

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

Date: July 2, 2015

Meeting #207

Project: McKeldin Plaza

Phase: Discussion

Location: Inner Harbor – Pratt + Light Street

PRESENTATION:

Mackenzie Paull of The Downtown Partnership opened the discussion (for Kirby Fowler, who was unable to attend) and introduced the project design team which consisted of the architectural firms of Ayers Saint Gross/Ziger Snead and the landscape architecture firm of Mahan Rykiel. Ms. Paull indicated that the prior design had been much edited by the work session’s previous comments and by other community input. The most obvious two changes include modifications that strengthen and clarify the Calvert Street pedestrian entrance to the Inner Harbor, the creation of a more defined threshold condition at the Light Street corner of the proposed new plaza as well as a series of geometric adjustments and re-alignments throughout the plan.

Discussion Comments from the Panel:

The Panel felt that the project, when viewed in its totality, had numerous very compelling design components. However, when viewed in phases, particularly before the automobile “spur” from Light to Pratt is eliminated, it is not clear that it could actually achieve its desired conceptual impact and connectivity. Further, there was continuing concern that the demolition of the existing fountain prior to the spur closure might be premature. Other points voiced by Panel members during the discussion were as follows:

1. **The “reading” of a Civic Plaza** - The discussion returned repeatedly to the comments questioning the expressive clarity of the space as a civic gathering space rather than as an extension of the Inner Harbor visitor’s experience. Perhaps a larger definitive paved area, with fewer conflicting geometries should be explored.
2. **Cohesion in Plan** –are there opportunities to better link the multiple parts of the plan together in a more meaningful way if the strict purity of forms were revisited.
3. **Relationship between the Plaza and Mass Transit** – the absence of a direct mass transit connection at McKeldin Plaza was thought to be a critical missing component and it was suggested that more study be given to this component.
4. **Light Street corner threshold** – Although it was felt that a threshold element might contribute to a better definition of the Plaza itself the currently proposed group of trees seem to block any long view to the Inner Harbor and the ship, Constellation. Illustrate this view in any future presentation to ensure threshold is created but visual connectivity in clear.
5. **Water feature element** – concern continues to be voiced regarding the proposed design and strength of the water wall element and its challenging role as both an entertainment feature and a serious memorial. Explore the possibility of more dynamic and creative options.

Panel Action: Discussion Only.

Attending:

Mackenzie Paull - The Downtown Partnership of Baltimore
Jonathan Ceci - Ayers Saint Gross
Richard Jones, Nan Rohrer – Mahan Rykiel
Steve Ziger – Ziger Snead Architects

Jeremy M. Rountree – Public Arts Commission
Nathan Dennies – AIA Baltimore
Mike Pugh – Resident
Fred Scharmen – Morgan State University
Neil Murray – Resident
Adison Zoretic – JTM
Lauren Moloney, Laurie Schwartz – Waterfront Partnership
Curtis Brown – Resident
Stephen Hendee – MICA
Darron Cooper – BDC
Jon Schulman, Arsh Mirmiran – CVP
Ryan Patterson, Bomim Jeon – BOPA
Klaus Philipsen – ArchPlan

Messrs. Bowden*, Burns, Haresign and Rubin - UDARP Panel

Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Amy Gilder-Busatti, Alex Hoffman, Heather Martin, Caitlin Audette –Planning Dept