

Community Meeting for Wende Creative Community Center (December 10, 2020, 6:00 pm)

Introduction and presentation of the proposed project by Justin Jampol and Brian Wickersham

Questions and Responses

Construction & Design Questions

Question: Do you have a view of the building from the alley?

Question: How long will the construction take?

Question: 3 stories looks tall. Why not 2 stories?

Response: Brian Wickersham: For the question about three stories, in reality it's really a two-story building but as I mentioned we elevated the ground level at the front so that the gardens connect through and there's a continuity of all the garden space on the block. Also, important to note that we have the higher structure only on the parking lot side, and the back side along the alley is the one-story structure that is the back of house piece—its only 14 or 15 feet tall and then the existing A-Frame. On the elevator corridor, we sloped that back so the building floats back towards the alley, following the lines of the existing A-Frame. So, that is the way we are minimizing the visual impact of it.

Construction timeline: Our intent is to be finalizing permits in the middle of 2021 and start construction thereafter. We expect that to be a 16-month process, but are currently working with a contractor and on a bid process for a number of contractors where we will provide more detail. Part of our brief with contractors we've been talking to is that they have absolute best practices on all work that gets done here, on noise, dust, and construction waste mitigation.

Question: Is there a height restriction on the housing parcel?

Response: Brian Wickersham: Referencing the rendering showing the angle cutting back: The intent is that you will see the angle of the A-Frame that you already see, with a little buffer piece at the base. I can't speak to the housing piece, but for the community center, the max height is 43 feet and we at 42 feet. Perhaps City staff can address the height of the housing.

Michael Allen: The height limitation for the residential component would be similar or equivalent to that of the museum which may be subject to change by what is adopted by the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan is to adopt specific standards specifically for the site, which may be different, either more flexible or restrictive than the adjacent zoning districts or the underlying zone which is currently open space. At this time, the height for residential has not been determined but for purposes of just simple discussion, we can assume the same as the museum.

Questions About the Use of Space

Question: What kind of performances? Culver City residents only? How different from vets meeting and community spaces?

Question: Is the CCUSD on board with these ideas?

RESPONSE: Justin Jampol: Yes, the original planning for the classroom was done in conjunction with the CCUSD superintendent who made requests for the design and the functionality of the space, such as lockers for students to put backpacks while in the classroom. The district reviewed all our plans, made suggestions, and is in our lease terms with the City. They are one of the anchor “tenants” to use the space.

Who gets access: We are prioritizing Culver City organizations, not that others can’t use it, but it is a Culver City property and a Culver City project. “Anchor tenants” are the United States Veterans Artist Alliance, a Culver City organization; CCUSD; Upward Bound House will be able to use the garden space on the rooftop deck; and the Mayme Clayton Library and Museum. Those preferred organizations get first dibs; then it will go to other Culver City organizations and individuals that want to book the space, and after that, it will go to non-Culver City organizations and residents.

Questions on Housing

Question: How will turning a community garden into homeless housing benefit the city?

Question: How long does it take to make changes on current community garden?

RESPONSE: Michael Allen: Just to reiterate what Justin explained earlier, that the intent of the City is to address a growing need and demand for affordable housing. Taking that, when City Council decided to engage in this endeavor with the museum they asked to include a housing component as part of the entitlement which would enable the housing development of up to six affordable units, which the affordability rate has not been determined, but would enable housing to be constructed at a future date which will go through another review process. The housing details will develop later in the process.

I would like to correct the characterization of housing homeless at this site. The affordable housing rates as defined by the state range from extremely low to moderate housing, those ranges break up into four categories. The range has not been decided as well as the affordability rates have not been decided, but that conversation will occur later. In addition to that, I wanted to ensure everyone that this is not the only location the City is exploring and has pursued several studies for affordable housing around the city as a whole. There are several locations around the city and the City will look into when and where they can provide affordable housing options to its residents.

Additional question/statement came in

Question: The pandemic has highlighted the value of open space. The Scout House preference would be to retain the Community Garden lot as open space. In the Nov 9th

meeting, Goran Erikson mentioned that City Staff was working on a report of City-owned sites that were available for housing. Noting that the Garden site is LESS than a standard Culver City residential lot, I am wondering what the status of the Staff report is and whether it could be made available to the housing advocacy groups and/or the public. Thinking there may be better options for housing.

Question: Are the changes to the Community garden has been approved?

