

# Meeting Minutes

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Project: Mellon Arena

Date: March 30, 2010

Subject: Interested Parties Meeting #4

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 pm

By: Lisa Olszak

Place: Rooms 335 & 336  
David Lawrence Convention Center  
Pittsburgh, PA

Attendees: See attachment 1

Handouts:

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## I. Introductions

A welcome and introduction was provided by Ray Maginness, Environmental Project Manager with Michael Baker, Jr.. Participants were thanked for their continued involvement in the Interested Party Process and asked to introduce themselves and the organization they represent.

Ray referred to and reviewed the meeting AGENDA, a copy of which was contained in the handout folder:

- Review the Interested Party meeting #2 minutes
- Discuss the revisions to Purpose & Needs (P/N) statement based on comments from Interested Party meeting #2 and subsequent coordination with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC)
- Review the range of development options & those for further consideration
- Initiate the assessment of the development options via a workshop and
- Identification of follow-up items for the next Interested Party meeting

## II. Meeting #2 Minutes Review & Comment

Ray noted that the minutes had been discussed during IP Meeting #3 and the finalized minutes would be posted on the project website.

## III. Purpose & Need Statement (Revised)

Ray noted that since the Interested Party meeting #2, revisions were made to the P/N statement based on the IP group's discussions. The revised P/N Statement in attendees' packets was referred to. It was noted that the PHMC suggested that the underlined phrase below be added to the IP process purpose to reflect historic significance of the Mellon Arena.

*The purpose is to consider feasible preservation possibilities for the continued use of the Mellon Arena site given its cultural value as a historic resource eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.*

Ray also noted that the Need statement was revised to reflect discussions of the Design, Planning & Sustainability issues identified during IP meeting #2. This need category now includes issues of:

- Compatibility and harmony (i.e., with the Consol Energy Center and other existing venues such as those at nearby universities, the Convention Center, etc.)
- Pre-existing historic fabric
- Urban design
- Green (environmental and economic sustainability) considerations
- Issues of historical significance (tangible and intangible)

Other categories (as indicated on the P/N handout) include Community Cohesion & Connectivity, Economic Development and Affordability.

During the presentation the following comments and responses were made:

Comment / Response

1. C: Will any plan need to consider all criteria included in the P/N?  
R: Yes. Each plan must address these. During tonight's workshop, we'll begin the process of applying these criteria to each option.
2. C: Does it make sense to think about economic development and affordability together?  
R: There is some overlap between many of the categories including economic development and affordability.
3. C: The social and political factors need to be included thereby addressing what we want the community to look like. We need to include non-physical aspects and intangibles like these.  
R: These can be included as an issue considered in tonight's workshop exercise where each option will be evaluated in terms of their related ability to address the project needs..
4. C: We need to define the social and economic goals for the project – as defined by the community. For instance, things like socio-economic diversity should be considered, along with the vision of the end product for the community.
5. C: I think adding more categories makes it too complicated. We should include additional criteria in the existing categories.  
R: We'll take all of your comments (along with comments from those not in attendance) into consideration.

**IV. Prior Meeting Follow Up Items**

The status of follow-up since IP meeting #2 was presented:

- A tour of the arena was held on Saturday (March 6<sup>th</sup>). A tour of the Hill District was held as well.
- The P/N Statement was revised as discussed and is posted on the project website.  
The PHMC coordination concerning the P/N statement has been posted on the website.
- Presentations of the various development plans was conducted during IP meeting #3 (3/17) and has been posted on the website.
- IP meeting #1 minutes have been posted. IP meeting #2 minutes will be posted later this week. IP meeting #3 minutes are being prepared and will be made available when complete.
- At tonight's meeting, the Assessment of the Development options under consideration will begin.

During the presentation the following comment and response was made:

Comment / Response

1. C: Kim Ellis offered to do a tour of the Hill District community. When will that occur?  
R: One tour was already completed. A second tour is in the works.

**V. Development Option Summary**

Ray noted that through coordination with the SEA and the PHMC, the following five options are appropriate for consideration in this consultation process.

Option 1 - Do Nothing (Mothball Arena)

This option involves closing or "Mothballing" the Mellon Arena.

- The parking lots would remain and be maintained for use by the Consol Energy Center.
- The physical barriers between the Hill District & the downtown would remain unchanged.
- The operational costs would be reduced, but baseline maintenance / life support costs would still be incurred.
- There would be a loss of revenue derived from the arena as well as an opportunity cost of alternative options
- A No Adverse Effect determination is assumed for this option.

