Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting Notes Dec. 13, 2019 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Board Members Present:

M. Ann Buck, Elaine Fink, David Lanegran, James McClean, Rep. Jerry Hertaus, Alicia Belton, Ted Lentz, Michael Bjornberg (Advisor), and Sen. Carla Nelson (on phone)

CAAPB Staff: Paul Mandell, Pete Musty and Linda Spohr.

Others Present: Commissioner Alice Roberts-Davis, Wayne Waslaski, Marcus Grubbs, Jordan Wente, Erin Campbell, Admin; David Nass and Troy Medlin, Christ on Capitol Hill; Erin Berg, Rethos; Jennifer Hassemer, MMB; Kimberly Sandbulte, Leo Daly

Ann Buck convened the meeting, with Mandell noting that with more than a quorum of the Board present, this constituted a full meeting of the Board and is subject to open meeting law.

CAAPB Staff reviewed the current position regarding the Ford Building, based on past positions favoring at least a study of, if not actual re-use of a renovated Ford Building as part of a larger, block redevelopment by the State. CAAPB Architectural Advisor Bjornberg, serving as consultant for Leo Daly, wrote the 2019 Re-Use Study.

Commissioner Alice Roberts-Davis reiterated stated positions from testimony at the November 2019 Board meeting arguing that from their responsibility statutorily, the most effective move is to demolish the building as part of a wholesale redevelopment of the block, in coordination with the neighboring church.

There was discussion of the cost in retrofitting the Ford Bldg., the limited employee capacity and intent of needed repairs, acknowledging that the building was structurally sound.

There is also brand-new information from the prior work that Ford had been "returned" for failing to meet requirements for Listing in the National Register due to "*lack of eligibility based on loss of integrity*." While acknowledging this isn't a "rejection," according to staff, it means no further consideration is pending or active.

With the building removed, Admin. studies show a building for upwards of 900 employees and a parking ramp of at least 450 spaces. CAAPB Planner Musty cited how Chapter 7a of the draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan calls for at least consideration of reuse of the building as part of a larger development and for active pedestrian-friendly ground floor/street level space. Bjornberg noted that the church has been now listed in the National Register and creates a need to address context in any redevelopment, with or without the Ford Building.

Sen. Nelson asked if the proposed 900 employees were new State employees or relocated, and if they are relocated, is it from leased or owned space. She stated it was unlikely, given her information, that there was an appetite for such a large new development with this years' legislature, adding that she would therefore probably be opposed to demolition, at least until such time as there was a plan and proven need. Ann Buck and others discussed a need for visitor or employee parking to replace Sears lot supply, for day care, coffee shops and flexible State office space. The Commissioner noted that currently three agencies, DEED, Public Safety and Education are all actively seeking new main offices.

Sen. Nelson asked if DEED was leaving leased space and thus indicating a significant bonding, and she exercised caution before merely tearing down the Ford Building. Bjornberg noted that there is large level of interest in private sector developers in the potential gain from a reuse of the Ford Building as part of a larger redevelopment questioning why the State isn't at least exploring such a plan for themselves. Ted Lentz spoke to the "coherence of the Capitol approach," arguing that Ford did not positively contribute to that coherence, in his view, that a clean site better offers opportunities to design an appropriate new and larger State Building right next to the church, citing his experience in seeing old buildings becoming a financial drain when undergoing rehab, at times for questionable benefits. McClean asked if at least a portion of the building, even the facade could be re-used, citing several successful examples in downtown Saint Paul, including most recently the Penfield, with Wayne noting that in the case of the Ford Building, that would probably involve demo and rebuilding as part of the new building. Mandell cited the World Architect study for replacing the need for Centennial Building – reflecting in drawings, a sense of at least part of the Ford Building incorporated into a larger multi-story State Building.

Administration, in response to questions, said they didn't have money to fully explore reuse at this time, but with no certain re-use of the site at this time, there would be time for exploring any such plans. Lanegran said he wasn't prepared to insist that the Ford Building be preserved, and Rep. Hertaus said he thought it unlikely that a new building is in the cards for this years' legislative Session, given pressures on the bonding bill and a $300 million ask based on a replacement for Centennial at Ford Site.

Lanegran offered a motion, seconded by Lentz, to modify the CAAPB position to be "open" to demolition of the Ford Building as part of planning for a new State Building, with the understanding that at that time, in Predesign and Site planning, the State could revisit re-use as part of a CAAPB-led design competition. (The last part offered as a friendly amendment by Ann Buck in response to earlier comments by Mandell).

