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Regular Meeting

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Agency: Akron Urban Design & Historic Preservation Commission

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Summary

- Architects Beth Anne Graham of Prime AE and Marie Dowling of Behnke Landscape & Architecture presented renderings and schematics for a proposed \$5.1 million renovation to the [Reservoir Park Community Center](#). The plans include a clean, modern cluster of earth tone ADA-compliant structures as well as a streamlined outdoor space fit for gatherings. The interior plans have included feedback from people living in the neighborhood. There will be display space for art work, gathering spaces, a new kitchen, a children's reading nook, and a dedicated office space for staff.
- Members of the [Urban Design and Historic Preservation Commission](#) voiced several concerns including elevation, dimensions, window casing and historical signage. Graham said they would further study these factors. Commission members voted to move forward with the proposal, agreeing to a motion to accept with consideration for recommendation.
- Commission Member Leianne Heppner proposed historic signage to highlight the importance of the center to Akron as well as to promote knowledge of the plants and trees around the structure. She said these factors could echo signs at the Ohio Welcome Center and create a dialogue about these resources.

Follow-Up Questions

- What is the timeline and projected start date and completion date for the project?
- Will more staff be hired at the community center since attendance may increase?

Notes

A. UD-2023-02-REV – Architectural review of [Reservoir Park Community Center](#)

- Neighborhood: Goodyear Heights
- Proposed total square footage 8,690 square feet
- Original structure built in 1933 with an addition in 1990
- Funding source: American Rescue Plan Act ([ARPA Website](#))
- Projected budget: \$5.1 million

Meeting Details

- Meeting started at 9:05 a.m.
- Six of seven commission members and one community member were in attendance
- Commission Member John Wheeler shared the meeting rules and order of business

Daniel D'Angelo, a planner and architect in the Office of Integrated Development, shared the project and design overview for Reservoir Park Community Center. Some updates include:

- Make it [ADA \(Americans With Disabilities Act\)](#) accessible
- Create a new main entrance
- Restore decor to echo the original design
- Add new windows to return the structure to its original appearance
- Graham-and Dowling Presented the architectural drafts ([here](#)) and renderings and shared the proposed changes.Exterior spaces
 - Graham said the goal is to restore the structure's original "voice"
 - Removal of planters would ensure that walkways are clear of obstructions.
 - Dowling said they will create shapes to soften the site while keeping existing trees.
 - Additional walk space, low maintenance native trees and shrubs will be added along with a lawn area.
 - Bike racks, a firepit, and general seating will also be added.
 - There will be a walkway to serve as a transition between the original structure to the addition.
 - Windows will be "storefront style" and vandal resistant.
 - Vision for the exterior is clean contemporary, simple
 - Creating a cluster of forms

- Color palette is in earth tones of sandstone and gray
- Interior spaces
 - Neighbor feedback inspired the creation of gathering spaces:
 - A large vestibule will be dual purpose –it can be divided into two community gathering spaces.
 - A dedicated office space that will connect to the front desk area will be added.
 - The existing community room will have a facelift with new furnishings.
 - A small children’s space will showcase a mural wall and host a reading nook.
 - There will also be a gaming area.
 - A kitchen will allow cooking courses.
 - Neighbors requested space to emphasize and showcase art. Display space will be created around the front desk.

Recommendations from the commission

- Elevation
 - Commission Member Mark Smith proposed adding detail to the north portion in order to break down larger areas
- Window casements
 - Smith suggested that casements be darker brown
 - Graham agreed to modify this detail
- Dimensions existing vs. the proposed new addition
 - Smith requested that the architects “ take a closer look at dimensions.” He said that window spacing between both structures should be reviewed in order to create a modern look.
 - Graham said her team will “study the proportions and window spacing of the existing and proposed new structure.”
 - Wheeler agreed with Smith’s comments but said he doesn’t want a cost increase for the project.
- Signage
 - Heppner requested the addition of historic signage for a few reasons:
 - To share the importance of the reservoir in Akron
 - To provide detail about the plants and trees

- She suggested that signs should be coated in green texture similar to the Ohio Welcome Center signage
- General signage package approved for the project includes:
 - An 8-foot LED sign located on the Brittain Road entrance. There was concern that this size exceeds code and would need to be approved by the planning commission.

Overall status of the project

- Commission members discussed the status of the project and whether or not to move it forward. After some discussion, they voted unanimously to approve the project with conditions.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- Elizabeth Kukwa was unanimously elected chair
- Wheeler was unanimously elected vice chair

Notes to reader: Unless quotation marks are used, all text is paraphrased. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at documenters@signalakron.org with "Correction Request" in the subject line.