

RECORDING SECRETARY'S RECORD OF MEETING

City Council Playhouse Design Steering Committee Meeting #2

April 18, 2023

Present: Mayor Sepi Shyne, Councilmember Chelsea Byers (Chair), Commissioner Mito Aviles, Commissioner Lindsey Deaton, Commissioner Dawn Moreno-Freedman, Commissioner Andrew Solomon, Commissioner Richard Karliss, Commissioner Rogerio Carvalheiro, Laura Zucker from AEA Consulting, Nicki Genovese from the Performing Arts Division of the City of Los Angeles, John Mulhern from the Broad Stage, Mary Sager McFadden from Pamela Burton & Company, Bryan Eck from the University of Southern California; City Staff: Urban Design and Architecture Studio Manager Ric Abramson, Arts Manager Rebecca Ehemann, Project Architect Michael Barker, Arts Division Grants Coordinator Eva Angeloff, Facilities & Field Services Manager Helen Collins; from Perkins & Will: Yan Krymsky, Leigh Christy, Liona Avery, and Max Hu.

Item 1.A. The meeting was called to order at 5:06 PM. Chair Byers welcomed everyone and notified all of the date change of the next meeting to June 13, 2023. Members and staff introduced themselves.

Item 1.B. Chair Byers read the Land Acknowledgement.

Item 2. Ric Abramson outlined the general design parameters for the playhouse and the goals of the Steering Committee meetings. Yan Krymsky provided a brief recap of feedback from the previous meeting, and explained that the team had been focusing on functionality and had been visiting various theaters to gain insight about operations.

Item 3. Yan Krymsky briefed the committee on two main design options- an east-west or north-south theater configuration, beginning with option 1 with a stage on the east side.

Member of the public Rick Sparks asked for clarification about the stage manager room location. Laura Zucker complimented the team on their work at addressing previous comments and stated that continental seating with a break to Accommodate ADA seating and a crossover is preferred. Noted that the current configuration creates a funnel point on the east side because everyone is leaving at the same time. Asked if we could use house left as a functional exit, and make the exits as wide as possible.

Nicki Genovese asked about the upper-level restroom location, which Yan replied was tucked near the elevator as a single occupancy.

John Mulhern asked about the freight elevator size, which Yan replied was an approximately 8'x10' interior cab size.

Richard Karliss asked about the seating and rake, to which Yan replied that it is approximately 6 inches per 4 feet, with staggered seats.

Member of the public Bryan Foyster asked if the staff office can connect to the box office, and expressed concern about the outdoor uncovered lobby. Asked about loading, to which Ric replied that the alley will be a one-way from west to east.

Andrew Solomon asked about the height of the freight elevator cab.

Member of the public Barbara Bain asked about space for props and costumes, and asked to ensure that space is accommodated for this.

Lindsey Deaton asked about light refreshments or concessions, which Yan replied can be either at the box office or on a cart that can be wheeled out to the exterior spaces.

John Mulhern mentioned that the crossover does not need to be a fixed wall, and could be drapery, and that a wall is limiting for directors. Only 1/3 or so of shows will utilize a crossover.

Laura Zucker commented on the control room, which can be like a bay window, and that we should avoid casting a shadow over the audience.

John Mulhern mentioned that control rooms are usually flush against the rear wall.

Member of the public Rick Sparks asked about signage, to which Yan replied that it would be part of the next meeting discussion.

Lindsey Deaton asked if the lobby or second floor are sufficient for small performances, and about the dimensions of the garden. Ric mentioned the feature stair as an opportunity for informal performance. Yan mentioned that the garden is another opportunity for informal theater.

A member of the public asked about the entry path for users with wheelchairs.

Nicki Genovese asked the team to provide covering for exterior spaces to provide shelter from inclement weather and sun, and mentioned that only a single occupancy bathroom next to the elevator is complicated for users, and noted that the rehearsal/ garden connection is great for performances and also events.

