



## **Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #10 DRAFT Wednesday, September 20, 2006**

---

### **Present:**

Bruce Kuwabara, Chair  
George Baird  
Paul Bedford  
Tania Bortolotto  
Peter Clewes  
Renee Daoust  
Peter Halsall  
Anne McIlroy  
Janet Rosenberg  
Don Schmitt  
Greg Smallenberg  
Charles Waldheim

### **Regrets:**

Siamak Hariri

### **Designees and Guests:**

Robert Freedman  
Christopher Glaisek

### **Recording Secretary:**

Pina Mallozzi

---

### **WELCOME**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the Panel to the Corporation's new offices. He reviewed the day's agenda and noted that although brief it looked very interesting.

The Chair recommended that a brief discussion on the architect selection component of the developer proposal call process be added to the agenda.

He then noted that Mr. Campbell was away and could not attend the Panel meeting this month. He then asked Mr. Glaisek to provide a project report.

---

### **REPORT FROM THE VP PLANNING AND DESIGN**

Christopher Glaisek, the Corporation's Vice President for Planning and Design, gave a general overview and brief update on project progress over the past month.

#### *Central Waterfront/Quay to the City*

- The Corporation hosted *Quay to the City*, the temporary closure of Queens Quay, from August 12 – 20, 2006.
- The event was kicked-off on August 11, 2006 with representatives from the three levels of government who painted the stripes of the Martin Goodman Trail. There was great excitement about the possibility for a transformed Queens Quay.
- The temporary landscape installation consisted of a linear picnic lawn, a stretch of 12,000 geraniums along the TTC right-of-way, an arch made of bicycles, and a reconnected Martin Goodman trail.
- The landscape was complimented by a series of programmed events that demonstrated the possibilities for the new public space. Events included a walking tour with Adriaan Geuze,

free boat tours, artist installations, a bike parade, canoe and kayaking lessons and a 5k family fun run.

- The Corporation is in the process of preparing a contract with West 8+DTAH for master planning, detailed design and initiating an environmental assessment. Construction on Queens Quay is anticipated to begin late next fall.

#### *West Don Lands*

- Construction of the berm and Don River Park is expected to begin this spring, and housing construction will be developed by TCHC, who will complete the first building in the West Don Lands. TCHC will hire an architect and together with the Corporation develop a process for design review.
- Later this year, the Corporation will issue a developer proposal call for the remainder of the buildings in district three. The Corporation is looking for the Panel's perspective on how to structure the requirements for architectural excellence in the developer proposal call.
- The third public meeting for Don River Park was held last night. The team continues to receive positive support from members of the stakeholder committee and the public, and Michael Van Valkenburgh will present to the Panel later today.

#### *East Bayfront*

- Zoning for the East Bayfront will go to council next week. The design guidelines will be presented to the Panel in November.

#### *Lake Ontario Park*

- Field Operations has prepared an initial philosophical approach to Lake Ontario Park which will present to the Panel today. It is anticipated they will return to present their concept plan to the public in December.

Mr. Glaisek began by noting that the Corporation is starting to transition its organizational structure away from the Program Manager model to one in which project management responsibilities will be brought in-house. The Planning and Design department is going to hire several new project managers, and Mr. Glaisek asked the Panel to email him any potential candidates for those positions.

The Chair then opened up the meeting for questions or comments from the Panel.

One Panel member asked if any major issues were anticipated in the environmental assessment for the Central Waterfront. Mr. Glaisek noted that although there are many issues, the temporary closure helped advance the process of evaluating the impacts. The major concerns identified are access to the south side, tour and school buses, and the fear that the proposed Queens Quay will not provide adequate vehicular capacity. Mr. Glaisek noted that although the community has some concerns, the survey conducted by the Corporation shows that 70% of the over 1,000 individuals surveyed favour the proposed Queens Quay changes. It was noted that the Corporation completed traffic counts and several surveys and will be preparing a comprehensive report of the outcome of *Quay to the City*.

One Panel member asked how the *Quay to the City* installation differed from the West 8+DTAH design. Mr. Glaisek explained the differences between the two designs noting the double alleé of trees and pedestrian promenade were not installed in the *Quay to the City* but will be integral to the long-term reconfiguration. He also noted that for the temporary closure the north side of the street was one-way and the winning design proposes two-way traffic. The final configuration of the street right-of-way will ultimately be determined as part of the environmental assessment process.

---

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

The Chair then asked the Panel for their corrections to the minutes. With no corrections noted, the minutes were approved by the Panel.

