



Minutes of the Development Review Commission Study Session May 8, 2018

Minutes of the Study Session of the Development Review Commission, of the City of Tempe, which was held in Council Chambers,
31 East Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona

Present:

Chair Linda Spears
Vice Chair David Lyon
Commissioner Thomas Brown
Commissioner Philip Amorosi
Commissioner Michael DiDomenico
Commissioner Andrew Johnson

Absent:

Commissioner Scott Summers
Alternate Commissioner Barbara Lloyd
Alternate Commissioner Nicholas Labadie
Alternate Commissioner Angela Thornton

City Staff Present:

Bonnie Richardson, Principal Planner
Suparna Dasgupta, Principal Planner
Diana Kaminski, Senior Planner
Cynthia Jarrad, Administrative Assistant

Chair Linda Spears began the Study Session at 5:30 p.m.

Presentation: Ms. Wendy Riddell of Berry Riddell LLC and Mr. Will McCrory, Smith Group JJR, gave a presentation on the proposed I.D.E.A. project. The project site is just west of the existing Tempe Center for the Arts (TCA) building. Ms. Riddell explained that this is a large site that would include four office buildings, one hotel/office and two parking garages, which will be built in phases. Phase 1 includes one office building and a parking garage, Phase 1B includes the TCA Annex/Retail spaces, which will be a building addition at the front of the Phase 1 garage. Commissioners expressed concern about the timing of these phases, in the event there are any delays to construction of Phase 1B, then the unscreened garage itself is what faces Rio Salado and the look of the garage and its proximity to Rio Salado Parkway is an issue. The Commissioners' concerns were the high visibility of the site from Rio Salado and that it is not aesthetically pleasing. Commissioners asked specifics of the timing for construction of these phases. Ms. Riddell responded that Phase 1 construction should begin in September of 2018, Phase 1B should rapidly follow, but that is not guaranteed. Mr. McCrory then went on to share images of existing conditions, future views, site plan, solar orientation, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, etc. Pedestrian circulation allows for easy access to the multi-modal path on the north side of the property. The Phase 1 office building and separate garage will each be six stories high. He also shared information and images of all future phases, with three different site plan configurations. He requested feedback from the Commission on which site plan configuration they preferred, and also spoke about colors and materials, landscaping, green space and amenity space. There will be a rooftop restaurant on the new TCA annex building (part of Phase 1B), which he shared renderings of as well.

The Commissioners continued to ask questions about the timing of construction of each of these phases, and would like to see Phase 1B begin concurrent with Phase 1. Ms. Riddell stated they are working closely with the TCA and city staff, and if they can make that timeline happen they will, but they cannot promise. The Commission members voiced many

concerns, with negative comments about the white flat roof of the TCA Annex facing Rio Salado, the lack of cohesion in the project and the building styles and materials not being enough to complement the beautiful and unique TCA. Realistically, as one enters the property, there would be an origami shaped building (TCA) on the east side and very plain looking buildings on the west side. Commissioner DiDomenico asked that the applicant provide a perspective of the proposed new buildings as one enters the driveway to the TCA. Another complaint was that the proposed development are all office buildings and garages with the possibility of one hotel, so the site will not be activated, as the City envisions along the lakefront. Commissioner Amorosi specifically asked what happened to the original plan that contemplated a mixed-use development with a residential component to draw people and activate the site. There were additional questions about remediation of the site and whether any parking can be provided below grade. Ms. Riddell and the Commission had some further discussion about details of the Development Agreement. Ms. Riddell indicated that the initial concept for this site had been approved by the City Council. Chair Spears addressed the Commission and recommended they contact the City Council with their respective concerns since these conceptual renderings were part of the Development Agreement approved by City Council. Mr. McCrory and Ms. Riddell thanked the Commission members for their feedback.

Presentation: Ms. Bonnie Richardson, Architect/Urban Planner in Public Works: Parks, gave the Commissioners an introduction to the Rio Salado + Beach Park Masterplan. She presented an overview, stating that holistic planning for this large area addresses connectivity, public realm, amenities, and preservation, with plans for high quality buildings, amenities, community services and public spaces. She reminded the Commission that the Tempe Town Lake area is within the Urban Core Master Plan boundaries, and this project is a visionary look at the next 20- to 30-years. The process will consist of three sections: analyzing, gathering input, and creating a conceptual plan. She spoke about and shared images of existing conditions and emphasized establishing desired principles for going forward. These principles would be those that allow for diversity in design and planning while maintaining consistent vision and level of quality. Examples would be providing public access and ownership, expanding connectivity, creating shade, uniting public and private spaces, attracting a wide variety of users, activities and interests, and emphasizing sustainability for the environment, economics, operations and maintenance, and social benefits. The project team is now gathering data on what people like, with many ideas and possibilities. Zones along the lake areas have already been identified, they include Ecology, Adventure, Entertainment, Athletics, Marina, and Riviera. Within and around these zones, there are endless possibilities which would offer opportunities for recreation, relaxation, economic diversity, social engagement, ecological exploration, education, and competition. Among these ideas are a riparian area, arts park, volley ball, rock climbing wall, hammocks, kiosks, food and drink, chess, checkers, ice rink, splash pool, dog park, and water taxis, to name a few. Also included in planning is access to both the south and north side of the lake for pedestrians without having to navigate up to a major city street. This is an element of successful projects in other cities that have similar lakeside areas. Ms. Richardson concluded by discussing the fact that the long-term success of this project will be funding and management. In regard to funding, the project team is looking into partnerships with public and private companies as well as non-profits. The next steps in the process are a public meeting tomorrow, May 9, 2018, with final public review in August of 2018, followed by presentation to City Council with anticipated adoption in Fall 2018. Commission members inquired about more specifics on some of the ideas presented, such as the riparian area, food and beverage availability, possible future restaurants, pop-up restaurants or food trucks, etc. They also stated they had enjoyed the presentation and very much liked the ideas and concepts presented.

Announcements: None.

The Study Session adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Prepared by: Cynthia Jarrad



Reviewed by: Suparna Dasgupta
Suparna Dasgupta, Principal Planner