

**GWCCA
CENTENNIAL OLYMPIC PARK COMMITTEE MEETING**

**August 16, 2012
Executive Board Room
10:00 a.m.**

MINUTES

Committee Members Present:

Dee Yancey, Chair
Tim Lowe, Ex-Officio
Greg O’Bradovich
Gary Smith

Committee Members Absent:

John Downs
Doug Tollett

GWCCA Staff Present:

Dale Aiken
Kevin Duvall
Jen LeMaster
Frank Poe
Joe Skopitz
Sherrie Spinks

Guests:

Barbara Faga, AECOM
Carlos Perez, AECOM
Steve Potts, Levy Restaurants

Chair Yancey called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. and asked for a motion to approve the June 15, 2011 meeting minutes.

A motion to approve the June 15, 2011 GWCCA Centennial Olympic Park Committee meeting minutes was made by Gary Smith, seconded by Greg O’Bradovich, and unanimously approved.

At today’s meeting AECOM’s report on Park visioning and capital projects, along with Park fundraising and advocacy, FY13 Budget, and future Park organizational considerations will be reviewed. EDAW was the original architect for the Park. EDAW was acquired by AECOM in 2005. In 2011 Park management felt it was time to evaluate the Park’s current capital needs and to offer recommendations for modification. Management contacted AECOM in 2011 to discuss the visioning process and subsequently contracted with them to perform a Park Visioning Project. AECOM was asked to look at accessibility, how to monetize investments, and capital improvements. Key stakeholders, customers, and the general public were surveyed to obtain data regarding Park needs. In spring of 2012 survey findings were reviewed and recommendations were prepared.

AECOM Report

At this time Mr. Poe introduced and welcomed Carlos Perez and Barbara Faga. Eighteen years ago EDAW submitted a proposal to be considered for the Centennial Olympic Park project. On September 4 of that year they were awarded the contract. The Park was designed to be a lasting legacy of the 1996 Olympic Games. Their direction was to build a great park, a “gold plated”

park. The Park started as an event space but has evolved into a community space. And now, looking forward to the 20th Anniversary in 2016, is a relevant benchmark to review Park goals.

AECOM focus included four guiding principles: Access, Attraction, Comfort, and Functionality.

Access Projects

- On-street parking
- Park gateway to create a grand entrance into the Park
- Unobstructed views, removable fences
- An urban plaza
- Terraced seating area

Attraction Projects

- Beer Garden Restaurant
- Carousel
- Water garden enhancements
- Using reflective pool for more family friendly activities
- Add a skate area
- Expanded Amphitheater
- Terrace restaurant on top of Chamber building
- Create smaller amphitheater which could be rented
- Add temporary and permanent art around the Park
- Add an iconic electronic visual element which could be seen from downtown
- Develop unused space as an extended event area

Comfort Projects

- Install movable tables and chairs which could be moved into shade on hot days
- Create sloped lawn strip with trees to view activities in the Park
- Make Ivan Allen Memorial Plaza more than a memorial
- Make Baker Street entrance a grand Promenade Alley from World of Coke and Aquarium

Functional Projects

- Create stage with a back-of-house structure
- Create iconic pavilions and restrooms
- Narrow Andrew Young through the Park so it becomes more of a pedestrian space

Top 10 priority recommendations selected include:

- Grand entrance (NE corner of Baker and COP Drive)
- On-street parking (along Baker and COP Drive)
- Park Avenue West “box seats”
- Andrew Young International Boulevard improvements (narrowing, urban plaza)
- Comfort package (trees, shade, movable furniture)
- Visual permeability package (deductive editing below canopy)
- Technology package (wifi, communication cables, plug and play sound/lighting)
- Additional food and beverage venues/sales carts
- Expanded amphitheater

Additional recommendations selected include:

- Stage pavilion, restrooms, back-of-house storage
- Water garden enhanced access and engagement
- South side changing rooms and restrooms
- Beer Garden (repurpose Admin/Maintenance offices)
- Acquire Chamber of Commerce building for Park offices, restaurant, roof top, conference center

Next steps:

- Committee feedback
- Program definition
- Identification of funding source(s)
- Schedule development

Questions asked by the Committee included:

- How will the City's plan to improve John Portman Boulevard tie in to and/or impact the Park?
- Has a dedicated running path been created in the Park?
- Why suggest toy boats when the children's playground shows the least amount of interest?
- The Gateway at Baker and COP Drive is a heavy traffic intersection. Would it be better to move the Gateway entrance west on Baker across from the World of Coca-Cola opening up the area around the playground?
- How will the Park share parking revenue with the city if we put parking along Baker and COP Drive?
- Would people be safe getting out of their cars if they park on COP Drive?
- The Beer Garden was presented at the top of the Attraction Projects list today. Why is it #14 on the list of recommendations?