Question: Comment to Michael. Nobody who lives in the vicinity agrees to housing on the garden site. We submitted a petition that 38 people who live contiguous to the property signed. There was a vote at the senior center meeting, 95 percent of 200 attendees voted for no housing. This was not agreed to by the residents. We do not want our community altered. We have stated and shown our desires. Housing like this should go in the Far East or far west of the city where this kind of housing should go.

Question: Given that housing is a requirement of this project, how can you say it is not tied to this project?

RESPONSE:

Michael Allen: The City's direction is to not remove or eliminate the existing community garden and replace it with housing; the direction is to explore an option that preserves a community garden, it may be a new design or configuration, but preserves the community garden amenity, while also providing affordable housing units. It's not the intent to eliminate or remove that garden permanently, it would be redesigned or reconfigured and maintained. Additionally, the report that was referenced is not something I am directly involved in, but I am aware of it and know the research/project has not been completed yet but will be made available to the City when completed. The city's Housing Division is overseeing that process and I am happy to follow up and find out what the timing.

Elisa Paster: Michael, can you explain, if the plan were approved as it was today, could the City or a nonprofit build the housing right away or is there another part of the process that has to happen?

Michael Allen: The way that the comprehensive plan works is that it is like a mini general plan for this site; every component of the plan does not necessarily get built at once and in this case, the project would be broken up into two phases. The comprehensive plan is considering the larger goal in its entirety for the site, which is to facilitate the process for the museum to expand in the way that is being discussed and proposed tonight, as well as facilitate the creation of the affordable housing. When the development of the housing moves forward, we would go through a conformance review or similar process, but the comprehensive plan would already be approved to lay the framework for what our overarching goal for the site is. Unfortunately, I don't have the timing for the implementation of the housing component; the only information that I do have is that it is proposed as a phase within the comprehensive plan so that when it is ready to pursue the comprehensive plan will already be in place to implement the housing component.

These community meetings are intended to elicit community feedback. This feedback is provided to the applicable staff, Commissions, and City Council. This project will be required to go to the Planning Commission and the City Council, so there will be two public hearings that will happen and each occurrence is an opportunity for members of the public to share their support or opposition to the project.

Question: To Michael, what is the cost to the city to subsidize each proposed housing unit? Is it 500,000 per unit? Where [does] that money come from? Please acknowledge that local residents do not agree on housing for this site. The local residents were not listened to.

RESPONSE: Michael Allen: I don't know the cost for the city to subsidize each proposed unit of the top of my head. I can find out that number, but I don't know it off the top of my head. Anecdotally, I think it is about half a million dollars per door, but I can't provide an assurance on that and will follow up on the rest of the question since there are many sources where the funding could come from depending on the engagement with the nonprofit organization or the funding sources of the City.

Question: Could you clarify if the Wende/creative center is behind the push to remove the Scout house, the paddle tennis court, and the community garden?

Question: Thank you for sharing. Is it possible to untangle the housing concept from the creative center?

Question: Are there meetings that residents can join to be part of the planning?

RESPONSE: Justin Jampol: Michael mentioned how they are going to be opportunities for public feedback and I don't know the answer about untangling. I can answer the one about the Creative Community Center. I have always been a big proponent of our neighbors and especially the Scouts and Paddle Tennis. I'm very aware those are constituents that helped support our project and am thankful for that. Our project is our project, and that still is the case now. The housing portion of this is part of the comprehensive plan. We are getting instructions about entitlements, which is again a forward thinking, long-term sign about the kinds of things and uses a space can have. Just to reiterate, not a conversation tonight about Boy Scouts or about Paddle Tennis.

Question: I'm a long-time Culver City resident that lives around the corner at Farragut and Elenda so this is my neighborhood and I know this location well.

This project is so beautifully designed with great architecture and the outdoor space is also fantastic. This area has been a dead zone for so long and I'm excited for this project to get started and built.

Question: Why are we talking about the paddle tennis courts? Am I missing something? Are they in fact going to be removed? I thought they were explicitly excluded.

Question: So the City Council wants to change the entitlements to remove the Scout house, community gardens, and paddle tennis courts?

RESPONSE: Justin Jampol: They are specifically excluded from this.

Michael Allen: The housing component is only the area that is shown on the map, and it is only where the community gardens are going. There is no discussion about removing the paddle courts or the Scout house.

Elisa Paster: The application itself is not going to include any requests that affect the paddle courts, the Scout house, or the rock and mineral house. They are not part of the entitlement and we are not requesting any changes—the only changes the city council could make to the application at the time would be to the land that is involved in the application.