It was noted that the Corporation will host its Annual General Meeting during the first week of November. Mr. Glaisek invited the Panel to attend the meeting.

The frequency of meetings for 2007 was discussed. One Panel member noted that the monthly meetings seem to work well. The Panel agreed to continue with monthly meetings.

The nature of the design requirements of the developer proposal call was discussed. The Panel expresses some concern that the level of design rigor be set high enough. It was noted that the Panel has never come to a consensus on how to define architectural excellence in the developer proposal call process. Mr. Glaisek explained that the Corporation is committed to excellence, but is not in favour of conducting a competitive design process for every site throughout the waterfront precincts.

The Panel suggested that the Corporation look to other great contemporary waterfronts for their approach to attracting talent. One Panel member asked if the Corporation has done research on how Amsterdam has done the eastern dock lands. It was noted that the Panel thought that those developments engaged a roster of approved architects. Mr. Glaisek asked whether that might be perceived as exclusive unless a very large list is defined, and by what criteria would the list be compiled. One Panel member noted that TCHC has different lists defined for different types of projects, which could serve as a model.

Another Panel member suggested that each precinct may require a combination of hiring recognized talent for some sites and sponsoring design competitions for others that require particular attention due to their importance to achieving the goals of the precinct plan. The Panel could identify a list of key sites it recommends to the Corporation for design competition. It was also suggested that a mix of established and new firms be engaged to ensure a dynamic mix of buildings. A further suggestion that the architecture, like the landscape projects already underway, should seek international talent.

One Panel member stated that many other cities use competitions. The Panel reaffirmed their support for having competitions as part of the developer proposal call process. It was noted that the recently completed central waterfront competition was a great success at creating excitement and the same must occur with the architecture. The Panel cautioned that these competitions could be structured in such a way that architects are compelled to over-commit up front and then not be able to deliver later.

The Panel noted that it is particularly important for the architectural language of the first building to create excitement for the waterfront.

Mr. Glaisek requested that the Panel strike a subcommittee to further define a set of selection criteria for the developer proposal call. Peter Clewes and George Baird were suggested as members of the subcommittee in addition to the Chair.

---

## **PROJECT REVIEWS**

### **I.0 Lake Ontario Park**

*ID#: 1014*

*Project Type: Park/Public Realm Design*

*Location: Area bounded the by Eastern Gap to the RC Harris Filtration Plant, from Unwin Avenue and Queen Street to Lake Ontario.*

*Proponent: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation*

*Architect/Designer: Field Operations*

*Review Round: One*

*Presenter(s): James Corner*

*Delegation: Ellen Neises, Justine Kwiatkowski, Joanna Kidd, and Mark Schollen*

#### **I.1 Introduction to the Issues**

Mr. Glaisek introduced this project, noting that Mr. Corner will present the team's preliminary musings for Lake Ontario Park for the Panel's initial reactions. The main issues on which the advice of the Panel was sought include:

- Appropriateness of conceptual organizing principles
- Programming, landscape systems and circulation

#### **I.2 Project Presentation**

James Corner, Principal with Field Operations, then gave a detailed presentation of Lake Ontario Park. He began by providing an overview of the team and a survey of his past work. He then provided an extensive presentation of the team's preliminary ideas for Lake Ontario Park intended to spawn interest and questions.

Mr. Corner described the wild, big nature and complex character of the site highlighting its defining history and dynamic present. He explained the 13 components which together make up Lake Ontario Park and discussed several of the unique characteristics of the site, including its 37 kilometer shoreline edge along with over 400 unique places. The main organizing concept involves four circulatory transects: the bar, the spit, the bow and the beach connecting three major landscape interventions to re-invoke the sandbar, the marsh and the river were historically present.

#### **I.3 Panel Comments**

The Chair then asked the Panel for comments.

One Panel member congratulated the team on a provocative start, noting that the concept is intriguing and extremely powerful. Another asked how increased population tends to draw people to the water's edge and how the team is going to accommodate this. Mr. Corner noted that the public made it clear at the June meeting that they really want the heterogeneous quality of the edge to be maintained, and not transformed into an urbanized, hard edged promenade.

Another Panel member raised concerns that the parameters of the park seem to go beyond what is really in need of a master plan. It was noted that as you move east of Ashbridges Bay, spaces are largely already defined and that although there is a perceptual benefit of making the park seem larger than it is, there is concern that it may be confusing the project by treating established areas and undeveloped territories equally.

