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Meeting Minutes

wHY will rely on these notes as the approved record of matters discussed and conclusions reached during this meeting unless you send the author notice to the contrary within seven calendar days of the issue date of these meeting notes.

Project	Project No
Culver City Hall Master Plan	
Meeting Location	Meeting Date
9770 Culver Blvd, Culver City, CA 90232	February 23 rd 2019
Meeting Subject	Meeting No.
Preparation for City Council Presentation	
Present	

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*Total number of people in attendance: 16

Items for Review

Lafayette:

- Overall Lafayette side was well received. Would like to see this carried over to rest of the site. (more nature).
- Can the seating wall on Lafayette be made from recycled wood – wHY proposed possibility of using site-harvested lumber to cap concrete seating.
- Love the idea of art being incorporated with the air shaft. Can there be other ways that artists and art installations be realized throughout the site?
- What *interactive* art installations can be realized?
- Concerns raised about homeless sleeping / congregating around southern property line (behind City Hall). Has been observed recently, what can we do to address this?

Central Plaza

- a) Note to incorporate the flag poles in the central plaza – either current location or relocated
- b) Consider the star paving around fountain on central plaza if central fountain is removed.

Action



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- c) General impression that plaza lacks the sense of “nature” present at Lafayette – request to soften extensive hardscape
- d) Agreement on taking any available measures to reduce size/impact of stair openings on plaza access and street presence (variety of measures discussed)
- e) Can central plaza be more intimate – concern that the current proposal shows too much hardscape.
 - a. Can the language of greenery (especially on the Lafayette side) be incorporated in central plaza?
 - b. Can there be more rows of trees in central plaza?
 - c. At the same time, do not limit functionality of the plaza for events
- f) Possibly explore a more consistently habitable and softer/more natural buffer zone along Culver
 - a. Improve unity along Culver and ‘soften’ central plaza with sense of transition from zone to zone
 - b. This would connect Lafayette and Duquesne
- g) More information desired on the lighting plan, especially in central plaza and overall streetscape and the art in the heritage court

Duquesne and Heritage Garden

- a) Overall quite pleased with the idea of terraced steps with moveable chairs and tables – though not well understood initially from the renders
- b) Love the idea of exposing the heritage garden bricks and ruins. Allows for more opportunities for art installation and collaboration
 - a. If removing the cyprus trees, can their original intention of marking the footprint of old city hall be realized with pavers?
- c) Return climbing ivy to inside face of old courthouse façade at Heritage Garden
- d) Can there be more of a “formal” design on the Duquesne side?
 - a. More shapes and gestures using hedges etc.?
- e) Overall no opposition in removing the Cyprus trees, but concern that the feeling of enclosure would be lost



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- a. How can we keep the sense of enclosure and viewsheds with new tree species?
- f) Request to bring some green buffer between Heritage Garden and Duquesne

General Comments

- Request more information on trees, foliage, color, plant species, etc. – specifically at critical locations and generally across site
- Can we incorporate more buffers using raised planter beds
- Concern raised about possible theft of moveable chairs
- What's the number of people expected to use the site?
- More information requested on site lighting - high and low level light, habitable times vs overnight, etc.
- How can we talk about and/or represent connectivity at night? Is it any different?
- How can we ensure more mobility from zone to zone?
 - Need to illustrate clear connectivity from Duquesne to Lafayette.

ZONE 1 / Lafayette Side:

- The proposed barriers that serve both to define the play areas and also allow for additional seating look very block-like in the renderings and appear to compete with the landscape rather than enhance it. Alternatives could include: 1) artist-designed barriers/benches that are both complementary to the site and child-friendly; and/or 2) repurposing the redwoods that are slated for replacement into elements that function as barriers/benches.
- If the scope of the project specifies all drought tolerant plants, why is there a separate native planting area? Is this intended as an instructive tool where all plants would be identified with markers? Is the grass being considered for the play areas drought tolerant and appropriate for children to play on (i.e., soft but durable)?

ZONE 2 / Central Courtyard:

- Overall, there appears to be a net INCREASE in hardscape in this section.
- Reducing the two stairwell openings is a good call but eliminating greenery around the openings (i.e., having exposed railings) does not appear to be an inviting solution.
- If the intent is have more people dwell in this area by providing tables and chairs, then more shade trees will have to be added to this section. Trees that are drought tolerant but have a good year-round shade canopy should be considered. More trees than what is proposed in wHY's February draft document may result in less seating space for events/concerts. By 2020, however, there will be other outdoor performance venues in the downtown area (e.g., Culver Steps) so perhaps reducing the area available for performance seating is not really an issue in the long run.
- Hardscape: Will this be a generic hardscape or will there be an overall decorative design, similar to what is currently in place? Will any of the existing hardscape be repurposed or is the intent that it be completely replaced? We are concerned that the color-palette will be in harmony with everything else.
- We would like to state here that increased illumination on the "Hanging Garden" artwork (third floor) would be most welcome, if that is possible.

ZONE 3 / Duquesne Side:

- We feel that replacing hardscape with DG, removing the raised planters, and adding moveable tables and chairs is a plus to encourage dwell time. However, as already noted above, if you want people to spend time in this space, there need to be more year-round shade trees!
- We feel it is important to maintain the footprint of the former City Hall, which is currently delineated with the cypress trees. This could be achieved in a number of ways if the cypress trees are removed.

- While we can appreciate wanting to open up Heritage Park to both the central courtyard area and Duquesne Avenue by removing the mature cypress trees, it is because this space is currently enclosed that people like to sit there. We suggest not opening up the space too much but rather making the current **opaque** cypress walls **more translucent**. One point in favor of cypress trees is that they do not shed any leaves into the nearby pool. Layering trees on both sides could help with creating translucency. For example, on the Duquesne Avenue side, rows of trees could be interplanted (off-set) so that there is visual separation but one can see a little of what lies beyond in Heritage Park. We feel that the function of the changes to the Duquesne side is that of encouraging people to walk farther into the courtyard rather than stopping by the street. Another plus is that the west-side of the fountain wall would be more accessible and made more inviting with added lighting, as well as illuminating the existing plaques on that side.
- As for placing tables and chairs along Duquesne Avenue, we feel this is not a realistic option. The traffic at that corner is too loud and with quieter seating areas within Heritage Park, the central courtyard and on the Lafayette Avenue side, additional tables and chairs in that location feels superfluous. At most, maybe a small bench or two.
- What about the marker on the corner of Duquesne Ave. and Culver Blvd.? Would that be re-sited in the same area?

GENERAL:

- We did not see any reference to the color-palette throughout. Will there be color in the plantings and if so, will that be distributed throughout?
- Wherever there are large concrete planters or tree-encasings, could consideration be given to adding design, color, tile or even mosaics to reduce the overall concrete quotient?