Questions on the Community Garden

Question: So whose idea is it to remove the community gardens? Wende or City council?

RESPONSE: Elisa Paster: The entirety of the land is owned by the city of Culver City—so, Culver City has to give authority to the application that is submitted. The Wende is going to be leasing the piece for the Creative Community Center; and again, the City Council has directed that, as part of the application, the Wende include in the comprehensive plan the community garden space and up to six units of affordable housing. They are the ultimate decision makers and have directed the comprehensive plan include the request for housing.

Question: I live around the corner from the Wende and want to share my enthusiasm for the project. I have so much confidence in you all and the Wende in particular. Thank you.

Question: City Council directed Wende to apply to change the gardens to housing? Is this a stipulation to allow the creative center?

RESPONSE: Michael Allen: The housing is not necessarily related to what the Wende Museum is specifically requesting at this time. The City has directed to include the housing as part of the request to satisfy policy goals and direction of the City as it relates to affordable housing. Because it is a city-owned parcel, City Council has the authority to expand or retract the allowances of the comprehensive plan; in this case, there is an opportunity to address the housing shortage, that has been acknowledged as a policy goal to address.

Question: To Michael, the gardens were looked at without community input. The fact that housing was even suggested was wrong. It went against the residents wishes. Council purposefully went around the residents. The city council works for the residents. Would we be housing current Culver City residents?

Michael Allen: When affordable housing is built there are standards and processes in place to provide preferential housing to preferred residents which qualify under several variables including income, employment, and current residency. So, there are opportunities to provide preferential housing to Culver City residents or those who have historically resided in Culver

City but may temporarily be relocated. There is a lot that goes into that and the short answer is that there is a path to provide preferential housing to Culver City residents—it's just that it is an arduous legal process. The city has done this at other affordable housing locations that are being built around the city including the Lucky Down on Washington and the Globe Housing recently finished where preferential housing was provided to Culver City residents. Not all of the residents were from Culver City but many of them were.

Question: Displacing the gardens displaces not just current garden members. It displaces all forever. What is the opinion of current garden members?

RESPONSE: Michael Allen: The current garden is going to be redesigned, relocated, or rebuilt in the same area in a different way. It's not leaving, it's not going away. City direction is to preserve, or at least keep the community garden component as part of a new housing project, and will be an integral part of the housing development to include the garden. Unfortunately, we don't know what the housing development is going to be yet so we don't know the details of the resulting garden at this time.

[Michael Allen provided his contact information to attendees]

Question: Seems heavy handed by City Council to tie approval of the fully funded Creative Community Center to unfunded, unknown housing project. What mechanism is available to untie these parcels and still give approval to the Community Center?

RESPONSE: Michael Allen: I encourage everyone to reach out and voice their desires to the City. The City has provided direction to include the housing. If the community is strongly vocalizing and providing that sentiment, that needs to be shared with the decision-making bodies.

Community Meeting for Wende Creative Community Center (June 1, 2020, 6:00 pm)

Introduction and presentation of the proposed project by Justin Jampol and Brian Wickersham

Questions and Responses

Question: I'm a long time Culver resident that lives right around the corner and excited to finally see this project moving forward. Perfect mix of uses that meets various City goals and great design. Really like the concrete and offset vertical fin elements integrated with landscaping. Will there be any opportunities in the community center for local art? Also, is there a food and beverage component as that would be great especially if partnering local restaurants?

RESPONSE:

Justin Jampol: Great questions, and really important ones, because I think it speaks to the extraordinary nature of a space like this. The short answer is yes. In a way, we weren't able to do that with the Wende Museum, because it specifically is on one subject. The Center opens up all of these possibilities, so let's say there is a CCUSD Jazz performance or you are just a local band and you can't find a place to play. This is a place to show off what you've got and invite the agents to come and see you. If you are a violinist trying to make it into the LA Phil, there will be opportunities for shows. We want people to settle down, grab a book, have a coffee, and really enjoy the space.

Question: So, are the additional housing units acting more as a residency for artists? Just sort of trying to understand how it works. I love the idea of working with the non-profit for artists and providing housing. What do you imagine the length of time for the artist to live in the housing?

