

## Meeting Minutes

**FROM:** EHT Traceries  
**SUBJECT:** Smithsonian South Mall Campus Master Plan  
Section 106 Consulting Parties Meeting  
**DATE:** March 30, 2015

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The following minutes represent comments received during the March Section 106 consulting parties meeting for the Smithsonian South Mall Campus Master Plan.

### Attendees

Name	Agency
Ann Trowbridge	SI
Michelle Spofford	SI
Christopher Lethbridge	SI
Samir Bitar	SI
Paul Westerberg	SI
Amy Ballard	SI
Jane Passman	SI
Barbara Faust	SI Gardens
Bill Donnelly	SI Gardens
Linda St. Thomas	SI OPA
Karen Cadogan	SI Associates
Fredie Adelman	SI Associates
Diane Sullivan	NCPC
Cheryl Kelly	NCPC
Vivian Lee	NCPC
Meghan Spigle	NCPC
Bill Marzella	EHT Traceries
Laura Hughes	EHT Traceries
Liz Estes	Stantec
Sean Franklin	BIG
Andrew Lewis	DC HPO
Robert Snieckus	USDA
Haren Dhokai	USDA
Susan Spain	NPS

Peter May	NPS/NCR
Kathryn Smith	NPS
Brian Lusher	ACHP
John Tinpe	ANC 2C
Joyce Saginaw	DOJ
Michael Gavula	NGA
Jonathan D. Rogers	DDOT
Megan Kanagy	DDOT
D.P. Tiller	Committee of 100
Carol Aten	Committee of 100
Elizabeth Merritt	NTHP
Rob Nieweg	NTHP
Fred Lindstrom	CFA
Thomas Luebke	CFA
Sarah Batcheler	CFA
Bob Craycraft	Waterfront Gateway Neighborhood Association
Irene Sinclair	Bethesda Community Garden Club
Pat Taylor	
Kate Perry	
Cynthia Field	
David M. Maxfield	
Wendy Blair	
Roger P. Stone	

## Presentation

1. Ann Trowbridge (AT) presented an overview of agenda and goals for meeting
2. Amy Ballard (AB) presented summary of Section 106 process, role of NCPC and Smithsonian, role of consulting parties, and Area of Potential Effect (APE)
3. Bill Marzella (BM) presented an overview of the South Mall Campus Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) scope and process
4. AT presented summary of process to date, including overview of NEPA status. AT indicated that an EIS will be prepared, instead of the EA SI and NCPC had anticipated.
5. AT presented list of twelve master plan objectives, and discussed further with associated graphics for each.

## Discussion

1. Cynthia Field (CF) asked whether CLR would include features that were present before the current landscape. AT indicated that it would.
2. Roger Stone asked if Smithsonian Regents were being updated throughout the process. AT responded that they had received an informational presentation in April 2014 and the response was positive, but no formal vote had been conducted. Several Regents are also on the Master Plan Steering Committee.
3. Pat Tiller, Committee of 100, asked about the integration between Section 106 and NEPA, and whether a separate consulting process was being undertaken for NEPA.

- a. AT responded that, unlike Section 106, NEPA does not occur through consulting party meetings. The EIS effort is being led by NCPC in cooperation with SI and NPS, and there would be opportunities to comment when the draft is released.
  - b. AT also explained that the processes are being completed in parallel, and will examine the same alternatives for their impacts. The Section 106 process, however, will focus only on effects to historic resources, whereas the EIS would examine a broader range of environmental impacts.
4. Bob Craycraft, Waterfront Gateway Neighborhood Association, asked if SI had a mechanism for reaching out to the potential future residents of the Southwest, which is undergoing a dramatic expansion.
  - a. AT responded that consultation and outreach efforts will be conducted as each phase of the master plan is realized.
  - b. AT also responded that SI may seek public space permits for portions of the project, and public input would be invited through that process.
5. Cynthia Field (CF) stated that aspects of the master plan, particularly the extensive excavation, could endanger historic landmarks, and that historic preservation should be given precedence over other drivers.
  - a. AT responded that SI has commissioned additional structural and geotechnical reports to examine the potential impacts on the Castle
  - b. AT also related that the restoration of the Castle was a beneficial aspect of the plan.
  - c. CF asked about the period to which the Castle was being restored. AT responded that it was based on the findings and recommendations of the Historic Structure Report (HSR) completed by SI in 2009.
  - d. CF expressed skepticism that Congress would act on the proposed bill to examine the feasibility of using the Arts and Industries Building (AIB) as a Latino museum. She encouraged SI to act and find a use for the building.
    - i. Christopher Lethbridge (CL) and AT stated that interim uses for AIB are an integral part of the Master Plan, and a contract for short-term uses will soon be awarded.
6. Robert Nieweg, NTHP, asked at what point the materials mentioned (CLR, geo-tech and structural reports) would be made available. He indicated that the proposed schedule (as presented in December 2014) to conclude consultation in summer 2015 was unrealistic.
  - a. AT responded that the documents are being reviewed internally by SI staff and would be finalized and made available in 1-2 months.
  - b. AT also stated that the consultation schedule has been extended to allow for additional consultation.
7. Betsy Merritt, NTHP, asked about the anticipated budget for the master plan, and if separate estimates were being prepared for each alternative
  - a. AT responded that the budget for implementing the twenty-year master plan is approximately \$2 billion. AT also stated that only one estimate was being prepared, but that the value was subject to change based on the final master plan and the implementation schedule.
  - b. Ms. Merritt also questioned the objective to double the current number of visitors.
  - c. Samir Bitar, SI, clarified that item, stating that SI is not trying to draw more visitors, but rather to better accommodate and provide orientation for the existing pool of visitors to the Mall museums.
8. An unidentified CP asked about the comments received during the scoping period, and whether those were being integrated and made available to the public.
  - a. AT responded that a scoping report with summary of comments would be available on the master plan website soon.
  - b. The same CP questioned whether alternatives have been altered or dismissed based on those comments. AT responded that the comments have been reviewed and taken into consideration. She also indicated that the Section 106 process was not prescriptive for how an agency developed alternatives or responded to CP feedback, but rather how it identifies and resolves adverse effects to historic resources.

