



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD MEETING
556 W. Maple
Thursday, April 4, 2024
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Kristy Barrett (Alternate), Alexandra Harris, Marty Logue, Jay Shell
Members Absent: Caroline Ashleigh, Bev Erickson, Pat Hughes, Judith Keefer
Student Members Present: None
Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack
Guests: Brian Devlin, Nagy Devlin Land Design

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Chairperson Logue.

**Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of March 7, 2024**

MOTION: by Barrett, seconded by Harris:

To approve the minutes of March 7, 2024.

VOTE: Yeas, 4
Nays, 0

Unfinished Business

Brian Devlin, Historic Landscape Architect from Nagy Devlin Land Design presented his revised landscape plan for the pond area, with details that include a complete planting scheme and specifications for stone materials, the observation platform, and bench and trash receptacles. He also presented a color rendering of the plan.

The planting plan includes an array of native plant-derived varieties that are suitable for the area around the pond, and that would support wildlife, maintain the natural character of the site's history, and permit visual access to the water features from various viewpoints. His scheme includes three basic areas; the east side of the pond, which features native wetlands plants and shrubs, including a large swath of a mixture of winterberry varieties with both male and female plants to ensure berry production.

- 1) The area that approaches/slopes toward the water would include blue flag iris, arrowhead, and other similar native plants that are native to these conditions.
- 2) The right of way/sidewalk/parking space area along Willits would include two elms, low growing juniper and potentilla due to their salt tolerance and native plant characteristics. Additional specimen trees include amelanchier and larch.
- 3) The south end of the pond has challenges due to the groundwater seeps and plan for the observation platform. The intent would be to dredge the south end of the pool to approximate its former boundary and elevate the observation platform, which is planned to be bluestone, on properly engineered supports. The steep slope to the immediate south of the planned walkway would feature meadowsweet, which may be a bit difficult to procure but is the preferred low

planting material for the slope. Some of the plants around the west end of the pond near the existing false cypress would include specimen oak leaf hydrangea and Peewee hydrangea. Ferns are included at the water's edge.

Mr. Devlin mentioned his concern that there is a significant amount of planting material and that some adjustments may be needed going forward. Removing the phragmites/common reed may be most effective in planned phasing to make sure it is removed and to coordinate new plantings. Mr. Devlin also shared a color rendering of the plan. The plan as designed would also require maintenance planning, and Mr. Devlin will be preparing a maintenance plan as part of his work on the project.

Board members agreed that the plan was well conceived and in line with the original concept plan, and appreciated the way the design would maintain visual contact with the water features. The board also was enthusiastic about the plan for the observation platform and the walkway area. There was a question about whether the City would permit the planting of two elm trees of the same variety along Willits, and a brief discussion of the limitations of disease resistance and whether different tree varieties should be considered. Elm trees are preferable if they can be used, because they reflect the historic character of the property, which is a key objective of the project. Director Pielack will research the City's policy regarding tree species and planting proximity for the next meeting. Mr. Devlin expressed an interest in meeting with AEW Engineer who designed the construction plan for the area around the pond to clarify some questions regarding the water level and elevations for the south area of the pond, as well as how to plan for the flow of the seeping springs in that area. Director Pielack suggested that she and Mr. Devlin could meet with AEW in the next month to discuss those concerns, and Mr. Devlin agreed to come back to the Museum Board in May to address these final issues. This would also permit additional review of the plan by members of the Museum Board that couldn't be at this meeting.

Communication and Reports

Museum Director Pielack reviewed the Director Report and highlighted the theme for next year's exhibit, which will be "Transportation and Transformation: Two Centuries of Shaping Birmingham and its People." The museum plans to incorporate unique stories of Birmingham relating to its growth and change due to the evolution of transportation and the impact on the community. Among the planned topics are early aviation, the Detroit United Railway, and the development of Birmingham's neighborhoods.

Member Comments

None.

Public Comments

None.

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 2, 2024, at 5:00 PM.

Ms. Logue adjourned the meeting at 6:36 PM.