RESPONSE: Justin Jampol: . The loss of the Mayme Clayton Museum was such a hit to the dream of the [Culver City] Cultural Corridor and this [Center] is reigniting that dream. And yes, the six units would be part of this artist-in-residence program and so far with impact and feedback from AFI and the neighbors that we have spoken to, it would be three international artists and three local artists, imagine a mini-UN for art. With the fellowships that AFI does, they provide the legal services, the management of the housing, and transition services for one-year. Thus, it's a fellowship of one year and that's probably what we would do for the international and local artists. This is in the model of Villa Aurora or the Thomas Mann House, German government funded residencies in the Pacific Palisades and in Brentwood. Both of them great, and kind of an inspiration for us as well. That's the vision now, and I mean there could be some reason why that would change and AFI does do a couple of them that for whatever reason are nine months but one year is basically their sweet spot.

Question (follow-up): The AFI collaboration is awesome and a one-year fellowship is great. And, they can conclude with a work perhaps that speaks to the work they did while living in the residency. This is wonderful!

RESPONSE: Justin Jampol: Awesome, and we are excited about it too. I think there is a lot to Marla's point, and I think it's an important one. The opportunities are a win-win: you have residents that have a fellowship, they are being subsidized and paid for an activity to do that benefits the museum and benefits the community. Part of the fellowship will require that you have to give X amount of performances, teach, or train this number of students, and we hope the international ones will take the local artists under their wing. It is a resume builder for everyone, which is fantastic for the residents. Especially for those that are coming from places that don't have those opportunities, and we have them here. I really do think this is a great point to bring up.

[WHILE WAITING FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, Justin shared that the landscape designer for the Armory will come back and design the landscaping for the Center. We really will have a sense of interconnectedness and fit in together.]

Question: Will Phase 2 and Phase 3 start at the same time? Current garden is rented to the Culver City residents. Will new garden space be rented to residents or managed by the museum? Are there any alternatives for current gardeners?

RESPONSE: Justin Jampol: No, they will not be done at the same time. We have tried to structure this in phases. Phase 2 will be the Center and Phase 3 will be the housing component. Also, the garden is going to be managed by the museum with volunteers and opened up for both those who are currently in the garden, who will have priority, and others. We will allocate a budget for this; in other words, while we work with our volunteers, they will not be expected to invest in the cost of buying the plants or equipment. All of this will be provided by us for the gardeners. We think there is a wonderful opportunity for is a demonstration garden for people that are gardeners and know their stuff. We have had a lot of requests from the local schools and Upward Bound House, the kids—the growth of urban gardening has been huge and there is an opportunity to make it available to children to learn from and be inspired by gardening. I'm excited about the opportunity to work closely together with our gardener volunteers. By the way, the garden will be vastly expanded because not only will it be the parking spots and the rooftop garden spaces, but we are actually going to be doing a pilot project of cultivating the medians which is a huge amount of land, the land between the parking lot and Culver Boulevard which is otherwise underutilized dead space and we want to actually grow something and create.

Question: Would you elaborate on the 1 year fellowship? What does that mean exactly?
Thanks in advance.

RESPONSE: Justin Jampol: There is a blue-ribbon committee that AFI manages and it really speaks to international artists who are looking for an opportunity here in the US. They will often come with an associate position at USC or UCLA but sometimes its working directly with the museum for one year and sometimes they may be working with local schools. AFI really looks at those who are international artists in need of support and fellowship, and they specialize in those who need legal assistance, since many of them are on a temporary visa. Or they need a longer visa in order to work here for a certain amount of time. AFI handles all of that—and I see that you are an international artist, exactly the kind of person that AFI would support. That is in their mission and their job is to manage who the artists are and where they are because they go through a whole vetting process and competition. We provide the facilities, maintain them, and

oversee them. That is how their business model works, and yes, it is for a year. Thank you for that.

Follow-up: So they would be the one to place the artists?

RESPONSE: Justin Jampol: Yes, they have an application process that goes through them. They basically share with us who the artists are and give us a bio. There is a whole orientation process for the artists to get them comfortable in their new home ; so, in other words, when they come they have staff show them how it all works. They give them vouchers for Lyft and Uber and they take them around. That is where the AFI partnership is: we would be the facilities people and provide the capital improvements, manage the garden—AFI's model, which is also of course a nonprofit organization, is that they manage the artist side, the legal part, the legal services, the management of the housing, and the transition assistance and services.

CONCLUDING:

Justin Jampol: If there is nothing else, please be in touch, you have my email address and you know where I work, or where I live, to be honest. I'd be delighted to see you and am thankful for your time and thoughtful questions. I'm really happy and delighted that you could be here.