At this time Barbara Faga and Carlos Perez thanked the Committee for allowing them to make their presentation and then left the meeting.

The following four Park capital projects tie back to the AECOM project list.

• Major hardscape repair	\$750,000
• Shade canopy/stage top replacement	\$500,000
• External speakers/emergency public address system, expand electrical service distribution, hardwire security camera system, add cameras to existing network, wireless internet service.	\$850,000
• Complete Reflection Pool renovation and support system (electrical, water pumps, LED lighting)	<u>\$850,000</u>
TOTAL	\$2,950,000

Mr. Poe and Kevin Duvall met individually with Billy Payne and Woodruff Foundation's Pete McTier to discuss the Park's future. While Mr. Payne focused only on the Park, Mr. McTier looked at the overall campus. Both of them feel the Park is the right size and would not be in favor of reducing the footprint, Park commercialization, or a private entity profiting off the Park. They are willing to support fundraising activities to support a capital request. They suggested the request should be "big and bold."

While the total package of fifteen recommendations could be considered big and bold, one project does not stand out as a WOW. Staff will re-evaluate AECOM's complete list of recommended projects to see if any could be considered big and bold.

FY13 Budget

While the Park has been consistent with expenditures, in the past it has experienced revenue issues and is aware it needs to drive revenue. Thirty-six percent more revenue is projected for FY13. The Park produced its first *Party in the Park* concert in FY12 and while revenue did not come in where expected, it is apparent that there is great money to be made from this type of event and it is an important piece of the revenue puzzle. Sponsorship for next year's concert will be secured much earlier than it was this year which will make a huge revenue difference. Historically the Congress Center contributes an average \$1.1 to \$1.2 million to the Park annually. This contribution is tied to Hotel/Motel Tax which is currently at \$1.5 million. Our goal is to reduce the contribution amount; although, it may not be possible to eliminate a subsidy from the Congress Center. Total July revenue for FY13 has exceeded budget by 26% and expenditures are up 10%. The operating gain for July was up 48% over budget. The gain is mainly due to the great July 4th Celebration which was sponsored by Georgia Lottery. Looking ahead, the Park will realize revenue from the new Coke pouring rights deal, all of which has not been budgeted.

Steve Potts, Levy Restaurant's Campus General Manager, updated the Committee on Levy's plan to generate more food service revenue in the Park. Food service in the Park is more than just Googie Burger revenue. Levy has developed a master plan to improve Levy's Park sales structure. The plan includes the following three major components: 1) hosted exhibitor events in the Park; 2) building better partnership with outside caterers to drive new events; and 3) targeting local, social events. Levy plans to add push carts that can be interchanged, i.e. a Googie hot dog cart, etc. Googie Burger has a great product but location, not the product, is one reason why it struggles. A sales analysis comparison of Googie Burger to FountainSide Café shows a steady increase in gross sales of 309% since 2009, which indicates there is a definite food service market in the Park.

Future Organizational Considerations

The General Manager position remains unfilled. Joe Skopitz has done a great job managing the Park as Assistant General Manager. For now, the Assistant General Manager position will be maintained as leadership. Two new positions, Operations Manager and Business Development Manager, will be added. The Operations Manager will assume the responsibility of maintaining and running the daily operations and the Business Development Manager will drive new revenue through more sales, further sponsorship development, grant writing, and foundation support.

Next Steps

- Staff will present two project lists to the Board at the September Planning Retreat, one that lists “big and bold” projects and one that lists “maintenance projects” which will keep the Park running smoothly.
- Staff will meet with Billy Payne and Pete McTier before the end of the year.
- Seek project funding and create implementation plan.
- Hire two new staff positions.
- Continue review of organizational model.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Recorded by: Dale Aiken

Dee Yancey, Chair