

PORT OF OLYMPIA COMMISSION
MINUTES OF STATE AVENUE MASTER PLAN WORK SESSION

August 6, 2003

CALL TO ORDER

President Pottle called the work session to order at 12:15 p.m. at Ruby's Restaurant in Olympia. Commissioners Telford and Van Schoorl were also in attendance.

Staff in attendance was: Executive Director Nick Handy, Director of Facilities Andrea Fontenot, Properties Director Heber Kennedy, and Administrative Assistant Lorie Watson.

Attending from NBBJ and Civic Partners were: Bill Sanford, Stephanie Bronson and Kim Selby from NBBJ, and Wayne Blauvelt and Scott Clements from Civic Partners.

Others in attendance were Jan Van Der Veen, Planning and Advisory Committee member, and Meta Heller.

President Pottle opened the meeting with welcoming comments and gave a brief background of the State Avenue Planning project to date. After issuing an RFP for State Avenue Planning, the Port's interview team selected Civic Partners/NBBJ as the preferred candidate and a contract was approved. The purpose of the work session was to allow an opportunity for the Commissioners to meet with the principals of Civic Partners and NBBJ and to discuss the planning process.

Mr. Heber Kennedy gave a brief background of the mission of the Port of Olympia and its four business units. He said he recently attended a conference, which confirmed for him that this State Avenue project is the type of project that can transform the whole nature of this area; just as the Market area was transformed. Ms. Andrea Fontenot will be the lead on the planning component of this project and Mr. Kennedy will be the lead on the development side.

Ms. Fontenot gave an overview of the State Avenue project's background and described the 17-acre parcel. She said the project actually started in 2001 after Hardel vacated the Warehouse that exists on the site. Port staff decided to take a refined look at this property and determined there would be value in coupling the master planning efforts with a development team.

Scott Clements provided a brief background on Civic Partners. Civic Partners is a privately owned development firm based in Newport Beach, California. They are a pioneer in public-private partnering and have worked on projects in several states including Idaho, Colorado and California. Their projects have focused on combining public and private use, creating a community and a place that is more utilized. All of their projects have had a government component with a government entity involved. He said that Civic Partners seeks to build a relationship with the community. Wayne Blauvelt will be the lead on development and Scott Clements will be lead on negotiations.

Bill Sanford then spoke on NBBJ, the planning and design firm who will partner with Civic Partners on this project. NBBJ is the oldest and largest planning and design firm in the Pacific Northwest and has offices throughout the world. Their projects have included the Museum of Flight, Safeco Field, the Olympic Hotel restoration and several hospitals in Seattle, as well as the Briggs family project in Olympia. NBBJ has worked with the Port of Olympia on previous projects, including helping with the planning work of the Market Center. NBBJ and Civic Partners worked together on the University of Idaho-Boise project and Mr. Sanford said he sought their partnership again for the Port of Olympia's State Avenue project.

Commissioner Pottle asked about the process for determining the best use of the State Avenue property. Mr. Clements and Mr. Blauvelt provided an outline of the process, which will start with exploring what, is best for the community, what improvements are needed to the site, and what will bring people to the area. They said the process will take the next several months, but the end result is sure to be a great asset to the Port and the City of Olympia. They will start with no pre-determined ideas, but will look at every option and see what works. They will consider the need to complement what exists and what the future plans for the area are. Mr. Blauvelt said this property is in a gateway position for what happens to the downtown area. The final development needs to draw people; that is what creates economic impact. Their other projects have a civic function that creates a draw for people, but what will create that draw to this property is not yet known. The Market Analysis Team will work to determine what economic driver is needed.

Mr. Sanford spoke about the possibility of exploring the option of a civic facility sited on the property. Commissioner Pottle questioned whether a civic facility might not draw people to the area, but Mr. Sanford said that it could have the context of being another reason for people to be there.

Kim Selby of NBBJ then reviewed the Scope of Work for the project. The Scope of Work will consist primarily of nine tasks, of which community input is a significant portion. The nine tasks include Site Analysis, Market Analysis, Infrastructure Study, Parking, Site Potentials and Constraints, Series of Alternate Development Concepts, Comparative Evaluation, Identification of a Preferred Concept, and Development and Implementation of the Plan, which leads to Design.

Ms. Fontenot described the series of public workshops that are being planned. She also said the PAC will be meeting to discuss their role throughout the project. The first public workshops will be held to gather input, such as community values, land uses and building form. The second workshop will be to present alternatives that NBBJ comes up with after the first workshop. The Market Study results will be presented. The third workshop will be to narrow down the multiple alternatives. The fourth public workshop will be a presentation to the PAC and Port Commission of the preferred alternative and costs. The first public workshop is expected to be held in September, with the process winding down in March.

Mr. Nick Handy introduced the PAC representative, Jan Van Der Veen, and described the PAC function. The PAC will attend the public workshops and meet with Port staff in between. They will be a sounding board for how the process goes.

Commissioner Van Schoorl expressed concern that in the process we have to set some parameters regarding the economic benefit. How will it be paid for? He said this needs to be clear up front. He wants to make sure we have a broad balance of input through this process and set expectations and parameters.

Ms. Fontenot said the Port's comp plan has values that reflect the main facets of the Port and these should be made part of the first workshop. Mr. Sanford also said development precepts need to be rooted in the Port's vision. This project needs to create economic return and this should be said up front. All suggested venues should be looked at and evaluated.

The group then discussed how to involve the various citizen groups. ODA & neighborhood association meetings will be scheduled, as will meetings with adjacent landowners. Preliminary meetings will be scheduled in August and early September. Other venues will also be used to gather community interest and keep people informed such as roundtables and the speaker's bureau. Efforts will be made to make sure everyone feels invited to participate in the process.

All three Commissioners stressed the importance of making sure that people from the outlying communities such as Yelm are involved in the public process and that the end result is a place that people from throughout the entire Thurston County will want to come and use.

Commissioner Telford commented that he is looking forward to observing the upcoming process and mentioned that it is important for the downtown businesses' concerns to be heard.

Mr. Van Der Veen said he feels comfortable with the process as it has been laid out.

Meta Heller said she is meeting with Thurston County staff members to discuss how to get the County more involved in the Port's process.

ADJOURNMENT

President Pottle adjourned the meeting of August 6, 2003 at 1:25 p.m.

PORT OF OLYMPIA COMMISSION

President

Vice President

Secretary-Treasurer