

ROCHESTER ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

9-9-24

Roll Call

A quorum was present as made up by the following current REC members:

REC Commissioners

- Kate Powers, Vice Chair
- Bill Schellinger
- Carlos Perez
- Ethan Burnell

Absent:

- Elizabeth Primus

Members of the Public

None in attendance

Vice Chair Powers called the meeting to order at 6:00pm on a motion to do so made by Carlos Perez and seconded by Bob Schellinger

Agenda Approval

The agenda was accepted without a vote after the approval of the June 3, 2024 minutes was removed due to the proper members not being present to vote.

Housekeeping

There were no housekeeping matters.

Review of Correspondence

There was no correspondence for review or to be issued.

Reports

There were no reports for review or to be issued.

New Business (SEQR/Chapter 48 referrals)

Genesee River Park Draft EAF

Tom Kicior of DES presented on the project with Eric Garcia of TY Lin, the design firm engaged in the project (see attached slide show).

Commissioners had the following questions/concerns directed to the referring party representatives:

Ethan Burnell asked about design considerations taken to prevent misuse of the space (e.g. homeless encampments, etc).

Design team responded that some of these concerns are responded to by the plan to remove many of the walls in the park that prevent users from surveilling their surroundings, as well as other design decision that prevent such activities as skateboarding on planters, etc.

Kate Powers asked what was driving the increase in impervious surfaces in the park, wondering if it had to do with design constraints of meeting ADA guidelines.

Design team indicated that was part of it, especially the addition of a ramp from Andrews Street; the extra impervious surfaces are the minimum required by contemporary guidelines and code (ADA, building, etc).

Bob Schellinger asked if pedestrian traffic through the park is expected during the winter.

Design team indicated they expected it would have pedestrian traffic during the winter as the Sister Cities Bridge across the river is cleared during the winter. The new design (with fewer steps and ability to walk through at grade) should encourage winter usage.

Kate Powers asked if the existing stormwater management infrastructure is sufficient to handle the increased volume created by the increased impervious surfacing.

Design team indicated they believed it is; they have cleaned it out, will snake with camera to confirm clear. They expect the additional flow will be mitigated by planned installation of green infrastructure, but if not they are prepared to resize the existing stormwater inlets and/or installing vortex drains to increase capacity and improve filtering to avoid need to apply for a permit to move or install new.

Kate Powers asked what the planting plan was – specifically whether native plants would be utilized.

Design team indicated natives are the plan, but representatives of the twelve sister cities have expressed interest in having plantings representative of each of them. This will be accommodated to the extent new plantings do not create maintenance or ecological problems.

Bob Schellinger asked if the conditions at the park location prior to the construction of the park in the 1970s was known – seeking to understand if they might be something that should be referenced in this update.

Design team indicated it was all buildings that were removed during urban renewal efforts in the 1970s, so the park when built improved access to the riverfront and the subject updates are expected to improve upon current rates of access.

Bob Schellinger and Ethan Burnell both indicated they generally are in favor with the plans for the park and the information presented in the draft EAF. Kate Powers indicate she was glad the design team is working with SHPO to manage the preservation that the site calls for.

There being no further question, concerns, or discussion, Vice Chair sought a motion to vote to recommend to the Mayor of Rochester (referring lead agency) that a negative declaration be tendered for this project. Carlos Perez made such a motion, Bob Schellinger seconded, and on a vote of 4-0-0, the recommendation was unanimously passed.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 6:25pm.