

Lowertown Ballpark Design & Construction Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2012

Committee Members Present: Thurmes, Flynn, Remke, Mannillo, Hauge, Gerten, Ivey, Tallarico, Pidde

Guests: Annie Huidekoper (St. Paul Saints), Paul Johnson (Nelson, Tietz, & Hoyer), Martinez-Sones (staff), Pat Driscoll, Bill Hosko, Jeff Volovsek, Peter and Kathy Frohmer, Chris Beckstrom

Prior to the meeting being called to order, committee members and guests discussed whether or not it was appropriate to videotape the meeting. After discussion, committee members took a vote and opposed the meeting being recorded.

Meeting called to order. Chair Thurmes welcomed the group and asked for introductions along with a brief statement about what motivated the committee member to apply for membership on the LBDCC.

Paul Johnson offered some background: Nelson, Tietz, and Hoyer are real estate and property management advisors who have worked on large projects in the past and worked exclusively with the Twins on Target Field. They have been hired by the City to help make effective decisions on design and construction issues as there are thousands of decisions to be made and their team is not a stranger to public input. Johnson talked briefly about the RFP process, explaining that an RFP is a Request for Proposals, and the RFP would be released on Friday (November 16th). For five years the City and the Saints have been partnered with Ryan as the presumptive design build contractor, but concerns had been raised about process and an RFP was decided upon. Proposals will likely be due in December and the selection of a design-build team will happen in January. Johnson stated that it would be important for the design-build team to be at the table with the committee when decisions are made, so we've hit a little pause project-wise. He also offered some clarification on the difference between a design/bid/hire/build process and a design-build process, along with advantages and disadvantages. He stated that in this project, which is a design-build, he does not see any disadvantages. Johnson also shared that a traffic study is underway as part of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), which includes work with City of St. Paul, Ramsey County, Met Council, MPCS, downtown airport, along with others.

Annie Huidekoper introduced herself as an employee of the St. Paul Saints who works on community relations, community partnerships, and customer service on game nights. The Saints aim to provide a safe and inviting diversion that is more about conversation, connection, and community, plus there is baseball. The Saints partnered with Ryan Companies on the feasibility study and Ryan has invested time and energy because they've been long-standing partners, but there is not yet a design for the ballpark. Huidekoper shared that Julie Snow Architects created images for the lobbying effort with the legislature, but it's still very early in the process. The dream is to move in two years from now and hold college games in the spring and have opening day for the Saints in May.

Committee members then asked questions of both Mr. Johnson and Ms. Huidekoper. There was discussion about the set of criteria that will be used to score proposals and questions about the RFP and the reuse of the Gillette building. Johnson explained that what they expect to get back is a project management proposal, not a design at all, and they are purposely trying to avoid that. Specific will be determined once a proposal is selected. The RFP stipulates the needs from a macro standpoint and the grammatical needs of the Saints. Johnson did not know if the responses would be made public.

There were additional questions about the budget for the ballpark, particularly around the 2 million dollar gap. Johnson explained that once a designer is on board, they will design to however much they have at the time.

Other concerns were raised about the allocation of funds for design, construction and the impact on the Farmers Market, and parking. This led to some questions about the scope of the committee, and staff directed the committee to review the language from council resolution which created the committee. Handout distributed. The resolution language was read aloud.

Thurmes distributed a document on committee goals and process which was drafted as a team effort and is only being presented as a draft. Committee members are asked to review this document and come to the next meeting prepared to discuss it.

There was brief discussion about the best date and time to hold regular, monthly meetings. Because of the challenge of so many competing schedules, staff agreed to send out a number of options and poll the group. This will be done sometime this week.

Meeting adjourned.