

Lowertown Ballpark Design & Construction Committee
February 25, 2013
Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Pidde, Tallarico, Neilsen, Smith, Wilgren Clyne, Flynn, Remke, Fesser, Thurmes, Griffin, Ivey, Gerten

Others Present: Bob Curley, Bob Close, Pat Driscoll, Debra Gisch, Renee Skoglund, Paul Johnson, Jody Martinez, Lucy Thompson, Paul Mandell, Tom Erickson, Sandra Erickson, Tyson McElvan, Tom Whaley, Melissa Martinez-Sones

Introductions. Chair Thurmes reminded the attendees that nobody had been authorized to tape the meeting. Any requests to record the meeting must be directed to the CapitolRiver Council Board or Executive Committee.

New committee member introductions. Cheryl Wilgren Clyne is a multimedia artist with a long history in Lowertown who is also working with the Northern Spark Festival. Tim Griffin is with the Saint Paul Design Center.

Focus Group Review. Thurmes reviewed the agenda and information that had been sent out to committee members in advance. Committee members were asked for their feedback on the focus group exercise of the previous meeting. **Programming and Functionality:** Ballpark should support Lowertown; “a-ha” moment was around short-, medium-, and long-term thinking. Make sound decisions and don’t preclude ourselves from ideas with limited thinking. **Neighborhood Context:** Need to relate to the neighborhood but not mimic or be a warehouse ballpark. Interpret, take inspiration, and echo elements of Lowertown. Remember natural elements, make it accessible, porous, very inviting, gracious public realm. Food, arts, marketplace were other key themes. **Arts:** Was a great conversation around kinds of art including projected film, chalk art, music, dance. Preference for art from Lowertown, should be a venue for artists and not stagnant. **Neighborhood Concerns:** Parking is a concern also during construction, dog park, traffic, and future skyway connections were all discussed. Life before, during, and after construction with regard to noise and light was also discussed.

There was some discussion on the need to get people to stay; incentives to keep Saints fans in downtown – restaurants, specific vendors, etc.

Draft Ballpark Vision Statements. The committee reviewed the draft of the vision statements based on the work to date. There were some clarifying questions and additional comments and this feedback will be incorporated into the vision statements and come back to the committee.

Ballpark Design Strategy. Members of the design team presented on the influences and how they were a touchstone for design thinking. Marriage of context and function – how to create a 360 experience? Information was offered on the optimal orientation and acceptable solar orientations, existing site constraints, and natural topography of the site. Similar solar orientation to Target Field. The ballpark will be about 14’ below street level, massing like a 2- to 2.5-story building. Not a heavy presence and height is comparable to existing Diamond Products building. *See PowerPoint presentation for additional information.*

There were follow-up questions from committee members about this ballpark in relation to others – anything similar out there? Other reactions were offered from committee members. Looks good on paper but hope is that ballpark is not overdesigned and the market can't handle it. We know the existing Saints fan base will come.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19th.

There was some additional discussion about the recording of meetings. Thurmes reiterated that the issue must be addressed through the CRC and that the LBDCC could not give permission for recording.

Community members asked about the process and having a larger public meeting that addresses reuse of the Gillette/Diamond Products building. Representatives from Ryan Company were asked if they would be willing to meet on this, and they explained that they were hired by the City and the Mayor and don't have authorization to do that. They were asked to meet privately and it was agreed that this conversation would continue outside the LBDCC meeting. Some committee members expressed support for a larger community meeting, and Thurmes agreed to talk with the design team about the schedule for this and report back to the LBDCC next month.

Meeting adjourned.