



## **City of Spokane Park Board Joint Arts Committee Meeting**

**3:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 13, 2019**

**Conference Room 5A, 5<sup>th</sup> floor City Hall**

**808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Washington 99201**

### **Joint Arts Committee members**

- X Garret Daggett, Arts Commission
- X Dean Davis, Arts Commission (alternate)
- X Ginger Ewing, Arts Commission
  - Jim Kolva, Arts Commission (absent)
  - Ted McGregor, Park Board (absent)
- X Jennifer Ogden, Park Board
- X Jamie SiJohn, Park Board (Arrived: 3:41 p.m.)

### **Staff**

- Garrett Jones, Parks
- Berry Ellison, Parks
- Jo-Lynn Brown, Parks
- Pamela Clarke, Parks
- Melissa Huggins, Spokane Arts
- Karen Mobley, Spokane Arts

### **Additional Park Board members**

- X Nick Sumner, Park Board president

## **Notes**

**A. Roll call/sign in** – See above

### **B. Action/Discussion items**

1. Stepwell update and location review – *Berry Ellison* presented an overview of the location for the Stepwell signature art piece which is scheduled to be installed on a knoll at the edge of the Bill Fearn Conservation Area on West Havermale Island. This site was selected by Stepwell artist Meejin Yoon, recommended by the Joint Arts Committee and approved by the Park Board May 2018. Since that site approval and as the redevelopment project progressed, a number of factors affecting the West Havermale Island project have developed. One of those factors involves securing a location for the parks' maintenance yard. This yard is primarily used for parking maintenance vehicles and housing two disposal dumpsters. *Garrett Jones* explained staff has deliberated and studies have been underway for the past three years to determine a location for this maintenance yard. Mr. Ellison explained pros and cons on each of the possible sites, and aspects relating to where the yard could be sited. Based on site parameters, including vehicle accessibility, traffic flow, Avista's needs at its current maintenance yard on West Havermale, Park staff recommends placing

the maintenance yard next to the Avista maintenance area which is located adjacent and to the west of the proposed Stepwell site.

*Jamie SiJohn arrived at 3:41*

Mr. Ellison said Ms. Yoon has been apprised of the situation and she believes the signature art piece should remain at its agreed upon location and that measures may be taken to mitigate some of the concerns of having a maintenance yard so close to the artwork. These measures include adding fill to create a 3.5' to 4' hump or rise in elevation, add fencing and planting 15'-18' tall conifer trees to serve a visual buffer around the maintenance yard. Ms. Yoon explained to staff during an earlier conference call meeting that landscaping can be used to frame the river view. Mr. Ellison provided maps and images showing other elements featured on West Havermale Island, including the Avista Upper Falls Powerhouse historic structure,'74 Expo legacy picnic shelter, all-inclusive playground and a parking area. Stepwell, at grade, is designed to be about 5 feet taller than the maintenance yard. He explained the dumpsters, a contained compacter and recycling bin, would be placed behind the yard's retaining wall. Some concerns were voiced regarding the smell and noise from the dumpsters. When asked by *Ginger Ewing* and *Garret Daggett* why other areas were not being selected for the yard, Mr. Ellison explained one of the factors involves access in and out of the park. Most of the bridges in the park will not accommodate maintenance vehicles. This leaves Post and Washington streets as the only viable access points. When considering a yard on the north bank near Washington Street, Mr. Ellison explained, per downtown design standards, Parks would need to build "one heck of a beautiful looking maintenance yard to get it close to the street." This drove staff's attention to the Post Street access where Avista has their current maintenance yard. Ms. Ewing, Mr. Daggett, *Dean Davis* and *Melissa Huggins* voiced strong concerns about the site, explaining the proximity to the maintenance yard undermines the initial vision that Stepwell would offer a 360-degree view of the city. Mr. Ellison shared Ms. Yoon thoughts regarding the view and said she believes landscaping can frame and draw the viewer's attention to the river view. Ms. Huggins fears the pedestrian traffic coming from Kendall Yards off Post Street Bridge will run into a maintenance fence and think there is nothing else to see. Mr. Ellison referred to a map which shows a pedestrian walkway off Post which leads to Stepwell. Ms. Ewing questioned why the plan to site the yard so close to the artwork was not discussed earlier when the group was deliberating on potential sites for Stepwell. She and Mr. Daggett said they would never have agreed to this location had they been aware the yard might be sited here. Mr. Daggett added if Ms. Yoon recommends the Stepwell stay at its proposed location then he remains respectful of her vision and direction on where the artwork should be sited. *Nick Sumner* empathized with their concerns and explained staff and the Park Board have reviewed, studied and discussed the options extensively, and have determined there is no other feasible location. Mr. Sumner added, due to Avista's needs, this area would never be anything other than a parking lot with pads for the utility company's large crane. Mr. Jones explained, as staff, he will not go to the Park Board explaining there is a problem with the approved location unless there is a recommended feasible alternative. Mr. Ellison explained SPVV Landscape Architects, who is contracted to design the West Havermale Island project, will incorporate landscaping to mitigate

the visual concerns. Ms. Ewing asked if Parks could ask Avista if they would be interested in helping fund the tree planting required for the additional landscaping. Mr. Jones said it was a good idea and staff will look in to that opportunity. Mr. Ellison explained the bid to build Stepwell will most likely go out in November. Mr. Jones assured the JAC that Park staff is committed to do everything with their power to see that these two elements complement each other.

**Motion No. 1:** Jennifer Ogden moved to recommend to the Park Board to support the artist's wishes in keeping Stepwell at its currently approved location and moving forward with the contract.

No second was made.

While no vote was taken, Spokane Arts representatives, who are members of the JAC, agreed they remain hopeful for the success of the Stepwell project. Ms. Huggins asked if it would be productive and useful for the JAC to make a recommendation to the Park Board that if the Stepwell must be at this site that everything available in the budget be used to screen the maintenance yard from the sculpture.

**Motion No. 2:** Dean Davis moved to recommend to the Park Board that whatever is available in the budget be used to screen the maintenance yard from Stepwell.

Garret Daggett seconded.

The motion carried with unanimous consent (5-0 vote).

- a. Options for remaining Riverfront Park art budget – *Berry Ellison* reported currently there is a 10% contingency of \$45,000 for the Stepwell project in the art budget, but Ms. Yoon believes there are risks involved and the contingency should be increased. Cited risk involving damage to a portion of the sculpture during installation which the fabricators are not willing to cover. Ms. Yoon asked that an additional \$50,000 be placed in contingency to reduce such a risk. This allocation would only be used if other contingency funds built into the budget are exhausted. If the contingency is not needed for Stepwell, it will be earmarked for other art projects in Riverfront Park. Mr. Ellison explained the only area to draw from for the additional contingency is from the remaining art budget which is about \$150,000. Other options which have been discussed for the remaining art budget include Stepwell site improvements, art markers and new art in the park. There was discussion regarding the opportunity of installing painted/decorated gondolas (retired SkyRide gondolas) which could hang from poles at park entrance points. Previous estimates reflect the art markers would be approximately \$40,000 - \$45,000. This cost estimate doesn't yet include Braille which the JAC has recommended be included on the markers. *Garrett Jones* explained the hope is to present a final recommendation to the Park Board in October on how the remaining art budget will be spent. *Melissa Huggins* requested some time to compile a recommendation on how the remaining art budget may be used. Ms. Huggins will provide data and a list to Mr. Jones in the next couple of weeks so the information may be discussed at the Sept. 9 Riverfront Park Committee meeting.

C. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.