Rain Forest Pavilion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure walking grades from garage and New West Entry are appropriate 	
Butterflies and Blooms		
New West Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create architectural connections to New West Entry within context of LRP design guidelines. Note that this strong connection between an architectural feature to visitor experience is unique to zoo facilities and must be addressed thoughtfully. • Easy grade transitions from garage, without steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architecture memorable for orientation (LRP) • Pathway orientation to/from remote lots to be intuitive with entrances aligned toward the direction of final destination
Zoo Store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access for product deliveries, without disrupting visitors 	
Restrooms		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must consider if restrooms are inside or outside of controlled areas (continuing WPZ discussion)
Ticket Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garage parking Point of Sale (POS) must function independently of visitor entry POS at “gates” • Must accommodate 2-part ticketing function: one for entry purchase, one for entry to zoo 	
Plaza		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covered entry for ticket functions and rest opportunities at garage/plaza intersection, stroller friendly
Visitors Assistance (Information, Security)		
Current Parking Lots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated POS and data collection systems consistent throughout all parking lots and garage 	
Nearby Animal Areas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize sound overflow (car doors, alarms, squealing tires)
Visitor Pathways from Phinney and N. Lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodate both interim and permanent pathways • Accommodate concert lines 	