The attached revised CAAPB review comments, reflecting staff understanding of the motion as confirmed by the Committee Members were then submitted.

CAPITAL BUDGET REQUESTS 2020

CAAPB Draft Review Comments (for input per MMB)

ADMINISTRATION

1. CAPRA
   The CAAPB is fully supportive of this request, as necessary maintenance of State assets.

2. Real Estate Strategic Plan
   The CAAPB is fully supportive of this request, especially given the timing with wrap-up of the CAAPB in-house work in rewriting the Comprehensive Plan for the Capitol Area, along with coordinated, multi-agency work on mobility planning.

3. Power Plant Chiller Replacement
   The CAAPB supports this work as an improvement in the area of sustainability. The CAAPB would need to be involved in any planning should there be a physical impact of the appearance of the site.

4. Centennial Office Building Replacement
   The CAAPB is very supportive of this effort to replace a building that is both unsightly and one that has possibly outlived its' usefulness given current conditions. Should this request require re-development of a new site within the Capitol Area, the CAAPB must, by law, be involved in both site planning and in execution of a CAAPB-led Design Competition, which would require between $20,000-$30,000 compensation for time and work, given tightness of our operating budget.

   ~~One additional note-should the site be current Ford Building and Lot C site, based on the newest draft study of the Ford Building by the CAAPB, there should be a thorough study for re-use of either all or part of the Ford Building as part of the historic fabric for the area, as the building is still structurally sound.~~

5. Parking Management Access Controls
   The CAAPB is fully supportive of this effort, totally in line with recent CAAPB studies and multi-agency work on parking and mobility, looking to reduce both the cost and amount of land in the Capitol Area tied up with parking.

6. State Building Efficiency Investments
   The CAAPB is supportive of this request due to interest in sustainability campus-wide.

7. Property Acquisition
   The CAAPB supports this request, especially given mounting pressure on land available to the State.

8. State Office Building Renovation-Pre-design and Design
   The CAAPB is fully supportive of this long-overdue study on the needs of the State Office Building, especially given the effects of inflation on a historic building, as experienced with the restoration of the State Capitol Building and the delay from original requests at turn of the century.

9. Ford Building ~~Debt and~~ Demolition
   ~~The CAAPB can support the debt relief in this request but is opposed to the idea of demolition of this historic building. That opposition is due in part because of the recently adopted Capitol/Rice Design Framework, created as Chapter 7a of the current re-write of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the most recent studies have found the building to be structurally sound, both via a consultant for Administration and the latest draft of the Ford Building Reuse Study, completed this past June for the CAAPB.~~
   ~~Given the need for a Strategic Plan, it makes no sense to demo a building before one even knows what kind of new space is needed in the Capitol Area.~~

While CAAPB policy does not *require* but supports re-use of the Ford Building, the CAAPB is open to the budget request for demolition of the Ford Building, given the understanding from the Administration Department, that the actual demolition would not occur until such time as they have an actual use for the site in the form of a planned building, the design of which would involve a CAAPB-led design competition. They also agreed that an analysis of the range of options for the site redevelopment, including full or partial building re-use to complete demolition and redevelopment of a cleared site, could be executed.

10. Capitol Complex Security Upgrades
    The CAAPB fully supports this critically needed project funding, as we have done in past several years, given the clear need for safety and security for all who come to the Capitol.

11. ADA Building Accommodation
    The CAAPB fully supports this request.

~~**PUBLIC SAFETY**~~

~~2. State Patrol and DPS Headquarters Predesign~~

~~Should this project consider the Ford Building and Lot C Site, if would be imperative that any site plans and building design be generated by means of a CAAPB-led Planning and Design Competition per statute, (for which $20,000-$30,000 would need to be allocated due to limited agency budgets). In addition, it is important to note that based on Comprehensive Plans for the Capitol Area and recently approved Design Guidelines for the Capitol/Rice area of the Capitol Area call for the reuse of all or part of the current Ford Building, found to be structurally sound though both Administration Department and the new CAAPB-led Ford Building Assessment. The building may receive designation on the Historic~~

~~Register before end of this year, and as part of the historic fabric of the area and University Avenue, the CAAPB strongly favors its re-use.~~