#### Option 2 - Preserve Arena (Continued Use as Multi-Purpose Arena)

This option preserves the Arena for continued use as a multi-purpose arena facility and was initially evaluated as an alternative to the construction of the Consol Energy Center. It was noted that as a result of the analysis conducted at that time, the continued use of the Arena as a multi-purpose facility had many draw-backs including:

- high facility and operational costs
- structural constraints to restructuring and expansion of the arena due to its unique dome shape
- restricted truck loading facility
- ever increasing size of competitive venues making the site uncompetitive for larger venue events
- Inadequate concourse and ticket sales facilities
- Inadequate ADA and safety features
- Inadequate toilet & waste removal facilities

#### Option 3 - Arena Re-Use & Site Development

This option, the Arena Re-Use & Site Development, is a plan that preserves a functioning dome through the restructuring of the arena for hotel construction and flexible open space. The remainder of the 28-acre Area of Potential Effect (APE) is developed with mixed land uses. Lemieux Place is maintained and Wylie and Webster Aves are extended. Structured parking on the Hill District side of the Arena supports mixed-use developments, and a Crawford Overlook. Due to the restructuring of the Arena, a Minimized No Adverse Effect is anticipated.

During this portion of the presentation the following comments and responses were made:

#### Comment / Response

1. C: Does this option differentiate between the arena remaining as-is versus an arena without the existing seating?  
R: This option has a lot of flexibility and could include a structure with the inner bowl removed.
2. C: Please explain the difference between "Minimize" No Adverse Effect and No Adverse Effect.  
R: Those phrases should be identical in the presentation.

#### Option 4 - Restructure Arena (Continued Use as Multi-Purpose Arena)

This option provides for continued use as a multi-purpose arena facility and was initially evaluated as an alternative to the construction of the Consol Energy Center. The restructuring involved elevating two of the six dome leaves, in order to house the arena expansion. As a result of the analysis and although this option allowed for additional new suites, it was not able to address the other deficiencies including:

- Expansion of the concourse & ticket sales areas
- Toilet facilities and infrastructure
- ADA and safety issues
- Truck loading facility
- Competitiveness with larger venues/facilities

This option would be a Minimized Adverse Effect. The final determination of adverse effect is completed by PHMC.

#### Option 5 - Arena Demo & Site Development

This option is the Demolition of the Arena and the development of the entire APE with high density mixed use. Wylie

Avenue is extended through the site and a street network is established. Land use type and scale transitions from Crawford Street towards the downtown with residential development most dense near Crawford and higher office buildings near the downtown. Structured and on-street parking are located through the site. This option would result an Adverse Effect to the Mellon Arena.

Since Options 2 & 4 were considered relative to the decision on whether to construct the Consol Energy Center, these options were determined to not lend themselves to any feasible use as a multi-purpose arena facility and are not appropriate for further consideration.

During this portion of the presentation the following comments and responses were made:

#### Comment / Response

1. C: Why keep Option #1 (Mothball)?  
R: As a part of an environmental review process, we are required to consider a "Do Nothing" Option.
2. C: When evaluating an historic building, there is often a period of time before it is reused. It is essentially a phase of Option #3.  
R: In evaluating each option, we are considering a ten-year time frame for phased construction completion is being considered to promote an equitable comparison of options.
3. C: Couldn't Option #1 be an alternative for someone who wanted to move the arena to another location?  
R: Moving is not considered a preservation option because of its adverse effect. This consideration may be revisited should the process proceed and discussions turn towards mitigation of adverse effect to the arena.

#### **VI. Option Assessment Workshop**

The collaborative assessment of the Development Options was initiated in a workshop format similar to the process of IP meeting #2. Participants were reminded that as IP members they agreed to work collaboratively, cooperatively and objectively. IPs were randomly assigned to one of two groups and asked to identify a recorder and reporter. The recorder recorded the opinions on the forms provided for each group. A collage of image excerpts from IP meeting #3 was provided to aid in discussions.

#### Comment / Response

1. C: What is the end result of this process?  
R: We want the opinions of the group. Collectively you fill out the worksheet. We'll summarize the work of all groups and bring it to the next meeting with the economic analysis.
2. C: The economic analysis will be very important. Will we have an opportunity to reconsider our assessments once we receive the economic analysis?  
R: Yes.
3. C: The purpose of the process is to consider reuse, correct?  
R: We are considering a wide range of alternatives. Options 1, 3 are preservation options and Option 5 has an adverse effect.
4. C: Option 5 should not be considered because of its adverse effect.  
R: We considered three preservation options with one being eliminated because it was not feasible. We are comparing these options in an even-handed equitable way. Ultimately, we may not have consensus but dissenting opinions will be recorded.

#### **VII. Meeting Summary & Follow Up Items**

Ray noted that that progress would be continued at the next IP meeting. During that meeting, a financial assessment would be provided if it was complete.

**II. Follow-up Items**

1. Kim Ellis will arrange for an additional tour of the Hill District community

Next Meeting: Tentative dates for the next meeting were discussed. It was agreed that we would contact the IP group members as soon as potential dates are identified.