

Master Plan Committee Minutes

**Wednesday, October 11, 1:30–2:30 p.m.**

Lory Student Center, Room 322

**Members:** Fred Haberecht, Tom Satterly, Dave Bradford, Dell Rae Ciaravola, Ellen Fisher, Lynn Johnson, Mike Rush, Rick Miranda, Blanche Hughes, Tom Milligan, Leslie Taylor

**Other participants:** Shelly Carroll, David Hansen, Kristi Buffington, Mike Ellis, Zack Kulbeck, Oscar Felix, Hanna Johnson, Anthony Taylor, Josh Silva, Julia Innes

## 1. Lagoon Revitalization (Haberecht/Hansen)

- a. This is a discussion about the future of the lagoon—what are the potentials? Should it stay the same or change? There is some funding to rehab it, but to what fashion and to what extent?
- b. The lagoon was built in 1964, between the original and second addition of the LSC.
  - i. The water in the lagoon is just about 1 acre.
  - ii. It exists between Arthur’s Ditch and the student center.
  - iii. Pedestrians and bikes regularly circulate around this area.
  - iv. There is a fire ring used at homecoming nearby.
  - v. This is BOG land, but falls in the domain of the LSC.
    1. There are programmed areas around the space, but no immediate programming on the lagoon space.
    2. The area east of the ditch is in considered the LSC’s programmable space and the LSC uses this space.
      - I. The West lawn has LSC programming.
      - II. Future stage nearby would be permanent. Expanding programming to the west side of the promenade.
- c. Technical issues:
  - i. Currently the west lawn plays into this conversation due to its “soggy bottom,” which makes programming the space almost impossible.
  - ii. The pond liner leaks.
  - iii. The underground piping is in disrepair.
  - iv. The concrete edge of the pool has issues where it is broken.
  - v. The depth of water in the pond itself leads to environmental issues and water quality.
    1. Almost an acre of evaporative water in the summer.
  - vi. There is an existing water feature that is not functional.
- d. Lynn Johnson asks: What is the cause of the soggy grass? Can we remedy this issue and, if we can, what is the cost and do we want to remedy it?
  - i. It is the low point in the drainage system with very dense/tight soil. It is not infiltration of the ditch or water in pipes. Over time there is a little dam that has been built with no release in this area. It can’t drain any faster.
  - ii. The most cost effective remedy is to create an outlet at the low end of this so it can drain directly into the lagoon.
  - iii. Or the other major remedy (which costs \$166,000) is to treat the whole area as a drainage bed so water percolates quickly through it—but not thought of as a

practicable solution. The upper two thirds of it could be serviceable most of the time with a direct intervention on the north end of it. It would take the soggy area away 85% of the time, but it will still be the lowest of low areas, so if it rains a lot then it will be soggy; it will not be a completely pristine area with this remedy.

- e. The pond is a flat area. Everything around the pond is a slope. Because everything is sloping down to the pond, it makes it a difficult spot to access. It is a visual feature of campus but without easy/direct engagement.
- f. Original intent, indicated on the plaque on a boulder nearby, is for rest, reflection, respite. It was not intended as an active program area, but as a place of contemplation and calm amongst the greater campus.
- g. There is a large sandstone boulder retaining area adjacent.
  - i. Often will see people sitting there.
  - ii. Hammocks appear in trees nearby.
- h. There was not enough money to have a water feature that could be maintained long-term and functional. It is a question of its value to the campus community.
- i. Previous site studies include:
  - i. An amphitheater with a physical stage set by the water itself. The soggy area was seen as a potential ecological water area, knowing it would be continuously wet, it could be a way to clean water before it goes into the lagoon.
    - 1. A lot of the first part of this vision has been realized.
  - ii. Other aspirations for a peace garden in this area. The design was a small sandstone area where you can see to Longs Peak and could potentially touch the water in Arthur's ditch as it flows past, but this is a seasonal vision (May–Oct or less than that).
- j. Do we want to put the lagoon back the way this has been? Is there an appropriate size, scale, and feel? Should we even have it? Is there another amenity that would make more sense?
  - i. There is no function except for its visual function.
- k. The design (kidney shaped, concrete edge) is historically a design from the 60s. It was contemporary of the time, but no longer relevant to have an evaporative body with no engagement. It needs to be discovered, is not part of visual field.
- l. 90% of edges slope, and 10% could conceivably be programmed.
- m. Lynn Johnson thinks it could be a good place for a stage. The tiering of the rocks would flow into this area.
  - i. There are 4 concert spaces that already exist.
  - ii. There is not a line of sight to this space, so it is a secondary/removed space for LSC to consider.
  - iii. The Indoor outdoor relationship of the student center is positive in the other spaces, but the lagoon is disconnected in many ways from that.
- n. Does the Transit Center need expansion?
  - i. Transit Center is planned to be expanded in the other direction, north.
  - ii. The lagoon area is a spillway, so the Transit Center couldn't be expanded there.
  - iii. Need the lagoon area for storm water retention. It impounds storm water for the big events on campus. If it's taken offline, that retention would have to be built elsewhere. Any filling of this space immediately takes away storm water detention. The fact that this has water is neutral; this could be lawn and have the same function.

