

## Humber Bay Park – Building and Related Site Improvements

### Architectural Community Resource Group Meeting #3

Wednesday August 30, 2017

6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Polish Association of Toronto, 2282 Lake Shore Blvd W  
Etobicoke, Ontario

## Meeting Summary

### 1. Agenda Review, Opening Remarks and Introductions

Participants to the third Architectural Community Resource Group (ACRG) meeting for the Humber Bay Parks building improvement were welcomed by Jim Faught, Lura Consulting. Mr. Faught led a round of introductions and reviewed the meeting agenda. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to:

- Update on project, approach, and timing;
- Overview of Consultation Framework;
- Summary of "What we Heard" at ACRG #2
- Overview of site and building concept;
- To answer key questions and concerns raised at the previous meeting;
- To discuss next steps for the building and site improvements.

The meeting agenda is attached as Appendix A, while a list of attending ACRG members can be found in Appendix B.

### 2. Project Update/ Consultation Framework

Peter Klambauer, City of Toronto, provided an update on the project and the process to date. Mr. Klambauer thanked the attendees for their feedback and perspectives and understood that while a total consensus may not be possible, it is important to have as many people's voices heard as possible.

The scale of the proposed building has changed based on the feedback heard as well as the purpose of the building. At this time, the team is committed to providing a nature-themed space that will not encourage inappropriate "urban use" impacts inside the park.

The consultation framework was reviewed and the group was advised that the next steps would include a public meeting in October to present preliminary concepts and preferred alternatives. Tonight would be the last ACRG meeting, slightly re-arranging the original framework, but there were upcoming public presentations and many further opportunities for public commentary and input.

Mr. Klambauer described what the benefit of our public consultation has yielded to date: reducing the size of the building (from its original combined built density result of 14,800 sf to proposed 8,000 sf); developing a new context and strategy for the east park; controlling urban intrusion; examining beneficial and preferred uses; designing nature-themed and integrated space: and working to prevent future commercialization of the space. We are working to remain focussed on bringing \$7 mil worth of capital improvements to the park, building out the core moves of the master plan on the east side that were tied to the building, integrated and adjacent landscape elements.

Tonight's presentation will include images of a concept strategy for a remote building that has effectively no footprint, meaning that its roof spaces will be accessible and part of the open park space!

### 3. What We Heard

Lori Eliis, City of Toronto, provided an overview of the public feedback received to date including the results of the online survey that was recently published online. Ms. Ellis addressed concerns about how the survey data was presented in the past. The preliminary data set presented at the public meeting graphically showed results from 182 respondents whereas the current data is presented as per the City's standard and reflects the input from 1021 responses. The data was not altered, but there were more responses and was presented in a different way.

The Extracted key points from the recent summary posted on line and include:

#### Concerns

- Architectural project needs to support goals of the Master Plan.
- Appropriate size of building for size and character of park is small not large.
- Park users want to be outside not inside so smaller building is better.
- Need to preserve the character and nature in the park
- Year-round function, staffing and maintenance are important.
- Educational program – does this serve needs of the community?

#### Positive Feedback

- Improvements are needed and should focus on the natural spaces in the park.
- Support educational uses as part of program – promotes year-round use!
- Community supports keeping and enhancing green space
- Park needs to address changing demographics of the area and be an amenity available to all including future needs.
- New building is an opportunity to enhance the park and preserve its uniqueness and character. High quality building that has small footprint.

Ms. Ellis emphasized that the team had listened to the feedback received from the public and from the discussion at the previous ACRG meetings and incorporated into the refined design which included:

- Smaller building – reduced to 8,000 square feet
- Complement adjacent Master Plan initiatives – implement adjoining features including the meadow, pond and parking.

#### ***Questions of Clarification***

C: Survey may have been presented differently between public meeting and when it was released, however the current information does align completely with what was released at the second public meeting.

Q: When I went through the survey results, the percentage of people worried about a building in the park was very low. So why are we spending so much time on it? This is a community of 23,000 people; if the design fits in, we will live with it. I think we are spending too much time on the building.

A: The building is an important component of the park and separate from the Master Plan components and that is why we need a separate meeting and process. The design of the building has been refined and will show the potential for the building to do more for the community.

Q: Was the community as a whole asked if they want a building? And after you explain the preferences of the smaller building, will you again ask the community if they want it?

A: The building is not an optional feature of the park, we need a building and the reality is that there are operational functions that need to be satisfied. Within the masterplan, we assumed there would be buildings and for a number of different reasons, Humber Bay Park East emerged as the preferred location. The building was not specifically asked about in the survey because there were a lot of questions, controversy and misinformation about the building. The project team was concerned that people's responses would have been based on this misinformation and instead asked for feedback on how people might use the building instead.