Others raised some concerns about the modesty of the outposts and how from a practical perspective they can exist safely. Mr. Corner noted that this condition already exists on Tommy Thompson Park, and that it will depend on the Parks Department's tolerance for safety as to how far this idea is expanded. It was noted that the team would like to retain the modest feeling in 50% of the park while the other 50% can be more intensively built up.

One Panel member noted that the promenade at the Eastern Beaches, where the edge of the city touches the lake, is quite an amazing place for walks but does not provide a "circuit", forcing strollers to double back to reach their departure point. It was suggested that the team explore creating opportunities for one to meander, rest, or short-cut. Another Panel member asked, given the tendency for a visitor to want to do a circuit walk, what the rationale was for a linear concept. Mr. Corner noted that while there may be some places where smaller circuits are integrated into the transects, the goal is to create a behaviorally different approach to park planning that enhances the sense of exploration and journey.

It was noted that many people do not know that the park exists. One Panel member asked how the design team intends to assert the presence of the park and suggested a bold physical connection across the water. Mr. Corner noted that while this is logistically very difficult, the team will consider making water-side connections at Cherry Street and the Don Greenway. One Panel member asked what will happen in the park at night and suggested that scenographic lighting might be a way to announce the park's presence to the city. Another Panel member noted support for an additional north-south route to the park.

It was suggested by the Panel that, given the amazing experience of being in the interior of the Tommy Thompson Park, a ferry that makes several stops might enhance one's experience with the site. It was also noted that this could enable full accessibility to the ends of Tommy Thompson Park which today are not accessible. Mr. Corner thought that this may be possible.

The Panel discussed the Cormorants living on the Spit that have destroyed a large area of plant material. One Panel member felt that the effects of the Cormorants are part of the character of the place. Mr. Corner noted that the city has a fairly sophisticated ecological contingency and that the debate on how to manage nature is very alive around the issue of the Cormorants in Tommy Thompson Park. He suggested that this debate should stay alive.

One Panel member asked how the team intends to get feedback from a wide group of stakeholders that reflect the regional aspirations of the park. Mr. Corner asked the Panel for their suggestions on how to identify a more diverse group. It was noted that for the Waterfront Public Space Framework, meetings were held in locations outside the waterfront community. One Panel member asked Mr. Corner to explain what strategies were used at Fresh Kills. Mr. Corner noted that at Fresh Kills, because it was a former dump, the notion that it would be transformed into a park stirred little opposition. Their team did an imaging campaign which included posterizing the buses downtown. It was noted that it took a while to build a constituency but a super group advocating for the park has been established. Ms. Jenkins noted that the Corporation is aware of the strategies that Field Operations has used in the past and is looking to outreach beyond the local community for Lake Ontario Park.

The Panel asked for clarity on the nature of Unwin Avenue as the edge of the sandbar. Mr. Corner explained that the conceptual plan envisions a concentration of active recreation along the Unwin Avenue edge of the park. Another Panel member inquired about the "knuckle", noting that there does not seem to be an image for how that parcel works. Mr. Glaisek

explained that although all the parcels around the knuckle have been designed, there is no design vision for that parcel. The Panel requested that the Corporation undertake a serious design investigation of this area.

#### 1.4 Summary of Panel's Key Issues

N/A

#### 1.5 Proponent's Response

Mr. Corner thanked the Panel for its input.

## **2.0 Don River Park**

*ID#: 1006*

*Project Type: Park/Public Realm Design*

*Location: Area bounded by the Don River, CN Rail Yards, Bayview Avenue, and King Street*

*Proponent: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation*

*Architect/Designer: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA)*

*Review Round: Three*

*Presenter(s): Michael Van Valkenburgh, Maryann Thompson*

*Delegation: Emily Mueller De Celis, Melanie Hare and Laurie Payne*

### 2.1 Introduction to the Issues

Mr. Glaisek introduces this project, noting that the design team is hoping to bring schematic design to an end following this visit and will present changes since the last meeting. The main issues on which the advice of the Panel was sought include:

- The design of the pavilion
- The topography
- The children's play areas

### 2.2 Project Presentation

Mr. Van Valkenburgh invited the Panel to join him around the new model. He highlighted the major changes including the topography which is now more robust, the soccer field size which has increased based on feedback from the City staff, and the pavilion siting which has been shifted to a flatter area on the top of the hill. He also noted that a new six meter pathway will provide emergency access to the site. He then introduced Maryann Thompson to present the pavilion.

