

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: July 20, 2017

Meeting #243

Project: Rash Field

Phase: Discussion

Location: 201 Key Highway, Baltimore MD 21230

PRESENTATION:

Laurie Schwartz, President of Waterfront Partnership, introduced the revised presentation and updated scope for the redevelopment of Rash Field – a 7-acre urban waterfront park along the south Inner Harbor Promenade. Richard Jones, Landscape Architect and President of Mahan Rykiel, reviewed key comments from the previous scheme and addressed the corresponding changes in the updated proposal:

South Edge – The Hillside

- Removal of existing concrete bleachers and introduction of a sloped landscape with meandering paths
- Two points of entry to the park - at the East and West corners
- Relocation of the Pride Memorial to the middle of The Hillside surrounded by shade trees and seating amidst the natural habitat

North Edge - Promenade

- Greater connection and diversity of experiences along the Promenade
- Multiple points of entry without distinct hierarchy
- Replacement of the Game Alee with 4 different zones – Polinator Garden, Game Lawn, Water Feature and Play Lawn that complement activities happening inside the park

The Overlook

- Collects the main points of entry and other pathways through the park
- Distinct geometry that incorporates seating and landscape
- Provides a promontory view towards the harbor
- Forms a strong axis to the water and provides direct access between the higher and lower levels of the South and North edges of the Park

Skate Park, Nature Park and Kinetic Play

- Provide wider variety of outdoor interactive experiences

Peter Stubb, Architect and Principal at Gensler, presented initial concepts for the main Pavilion under The Overlook that drew inspiration from ideas of ‘prospect’ and ‘shelter’. The proposed structure would help navigate the important pathways through the site and into the Inner Harbor, provide panoramic views and tie architecturally to the existing piers along the water’s edge. The building includes a café on axis with the main entry from the promenade, rental facility and restrooms towards the open fields and additional services tucked towards the slope.

Comments from the Panel:

The Panel applauded the ambitious scope, increased budget and general design approach to the project. The following comments address recommendations for further study:

- **Park Fields** – the panel questioned if the central location of the volleyball fields is adequate with respect to its limited activity most of the time and suggested bringing the Main Lawn to the center of the park instead.
- **Pride Memorial** – the panel encouraged further development of the area around the Pride Memorial into a more contemplative rather than a pass-through environment with a clear path leading to it and also questioned the physical manifestation of the memorial – highly visible vs. experiential.
- **Water Feature** – the panel suggested that the fountain take on a more architectural character and connect better to the surroundings rather than acting as an island in the park. Investigate ways to create an urban pause at the feature and experience it more from the promenade.
- **Pavilion and Overlook** – the panel recommended that the design team develops further the Pavilion and Overlook element in order to connect it to The Hillside in a more definitive way – formally and functionally. Further study is also needed at the lower level where the Pavilion receives all converging paths but fails to organize the flow and hierarchy through the area. The panel suggested revisiting the axial arrival at the Pavilion from the Promenade and exploring a ‘plaza’ space as a place-making device at this important junction.
- **Spatial Legibility** – the panel encouraged the design team to further clarify the hierarchy of movement and spatial quality of all main elements through the deliberate use of materials (pathways vs places), vegetation (cadence of trees vs clusters), faceted vs. oval forms (upper vs lower park level) towards developing a coherent vocabulary for the project.

Panel Action: Discussion.

Attending: Laurie Schwartz, Lauren Maloney- Waterfront Partnership
Richard Jones - Mahan Rykiel
Peter Stubb, Chris Melander, Tyler Miller – Gensler
Sarah Gantz – Baltimore Sun
Ed Gunts – BAF
Maurice Walters

Messrs. Bowden and Burns, Mses. O’Neill and Ilieva* - UDARP Panel

Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Wolde Ararsa, Matthew DeSantis, Stephanie Smith,
Kristen Ahearn, Laurie Feinberg, Christina Hartsfield - Planning