C: When the building was originally proposed the community wasn't informed, but at the beginning of this process, Peter explained that we could have a wide range of choices, including just fixing up washrooms. However at the last meeting a larger building was presented to us. The focus should be what is best for the community and what they desire. There is still a bit of mistrust and caution but let's move forward.

#### 4. Presentation – Preliminary Architectural Concept Review

Jon Neuert, Baird Sampson Neuert Architects, presented the preliminary architectural concepts for the building. The takeaways from the previous meeting, along with Master Plan considerations, were used to refine the design including:

- Smaller footprint: the footprint presented is the minimal functional size to meet operational needs.
- Move the building: the water level rise of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a meter proposed in the Master Plan will cause the existing building to be impacted with raised water level flood risk.
- Accessible roof spaces: opportunities include a roof that runs into the land, terraced seating, creating viewing relationships
- Integrated Design; building covered by greenery and built into the landscape, roof becomes part of the ecosystem, intense biodiverse green room that is accessible part of a larger landscape integration.
- Interior/Exterior relationships: opportunity within the site to create something that is in keeping with the place. I.e. promote a diverse ecosystem, a place of enjoyment for people and move towards an integrated design approach that is in keeping with the characteristics of the park.

Additional features include:

- Maintenance of trees: trees create a green layer that keeps the city away and creates a retreat. The design tries to integrate the landforms and create meeting points.
- Create a berm and fill out the berm with building to make a type of porch and covered walkway

- Enhance park user experience as part of an integrated design approach. Weather protected spaces, seating, viewing opportunities and habitat areas in close proximity to people.
- Sustainable Technology: geothermal opportunity to create a low energy and bird friendly building.

## 5. Presentation – Community Space

Mr. Klambauer presented information and ideas around the community space component. In addition to the parks management function and washrooms, there is an opportunity to improve community space and activities offered in the park including pond skating, walking and space for activities.

Although the survey data has been presented in several formats, it does indicate support for improved indoor amenities versus a prohibition on them and them, a preference for various listed new indoor amenities versus none at all.

Mr. Klambauer also spoke to successful precedents for this, notably the nearby Power House, and the Humber Valley Arboretum. Both of these are popular, innovative and beautiful buildings that do not diminish their natural environments. Furthermore, the existing pond infrastructure, boardwalks and bridges are failing and action has to be taken soon, in any event, so discussion and decisions are imminent.

Mr. Klambauer concluded by focussing on how we can build for the future and, through the Master Plan process, provide naturalization opportunities and wetlands development at the ponds that restores the original park's intentions it provides as healthier oxygenated water balance. Community space opens up opportunities for expanded building access, including year-round washroom access, warm-up / cool-down lobby space and expanded accessibility features to support access and enjoyment of the park by providing supports for seniors and families that don't currently exist. Community space creates amenity that services growth, which can therefore be funded by development charge-based funding. It's an opportunity for the park and the communities that it serves.

## 6. Discussion – Summary

Questions were encouraged throughout the presentation. A summary of the questions of clarification are provided below. Questions are noted with **Q**, responses by the project team are noted by **A**, and comments are noted by **C**. Please note this is not a verbatim summary.

**Q:** Will the old building stay or go?

**A:** The buildings would be removed. However, during construction it could remain open for access to washrooms etc.

**Q:** Do we have funding to do this?

**A:** Originally had budget for a larger building. Now we will be using the funds in a different way. It is our intention to create this but would require formal design development to understand all costs.

**Q:** Once the money is used up, will there be money to complete the design and maintain it?

**A:** We understand that the cost conversation is highly relevant. The proposed design is done to make maintenance less costly. Whenever there is a capital project like this, there is an impact of budget and management of assets moving forwards; we have an opportunity to set a high bar.

**Q:** We have had this park for 25 years and it is neglected because the city has maintained it well enough. Putting money into this kind of project is great, but will it be maintained?

**A:** To clarify, the building is one component of the Master Plan but it is the element of the master plan that we have opportunity to access funds for, if they are based in a building development and its integrated aspects. The pathways, berms etc. are master plan elements but they are adjacent to the building and we can justify doing those surrounding elements. A new contemporary design gives us the opportunity to develop durable low maintenance solutions. Energy efficiency design will help develop economical approaches. We don't intend to use natural gas to service the building, as part of our low energy consumption design approach, in addition to reducing likelihood of future commercial conversion that we understand the public is very concerned about.