Ms. Thompson explained how the pavilion has been re-conceived as an open air pavilion with a fireplace, two restrooms and a small office. She explained that the fireplace, which is faced with solar panels, is oriented so that temporary, pocketed, sliding doors can enclose the space in cold weather to provide microclimate for extended seasonal use. She then described the material palette being proposed including a metal lower roof, "green" upper roof, cedar interior, board-formed concrete fireplace, and stone floor.

### 2.3 Panel Comments

One Panel member asked about the status of the community kitchen. Ms. Thompson noted that the Parks Department had many concerns with the kitchen from an operations perspective and it has therefore been removed from the pavilion program at this point. The Panel was disappointed by this decision noting that the kitchen would eventually have a constituency to help with operations. Ms. Thompson noted that the design of the pavilion could provide utilities

so as not to preclude a future kitchen. The Panel suggested that kitchen infrastructure could be as simple as a gas grill and a big stainless steel sink or a huge cast concrete counter and basin.

Another Panel member suggested that a small food concession be considered as a possible program for the pavilion, and a potential revenue generator. Ms. Thompson noted that she would love to see food service but that the Parks Department does not feel there is an adequate demand for such a use. Another Panel member suggested accommodating a mobile vendor who can pull up for a few hours.

Mr. Van Valkenburgh noted that the Parks Department staff have been good critics but that the real challenge is in the lack of funding for the operations which is the source of their reluctance with unique features. It was noted that if the Corporation's intent is to build a series of amazing public spaces the resources for maintaining them must be determined. Mr. Van Valkenburgh noted the Battery Park City model where, as part of the competition for buildings, developers were encouraged to become stewards of their public space and in return the public space increases their marketability. Several Panel members suggested that ways be found to increase operational funding, either through city budgeting or the development of an endowment. Mr. Glaisek noted that the Corporation is about to engage in a study to examine park maintenance requirements for all new waterfront parks and identify alternative ways of providing funding. It was suggested that the Condominium Corporation model might be a good one to look at.

The Chair then asked the Panel for their thoughts on the architecture of the pavilion. One Panel member felt that the pavilion should be slightly stretched and that the columns should be pulled back far enough for the roof to appear to float. There was an inquiry about whether the roof should be a planar folding form or an undulating curve that more strongly reflects the character of the park design. Another Panel member noted that the building seems timid in scale and should be expanded 80 percent to embrace the landform. It was noted that the fireplace is the fixed vertical anchor and that the roofs should glide out of it and the service area should be disengaged from it. Several Panel members noted their support for the moveable doors as a valuable feature.

The Panel noted that there should be attention given to the durability and aesthetics of the furnishings for the pavilion. It was suggested that furnishings should be custom designed, moveable, heavy pieces, possibly made of concrete or wood.

The Panel asked about the budget for the pavilion. Ms. Thompson explained that the budget for the building is fixed at five hundred thousand dollars. The Panel suggested that if there are constraints in the budget the priority should be the big architectural moves. There was a concern that given the budget too much is happening, and it was suggested that the team value engineer the design now and remove less critical items that may take away from the bigger moves. It was suggested that the pavilion should be simple, much like a Le Corbusier building. Ms. Thompson asked if the Panel thought the Le Corbusier aesthetic could work for Don River Park and one Panel member felt that it might.

The Panel asked about the relationship of the pavilion to the Bala Underpass and the school and recreational field. Ms. Hare of Urban Strategies explained that MVVA has met with Steve Teeple and Joe Lobko, who have been hired by the Corporation to prepare a feasibility for the school and community centre site and discussions are underway about creating a connection between the park and the school through the building and the landscape. Mr. Van Valkenburgh described the possibility of a row of columnar Lombardi poplars which would line the edge of

the school and park site. Ms. Hare explained that the MVVA team will consider basic lighting and design features for the Bala Underpass, but that there is no money in the park design budget for enhancements to the basic engineered structure.

One Panel member inquired about the four season use. It was noted that a fireplace and skating rink would help but the Panel was curious about the possibility of transforming the water play area into an ice rink in winter that might have characteristics of the Ryerson ice rink. Ms. Solano of MVVA noted that while they had considered this, there are budgetary constraints.

#### 2.4 Summary of Panel's Key Issues

N/A

#### 2.5 Proponent's Response

Mr. Van Valkenburgh and Ms. Thompson thanked the Panel for its input and support.

---

### **CLOSING**

There being no further comments, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

---