Yan Krymsky provided an overview of the option 2 planning, which included the north/ south stage orientation.

Laura Zucker asked about number of public restrooms.

Ric Abramson asked about the amount of fixed seating, and potential for a box platform that can be stored.

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John Mulhern asked about the height of the stage, and noted that it should be raised for good sightlines, even if only 3', to give more of a proscenium feel. John asked about where stage pieces are stored. Yan replied that storage can occur underneath the stage or seating. Nicki Genovese noted that stage extensions are very large when stored.

Lindsey Deaton asked about storage for cables. Nicki Genovese mentioned that if it's a rental house, the renters bring in additional equipment, so no need for a significant amount of storage. Nicki mentioned the need for a wardrobe maintenance area with a steamer, iron, but not a full costume shop. Noted that theater groups and technicians are very inventive with spaces. Barbara Bain commented that it's better to build it in now in the case it is not a rental house in the future.

Barbara Bain noted the need for wing space for people catching dancers, if dance will be presented here.

John Mulhern stated that the control room should be on center, and that all A/V can be in the same space, with no doors.

Items 4, 5, 6. A member of the public stated that double doors are essential for getting people out of the theater, and that there were concerns about safety on the exterior stairs.

A member of the public noted that concessions are noisy and need space, and that a secondary changing area for a VIP performer may be useful. Scanning tickets creates a bottleneck so scan immediately in the lobby, far from the theater.

A member of the public Bryan Foyster commented that the rake of the seating is too low and that people don't want to look over people's heads. Restrooms on the same level as the theater are very important. 2 single use restrooms at that level will make a huge difference.

The steering committee discussed option 1 versus option 2. Yan was preferential to the larger terrace on option 1. Michael Barker noted that option 2 provides the potential to egress from both sides of the theater to the street and not the alley. Laura Zucker preferred the theater in option 2 because it fulfills the expectation as an audience member to enter from the back of the theater, moving towards the experience.

Mito Aviles remarked on the curb appeal of the timber structure and liked the flexibility and theater layout of option 2.

John Mulhern mentioned that it's not an issue if the control room access is from a public lobby.

Andrew Solomon preferred the curb appeal of the timber structure and the large, unbroken space from the street in option 1.

Chair Byers expressed a preference for the option 2 theater with the option 1 frame and protected stair and improved public space.

Rogério Carneiro expressed his preference for the option 1 stair and stage of option 2, and mentioned that the public elevator location seems odd in the plan.

Lindsey Deaton stated that restrooms right across from the theater are important, and ticketing at the bottom of the stairs.

John Mulhern talked about the programming of the green room, including refreshments, microwave, sink, dining table, and the need for it to be separate from the rehearsal space. Noted the issue of noise from the freight elevator. Vinyl dancing floor doesn't fit well with a semicircular edge or apron, so likely not worth the trouble.

Nicki Genovese stated that flexible seating is not needed in a venue like this.

Rogério asked if the box office at street level is functional. Nicki G. mentioned that technology is evolving fast and that it is a bad idea to combine concessions with ticketing. The currently shown box office probably won't actually be for ticketing, but it could be for concessions.

A member of the public stated that a box office in the lobby is an issue.

Mary Sager McFadden asked about the northern extent of the open space, and if there will be any sort of screening/ wall from the alley.

Nicki Genovese mentioned that a comms room for tech and cabling will be needed. John Mulhern stated that full streaming is not needed, but maybe some small broadcasting to the outdoor space if not too costly.

Yan Krymsky recapped the feedback, noting that the option 2 stage plan can be merged with the option 1 stair and exterior space and timber structure. Signage, garden outdoor space, sidewalks, concessions, and 3d views will be a priority for the next meeting.

Mito Aviles asked to provide members with an agenda packet with plans and images prior to the next meeting.

Item 7. The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 PM.

Michael Barker

Michael Barker, Project Architect

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