**Q:** I like what you presented here. I appreciate at this point that you do not have the design costed out but what is the timeframe for costing out, because presenting this publically, it may not be genuine to the community. Are you able to do costing in advance of the public meeting?

**A:** What we are presenting is our intention. Ultimately we have to look at conditions, public support. This is what the city wants to do. We can get schematic costing and then more and more ideas in an order of magnitude way, but we need to commit to a concept that we can develop in enough detail to be able to measure costs. With the budget currently available, we hope and expect to deliver on the integration of building, berm and pond edge conditions; we hope to address the parking and meadow, but need to advance the design development to determine if that can be afforded in the budget.

**Q:** Does the new proposed building accommodate park staff space requirements?

**A:** Yes

**C:** Comments, park is very low, flat and not good viewing platforms. I like the integrated design; it is beautiful with lots of potential. I think there should be rooftop viewing (into wetland in the park). Also, should have enough covered open space for people to shelter in. There was a lot of glass in the renderings – need to be bird-friendly. In terms of community space and building; don't over build and don't put staffing and programming here. I don't think it is appropriate or sustainable. Beautiful concept and space but the park should be for park use and not for classrooms and meetings.

**Q:** I am flabbergasted by the concept – you've done a great job of hearing the concerns of the last meeting. Where are they going to put park maintenance equipment in this concept?

**A:** There would be space used here initially and then move most of it to the other side when built (to accommodate the phasing of the Master Plan).

**C:** See the park and waterfront space as an amazing opportunity and the design is brilliant. I am trying to see it as a user and citizen of Toronto, tourists etc. and it seems nicely put together. I think of it as a resource for more people and attract more funding to it. The park doesn't just belong to the people who live here but is a feature of Lake Ontario.

**Q:** You have proposed rooms that are 25' by 35'? What is the rest of the space used for?

**A:** The lobby, washrooms and circulation space probably adds up to 7000 square feet. The extra 1000 square feet is extra space to work with other program spaces, daylighting design, circulation, building shape and the like.

**C:** I like what is developing here, but don't think anyone should suggest that this isn't a major risk. The budget is very uncertain, the funding may or may not be approved, changing players might impact funding etc. I think it's a risk worth taking but city staff should not pretend this is not a risk.

**Q:** Really pleased to see the concept and brought in a lot of elements we talked about. A lot of us are concerned about funding. Would like to see the building be as sustainable as possible and like that the building will be moved. According to timeline, would there be more detailed drawings for a general budget and timeline?

**A:** We want to be accountable for the imagery being shown and can get an order of magnitude budget together for that timeline.

**C:** Really like the design, it is obvious you listened and it is very exciting. I would be more excited if I knew how the rooms would be used. With flexible design and use decided later, but makes sense to do it in the other order. I would also like to ensure covered space and maybe an extended the roof for more coverage.

**C:** Like the direction, however I am concerned about limiting the amount of parking as it may discourage people coming in from further away.

**A:** This is an important issue and we will think about solutions.

**C:** Congratulations. The plan is really innovative and exciting and hope it comes to reality. Community space needs a lot more work. If you're talking about recreation for people living in the motel strip, and use here at the park, then be clear that there will be city support for recreation and programs. Need commitment that there will be funding for the park.

**Q:** We have \$7 million to build this project. How much has been spent from that 7 million?

**A:** We did not review that information in advance of the meeting. Funds have been spent on public consultation, design and investigations.

**C:** This is much better than what was first proposed. Let's please build something that is functional and can be useful to the Community!

### Summary Next Steps

This meeting concludes the Architecture Community Resource Group meetings for the building. However feedback from this group I still welcomed and will be considered in the design and how information is presented at future steps in our process.

The survey data set and guidelines to help interpret the data will be uploaded to the project website.

**Meeting adjourned.**

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**AGENDA**

**Meeting Purpose:**

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- Summary of "What we Heard" at ACRG #2
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**6:30 pm      Agenda Review, Opening Remarks, review of TOR**

- Jim Faight, Lura Consulting, Facilitator

**6:40 pm      Project Update / Consultation Framework Update**

- Peter Klambauer, City of Toronto

**6:50 pm      What We Heard**

- Lori Ellis, City of Toronto

**7:00 pm      Questions of Clarification**

**7:10 pm      Preliminary Architectural Concept Review**

- Jon Neuert, BSN Architects,

**7:40 pm      Community Space**

- Peter Klambauer, City of Toronto

**7:50 pm      Facilitated Discussion**

**8:20 pm      Summary and Next Steps**

- Lori Ellis, Peter Klambauer, City of Toronto

**8:30 pm      Adjourn**