

# Richardson Olmsted Complex Master Plan

Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting

December 9, 2010

6:00 PM

Burchfield Penney Art Center

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**CAG**

✓ Justin P. Azzarella  
✓ Jennifer Bayles  
Melissa Brown  
Benjamin Christy  
Ray Clark  
✓ Brian Dold  
✓ Harvey Garrett  
Louis Grachos

✓ Chris Hawley  
Thomas Herrera-Mishler  
✓ Anne Harding Joyce  
Francis R. Kowsky  
Richard Mack  
Michael McLean  
Carolyn Morris  
✓ Gregory M. Patterson  
Tanski

✓ Ted Pietrzak  
✓ Dr. Barbara Seals  
Nevergold  
✓ Tim Tielman  
✓ Max Willig  
**Guest**  
✓ William Joyce

**RCC**

✓ Eva Hassett  
✓ Monica Pellegrino Faix  
✓ Kelly Hayes McAlonie

**Consultants**

✓ Bob Shibley  
✓ Bradshaw Hovey  
✓ Lynda Schneklooth

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## Agenda

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**Agenda**

- I. Welcome and Overview. Max Willig and Gregory Patterson-Tanski, co- chairs of the Community Advisory Group.
- II. Welcome and consultant introduction. Eva Hassett, RCC board member.
- III. Parking lot design presentation and discussion: Monica Pellegrino Faix
  - a. Discussion facilitated by Bob Shibley.
- IV. South Lawn design.
  - a. Presentation and discussion: Chris Mendel, Andropogon Associates
  - b. Discussion facilitated by Bob Shibley.
- V. Major activities/ timeline update. Monica Pellegrino Faix. Discussion facilitated by Bob Shibley.

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## Summary

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**Agenda Item: Welcome and Overview****Discussion and Conclusions:**

- Welcome.

Gregory Patterson Tanski welcomed the group and introduced new members.

- Chris Hawley – City of Buffalo
  - Jennifer Bayles – Albright Knox.
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- Ted Pietrzak – previously representing Burchfield Penney, now on behalf of the Board of Visitors
- Carolyn Morris – now for the Burchfield Penney replacing Ted.
- Tanski also outlined some of the CAG vacancies to be filled.
  - There are three holes we need to fill on the Community Advisory Group.
  - Max Willig is reaching out to the Grant-Ferry Association for a new member to represent them.
  - We will also be in contact with friends at Buffalo State College to identify a new student representative who is part of the governance structure there.
  - Gregory Patterson-Tanski is no longer involved with his former neighborhood association. Indeed, he no longer lives in the area. He will, however, stay on as co-chair of the CAG.
- Max Willig gave an overview of mission and history of the Community Advisory Group.
  - The CAG was constructed to map the stakeholder universe for the Richardson Center project. There's a seat at the table for neighboring institutions, adjacent neighborhoods and business districts, other interested constituencies.
  - The CAG has had strong participation and lots of hard work over two and a half years to help the Richardson Center Corporation plan, organize, and convene a continuing public conversation about the fate of the complex.
  - There's been real continuity in participation and a strong connection built between the corporation and project and the community constituencies that care about it because the members of the CAG have reached out beyond themselves.
- Willig also reviewed the Public Meeting held on August 12, 2010.
  - We have a master plan with a sensible incremental strategy to redevelop (a) a core project, (b) an expanded core, (c) the full array of Richardson buildings, and (d) vacant land on the north side of the complex, if appropriate.
  - We have a clear set of priorities for proceeding: (a) identifying reuse programs, (b) stabilizing the buildings, (c) prioritizing landscape investments, (d) rationalizing the site for parking and circulation, and (e) establishing public access.
  - We are making progress on all of these fronts, including work on stabilization and security as well as schemes to relocate parking, and concepts for the redesign of the south lawn, which we will review tonight.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
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**Agenda Item: Welcome and consultant introduction**

**Discussion and Conclusions:**

Eva Hassett also welcomed the committee, offering thanks to the Burchfield Penney Art Center for allowing us the use of their conference room. She gave a brief update on the results of the Richardson Center Corporation board meeting held earlier in the day. And she introduced Chris Mendel, from Andropogon Associates, landscape architecture consultants to the project.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
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**Agenda Item: Parking lot presentation and discussion**

**Discussion and Conclusions:**

Monica Pellegrino Faix presented a draft proposal for the expansion or creation of parking lots to the east of the Strozzi Building that will compensate for the parking lot to be removed from the South Lawn area. Discussion followed.

**Comments on the parking scheme.**

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- The replacement lots are very long. It would help a lot to break them up with additional landscaping. It's not part of the RCC property but it will still make an important impact on our project. We ought to have parking lots, not out of the parking lot manual, but something that looks like it's part of a park. Extend plantings in from the sides.
- Monica Pellegrino Faix: We also need to address the concerns of the Buffalo Psychiatric Center who will have to build, manage, and maintain the lots. This isn't a plan we can impose.
- When we roll this out to the public, let's show a before-and-after view of the lots so the character of the change will be more visible.
- It should also be an enhanced view that includes the additional foliage that will be provided.
- Let's provide the best-case scenario for the parking lot location and design and leave it up to BPC to "rationalize" it.
- There is a possibility that the pedestrian connection through the site will open into a big parking lot – the one just to the north and east of the Strozzi building. Take care to design for that walking experience.
- Let's show a three-quarter view to illustrate how these lots will actually look. The diagonal parking is just about as efficient as we're going to get.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Prepare before and after views of the new Parking lot areas, including a view with the new greenery, and a three-quarter view to illustrate how the lots will look.	Monica Faix	For the January Public Meeting

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### Agenda Item: South Lawn Design

#### Discussion and Conclusions:

Chris Mendel presented a draft proposal for treatment of the South Lawn of the Richardson Olmsted Complex site.