- o. Notice that the entire west lawn is about the same space as the amount of the lagoon water area.
- p. Josh Silva asks about the original intent/thinking for this area.
  - i. We are inferring intent from the language on the plaque and the design of the time. It was about the composition, the simplicity of the lawn running up to the water.
  - ii. Contemporary of the last few decades would include engagement with the people and acknowledgement of the environmental aspects of the pond.
    - 1. Is there some other aspect to the edge that would be more appropriate?
  - iii. In a contemporary sense, ornamental ponds don't get put in anymore because of our climate and the evaporative nature. From a maintenance perspective it wouldn't be put in the same way; today, there would need to be some type of water augmentation plan to release the water back into the river.
- q. The student experience of the lagoon:
  - i. Josh remembers that as a first year student he took walks around the lagoon; it had a calming, pleasant, aesthetic presence. He recommends keeping it in some shape or form as a naturalistic experience.
  - ii. Hanna thinks it is a good place to go to think. However, it looks ugly when it is not full and the edge is not aesthetic, but she feels the water element is important.
  - iii. Anthony thinks it is a defining characteristic of the university; it is memorable and the openness of the space says something about the university.
  - iv. They agree that it doesn't necessarily think it needs to remain the same size. It could be smaller, as long as the aesthetic qualities are retained.
- r. Fred and David Hansen are advocates for making it an appropriately smaller space and having an opportunity for more flat ground where one could engage with it and have more of a contemplative experience.
  - i. There could be more programming space, but there is so much activity, they think it's appropriate to use this area mainly as meditative.
  - ii. The existing water feature would be removed and the rocks would be redistributed. It would open up the soggy bottom and move water through.
  - iii. For the edge, they are advocating some points of engagement where people could sit along the water.
  - iv. The Peace garden could make sense, if not using it as programmable space.
- s. Mike Rush says the image on left (of the presentation) seems more appropriately scaled in the overall space. The dash lines could be paths around it, and easier to maintain.
  - i. Having moving water would be more impactful—though there is no funding for this currently.
- t. Lynn Johnson asks if there is concern for it becoming a mosquito haven.
  - i. The water is so shallow currently that it heats up and gets algae in it. From a maintenance perspective, we currently put blue die in it and have to rake the algae. Making it deeper would help with that.
  - ii. Also, we could put aeration systems underneath (similar to the VTH pond) to keep water circulating to help with water quality.
  - iii. A fountain could do the same for turning over water, but fountains/water features get turned off during a drought because they evaporate more water.
- u. Mike Ellis likes where this is headed with the contemplative space, and doesn't see it as a programming space. He hears a lot from alums that this space is memorable.
  - i. The loading dock is continuing to shrink with the Transit Center, so if there is a way to get a little space there it would be helpful. There is a safety issue for students

walking to the Transit Center due to 18 wheelers backing up. The shrinking of the lagoon could possibly help with that.

- v. Would reducing it keep it cleaner?
  - i. Yes, smaller and deeper would help with keeping it fuller and for longer.
  - ii. It is filled from our irrigation system, which is not active during the winter.
- w. COMMITTEE GUIDANCE: The committee believes that the lagoon is a touchstone of the campus experience and is valued; that it would be good for water to be in it more consistently; that it doesn't need to be put back the way it is currently, but that it needs to have water; and it could have a more contemporary interpretation or expression that would be appropriate for people to engage with.
- x. Currently the timeline of the project is that it is in the programming/predesign/survey phase. Construction is expected spring or summer of next year, done by football season of 2018.
- y. Facilities will work with LSC and come back to the Master Plan Committee in the future with a drawing of what it will look like.