- c. AT also indicated that the alternatives, including the final preferred alternative, would likely change subject to CP and public feedback.
9. CF asked if SI was aware of a legal agreement between SI and CFA regarding the visibility of the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden. CFA and SI responded that they were aware of no such agreement, but that they would review the documentation again.
10. CF asked DC HPO for comments. Andrew Lewis (AL) replied that he was still in the process of gathering information, and a formal determination of effect could not yet be made. AL stated that he was concerned about the effects on the Castle and its historic setting, and hoped that the alternatives will be revised to avoid adverse effects.
11. Tom Luebke (TL), CFA, asked how the Section 106 resolution documents will be approached, given the magnitude and longevity of the scope.
  - a. AL stated that a Programmatic Agreement (PA) is the typical approach, but given the complexity of this project, a PA may not be appropriate. AL also pointed out that that a PA was not used to implement the National Zoo master plan.
  - b. Regarding the Castle, TL asked what was driving the proposed base isolation, the need for seismic protection or additional space for programming. He asked about the viability of that approach, given the high associated costs. AT and CL responded that the Castle is critically important to SI and that its significance was fully understood by SI. AT and CL stated that base isolation provided a variety of benefits, including needed additional space and protection should another seismic event occur.
  - c. TL stated that a more productive use should be identified for AIB. CL responded that AIB had been upgraded to meet current seismic code, and that a temporary use would soon be active.
12. SI closed the meeting and invited CPs on an optional tour of the campus.

## **Tour**

1. SI led CPs on a tour of portions of the South Mall Campus, including through the Ripley and Haupt gardens and into the Quadrangle complex.
2. Attendee comments while on tour:
  - a. General discussion on proposed museum entrance “peaks.” When shown location of face of proposed lower level entrance to visitor services and location of proposed “peak” museum entrances, remarked on greater distance of peaks from Castle than was apparent in renderings and that length of Castle was visible between peaks as one approached Castle.
  - b. General discussion of design of interior Quad layout, including:
    - i. Awkwardness of Ripley Center entrance sequence.
    - ii. Disorientation relative to the Haupt Garden and Castle above.
    - iii. Lack of natural light. Were bridges spanning Concourse a later addition or part of original Quad design? (Editor’s note: Concourse has not been extensively altered since its completion in 1987. Some minor decorative elements have been added or removed, but all bridges, glazing, etc. appears to be original. Other areas of the Quad have been more extensively altered.)
    - iv. One CP requested to see the original plan of the Quadrangle.
  - c. General discussion of appropriateness and cost effectiveness of various seismic design approaches for the Castle.
  - d. General discussion of evolution and age of plant material

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

1. SI stated that master plan materials and supporting documentation would be posted on the project website, [www.southmallcampus.si.edu](http://www.southmallcampus.si.edu), as they become available.
2. Any additional comments can be emailed to Michelle Spofford at [spoffordm@si.edu](mailto:spoffordm@si.edu).

3. The April 27 Consulting Parties meeting will be postponed based on the availability of the Scoping Report, the Cultural Landscape Report and Geotechnical and Seismic Studies. The purpose of the meeting is to review and discuss the revised alternatives. A meeting invite will follow.
4. Following the request of several CPs, SI indicated that the following meetings will be held in smaller rooms to facilitate direct conversation.

*Minutes prepared by Bill Marzella, EHT Tracerics, April 7, 2015 (revised April 20)*