#### Comments on the South Lawn concept.

- Neighbors to the south will surely use the grounds. But so should students from Buffalo State College. We should make sure to establish an easy connection from our campus to their campus. [It's a good idea but beyond the scope of the project. However, the tunnels will be open].
  - Chris Mendel explained the Olmsted philosophy very well in terms of thinking about "what would Olmsted do." But it's even more important to consider what **did** Olmsted do? The Campaign for a Greater Buffalo wants continuous vehicular circulation on the campus as consistent with Olmsted's design as possible. What archaeology will be done to identify historically where the original roads were? How will this information influence location of roadways in the new scheme? As presented, the new South Lawn design would be bisected by any restoration of the historic roadways. Can we delay this decision while moving forward with other elements of the project?
  - Chris Mendel: It's really a matter of what we are able to do with the land we have available – in this case a total of eight acres – that will also allow us to connect to the existing roadway system. SHPO, meanwhile, is asking for test pits to be excavated.
  - We need to consider that a delay of the roadway design might put the construction schedule in jeopardy with negative impact on preparations for the National Trust conference next October.
  - It makes sense to extend the project limit line to the front of the Strozzi building. Future work will be needed to match the landscaping from one property to the other. It would be better if we were the ones doing it. [That was discussed with the BPC and they are open to landscape on their property but want their roads to stay in the current alignment].
  - Let's keep in mind that patients from the Psychiatric Center will use this area, too.
  - We need to show Richmond Avenue more clearly on these maps. Indeed, we need to make sure all of the adjacent streets are well-identified. The neighbors want to know where they are in relation to the project.
  - Let's show the gates as open.
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- Parallel parking along the loop road is missing; it was in the Master Plan. [Mendel: this is still to be designed. It's in the master plan. We need to insert parking in a way that protects the image of the property].
- No parking on the campus should be free. Putting a price on parking will help us manage demand and it will generate revenue. Most visitors will appreciate the fact that their parking fees will be invested in the property.
- Can we design a way to park along the roadway that's "green"? [Mendel: Maybe. But recently developed geo-technical materials are frankly disappointing. We shouldn't overpromise what the options can deliver].
- Designers of the new north parking lot should consider the view corridor from Elmwood toward the southwest that allows travelers to see one of the male ward buildings from that vantage point.

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Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Images should have the roadways clearly marked.	Chris Mendel	For the January Public Meeting

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**Agenda Item: Major activities/ timeline update**

**Discussion and Conclusions:**

Monica Pellegrino Faix presented an overview of major project activities and the upcoming schedule of work and events addressing, among other things, issues of the release of funding and state legislation on transfer of ownership needed to move current capital work forward and addressing planning for an upcoming public meeting to review the design for South Lawn improvements.

**Comments on progress, schedule, and next public meeting.**

- The South Lawn project and the new parking lot construction in 2011 are in jeopardy due delays in the release of construction funds and the failure of the state legislature to pass transfer-of-ownership legislation.
  - Is the hitch on legislation and funding political or bureaucratic? [Yes! All sorts of issues about who is in charge, how the money moves, and more].
  - What is "Plan B" if the money and the legislation are not forthcoming? We don't know yet.
  - We should avoid negotiating against ourselves. "Plan B" is not something we want to telegraph. It's something to hold in reserve while we push for legislation and funding.
  - Let's hold a public meeting in January with or without progress on the legislation and funds release. We need to maintain communication and maintain trust. Keep the information flowing and stem the rumors.
  - We can advance the design even if we don't get what we need to implement the plan this year. There is enough new to show and tell in January to make a meeting worthwhile. An agenda such as in this meeting with some clickers to stimulate the conversation would be great.
  - We need a way to measure intensity. Let's go back to the low technology of dots. Clickers sound like fun. [Shibley: but let's keep in mind that we're not holding a referendum. The clickers are intended to help draw people out for discussion and identify minority positions as well as to measure majorities].
  - Do we need to meet as early as January 13<sup>th</sup>. Couldn't we wait until February? [Shibley: It's better to keep this on the fast track]. [Friday, January 21<sup>st</sup> is the next RCC Board meeting. We could synch it with that].
  - We might expect a smaller turnout in January because people are getting comfortable with the process. And that's okay. People will come out more later as other concrete work is considered.
  - We need to get info out in advance so people will know what to expect in January.
  - Maybe we could produce a one-page PDF to distribute via e-mail – not just the usual post card – and to use Facebook events.
  - What are the vehicle lane dimensions for the roadways? The narrower they are the more they promote the slow
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speeds we are hoping for. [Chris Mendel: We'll make them minimal but also figure in parking].

- We should do something on the site this year even if construction doesn't proceed. Open the gates and hold an event.
- Now that the master planning is completed, is there more dialogue with Buffalo State College. For example, the removal of the maintenance building has been widely discussed. Aaron Podolefsky, the new president of BSC, has agreed to join the RCC Board and is excited about the project. [We should build that into the January presentation].

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**Adjournment.**