## **2. Diversity House Expansion (Haberecht/Hansen)**

- a. This topic is not presented today to request approval for the project, but is just a discussion about how we approach this potential expansion. Is this a parcel that is deserving of expansion? Is it good planning to do an addition to this building? Is it the highest best use to do a building addition or will it be scraped in the next 10–15 years? Will it still be in the university property in the future?
- b. Lynn Johnson thinks it is helpful to have a discussion in the Master Plan Committee about what is the future of this project. However, everyone has to show that they have funding before we invest any facilities time in building any drawings, etc.
  - i. Diversity can get together with Mike Rush to get a sense for what it will cost, but the form has to be filled out and signed off on before we can use university resources on a project.
- c. This is a 3-acre site. Historical pieces remain of an outdoor patio and a fire pit and grill, but they are not functional.
- d. Past site-studies and uses include:
  - i. A parking lot around the alumni center was considered.
  - ii. Relocating tennis courts with the expansion of the rec center, but that ended up at south campus.
  - iii. Was the president's house in the past.
  - iv. Has had multiple tenants.
  - v. Currently it houses the Office of Diversity.
- e. Diversity is in a growing phase. They needed modifications to make their training room ADA compliant, which made it not feasible for trainings. They now do trainings on campus to help with ADA accessibility.
  - i. They are looking for additional space that can serve as a training center and to have more office space to help with engaging people in these critical conversations. They need a better space to help the university move forward in this; to engage the community and to create more community dialogue; and to engage faculty and help improve pedagogy with inclusive policies.
- f. The Diversity House may not be a forever site/piece of property for the university.

- i. CSURF has mentioned possible interest from sororities and fraternities. We own the land, but it's on the other side of the street, so we could potentially be part of a land swap.
- g. Is there possibility for funding? There is no money for the addition yet. The Office of Diversity would fundraise.
- h. What is the timing on this property, how long may we end up keeping it? We need to make an assumption—maybe 10–15 years? With an assumption of time, then Diversity can better plan. Should Diversity look at the vision of this and think about fundraising for it?
- i. Are there restrictions for how densely this lot can be developed?
  - i. It's part of our annexation with the city so it has entitlements that wouldn't apply to other properties. It would not have to go through city planning or the SPAR process, though probably we would send it through SPAR anyway since it is on other side of street from campus.
- j. Lynn Johnson points out that versions of this project have been looked at in the past, but never came to fruition, so going through the program planning would not occur until there are resources that can fund it.
  - i. A conceptual rendering would be okay to consider, to help show scale, if it would fit as the highest best use of the property.
- k. CSURF input is needed.
- l. Tom Milligan says, as we place more emphasis on these issues of diversity, then we need to help find space to foster that, but this property may not be the space for it. Internal to campus may work better for the Office of Diversity.
- m. Lynn Johnson states that an ideal situation would be for the Vice President for Diversity and Training and Organizational Development (TOD) to co-locate and share training facilities. Diversity training is wrapped into supervisor trainings, and there is a lot of commonality and engagement within the university. There is overlap and synergy in what they do. Her advice is not to do this in isolation, to merge the functionalities. It is important to solve the needs of more than one unit. Co-locate both units to provide the things both need within a reasonable budget.
  - i. Suggestion to revisit Remington house to support TOD and Diversity, if the cost to renovate the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor made sense for office space, using the 1<sup>st</sup> floor for training purposes.
  - ii. Or take TOD to Diversity House because the location has parking and easy access.
  - iii. At TOD/Remington House parking is an issue.
    - 1. For both of these spaces, additional parking is needed for larger groups with more accessible parking.
    - 2. There is an opportunity to expand parking on north side of lot, or other sides possibly, for Diversity House. The addition could go in various places.
- n. From a long-term perspective, it is important to preserve flexibility for this space—to be able to use the site and to not close off opportunities for this property, which is valuable real estate.
- o. A person has to cross both Laurel and Shields to get to this property from main campus.
  - i. Is a crosswalk on the south side possible? Unlikely because it slows up traffic.
- p. Discussed in the past a desire for retirement faculty member housing, for those who want to be located in proximity to the University. This could be a possible future reuse of the Diversity House property.
- q. Two story building complex may be appropriate for this property.

- r. COMMITTEE GUIDIANCE: The committee's direction is to enable Mike Rush to do some simple visioning to develop a cost; to look for efficiencies and synergies as not a standalone solution; to reach out to CSURF to understand how they see the property long term.
  - i. If Oscar Felix/Diversity House has a donor to build it right away, then allow that as a possibility.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 8, 1:30–2:30 p.m., Lory Student Center, Room 312**