

**REGULAR MEETING AND JOINT STUDY SESSION WITH PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMITTEE OF THE FOSTER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

MINUTES

JUNE 1, 2023

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

At 7:00 p.m. by Chair Jagtiani

This meeting was held as a hybrid meeting.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Planning Commission Present: Commissioners Haddad, Pedro, Venkat, and Chair Jagtiani

Parks and Recreation Committee: Committee Members Bindal, Corpuz, Delmonico, Duncan, Ryzak, and Chair Baer

Absent: Commissioner Bronitsky and Committee Tiwari

Consultants: Jonathan Hartman, Principal Architect, Group 4; Dawn Merkes, Principal Architect, Group 4; and Sebastian Lopez-Wilson, Job Captain, Group 4; and Marco Esposito, SWA

Staff Present: Sofia Mangalam, Community Development Director; Derek Schweigart, Parks and Recreation Director; and Denise Bazzano, Assistant City Attorney

9. **STUDY SESSION**

1. TO DISCUSS: 1) SCHEMATIC SITE AND BUILDING DESIGN FOR THE CITY OF FOSTER CITY RECREATION CENTER REBUILD PROJECT, AND 2) CONCEPT DESIGN OPTIONS FOR THE BOARDWALK IMPROVEMENTS ON THE LAGOON BETWEEN THE BOAT LAUNCH AND THE AMPHITHEATER.

ACTION: Commissioner Venkat motioned for item 9.1 to be moved to the top of the agenda, Commissioner Pedro seconded, and action was approved by roll call vote of 4-0-0-1 (Absent: Bronitsky)

Project Update:

Director Schweigart and consultant Dawn Merkes updated the committee on the ongoing project design work as the project moves into the next phase, Schematic Design. They summarized ongoing community outreach efforts (the design team is gathering input at public events and an online survey, with efforts continuing through June 11) and the multiple ongoing technical meetings with city staff and design consultants which have resulted in the current site and building design options.

Building Design Update:

City's consultants Dawn Merkes and Jonathan Hartman from the Group 4 presented an updated two-story building design which was developed in response to comments and feedback received during the first round of community outreach, and the preferences of the Project Management Team, Project Task Force, Joint Study Session, and City Council. The updated design features an angled events wing which improves protection of the primary exterior spaces from dominant winds and allows for independent after-hours operation of the wing for large events, with an added secondary entrance and lobby. Jonathan Hartman presented three distinct material and color palette options which are being presented as part of the ongoing community outreach efforts.

Waterfront Masterplan Design Update:

Marco Esposito from SWA presented visioning and options for a new waterfront master plan. The Waterfront Master Plan was approved in April as an additional service to design the new waterfront from the amphitheater to the boat launch. Conceptual design for this scope will be developed along with the rec center's schematic design phase to integrate the project and waterfront. Mr. Esposito presented a series of images and examples of successful ways of engaging with bodies of water from around the bay area, and the world. He reviewed a series of site plan and section sketches showing improvements to the pathways around the amphitheater, as well as alternates for the design of the waterfront with elements such as floating docks, buoys, seating and swimming areas, walking routes, a marina, a floating beach, etc. which relate to the images which were presented.

Interactive Breakout Session:

The Joint Study Session moved on to a breakout session where the Committee Members and Commissioners reviewed physical presentation materials for the waterfront and building materials options brought by the design consultants. Participants marked their preferences on the physical boards and asked informal questions of the design team. After this period of question, comment, and discussion, the Joint Study Session returned to their seats and continued with formal comments.

Comments:

Following the breakout session, the Joint Study Session members provided individual comments on the site and material palette and building design options.

- Committee Member Bindal commented that his preference is that whatever color is chosen should blend in with the surroundings – blue for the lagoon water and natural colors. They expressed the opinion that all the activities are popular and should be supported, and the design should support all the activities presented to get people closer to the water, but to be sensitive to loud activities. They commented that the natural stone feature would blend well with the amphitheater background, and transition into the water. They expressed concern over the need to make sure the steps into the water are not slick to prevent falls.
- Committee Member Ryzak commented that the speed of this project is exciting. They built on Committee Member Bindal's comments and noted that one thing to keep in mind is that water transfers sound. Swimming pools and lounge areas that create a lot of noise would be audible to residents across the water. Activities should be community-oriented, but with a mindfulness toward sound and its impact on neighbors.

- They expressed that the design and scheme for the building will really excite residents of Foster City. While it's a large expenditure, and is not to be taken lightly, she is confident in the work done by the design team. They commended the design team for moving forward with the design process in an inclusive way.
- Committee Member Duncan thanked Derek Schweigart, Parks and Recreation staff, City staff, the Planning Commission, Group 4, along with community input, especially from the 55 and better group. She commented that the values of the design align with the community, and that Foster City will benefit from a design that fully integrates the waterfront with the indoors and outdoors, with the various terraces and spaces for food trucks. A timeless, warm, and inviting, sustainable rec center, with a nautical theme will be functional for the community for years to come. She expressed a preference for palette A, but commented that she would like to incorporate elements from the other palettes, such as the wavy pattern from option B, and the dark blue. She commented that she would like to see some of the features from the previous one-story option incorporated into the two-story option. She expressed her opinion that the design should reflect the nautical themes of the community, such as the sailboat on the city seal (the nautical theme has been part of the city from the beginning), and that she would like to see a variety of water-oriented activities that celebrate Foster City's uniqueness. She also expressed that she is pleased to see the senior space on the ground floor by the lobby that faces the water and that is larger than the current space. She expressed that she is not convinced that Foster City will be able to build a two-story recreation center with the given budget.
 - Committee Member Delmonico expressed a preference for palette options A and the natural look of B, along with the waterfront design which integrates the design with the Lagoon. She expressed that she was not in support of a floating deck or pool. They expressed an opinion that these features would open up a can of worms for liability and added staff. They mentioned that it would be nice to see a variety of water-oriented activities supported by the new design and look forward to seeing this in the coming years.
 - Committee Member Corpuz expressed an appreciation of the consideration of the waterfront masterplan as part of this project. They commented that it's good to see the thought put into the variety of activities that would allow the community to enjoy the unique amenity of the lagoon and waterways that don't exist anywhere else in the Bay Area. Opening these up will not only complement the Rec center but also improve the waterways and have a lasting impact on the community and economic development of Foster City. He encouraged everyone to take the online survey or attend a pop-up outreach event. He approved of different elements from each material option: the blue color from option A, the accent wavy pattern from option B, and the white colors for the roofline and soffit from option C. These invoke a nautical theme. He commented that the design can build off the presented waterfront design elements to influence future development throughout the city. He expressed the opinion that the committee should think about added features and design enhancements of the entire lagoon system that could be incorporated at a parks master plan level.
 - Chair Baer expressed a preference for Option C with lots of brightness and contrast, and not too much white. He expressed appreciation of all the options seen for the waterfront and commented that one that should be looked at in more detail is the crew races which the City could host, similar to the course at Redwood Shores. He commented that it wouldn't be as simple to do a regulation course on the Lagoon. He

- commented that in all his involvement in national aquatics and championships he has not seen the idea of having a regulation pool in the lagoon, which could work. USA swimming usually uses temporary pools in a convention center for Olympic trials, which then gets sold to a city afterwards, so this could be an option for getting a pool. He expressed that he doesn't see a swimming option being feasible without partners due to budget constraints. Having a swimming area may be too much liability, so this may not work in Foster City, but a regulation pool that is secured for competition, which is not part of the Rec Center budget, should be explored as an additional option. He commended the design team for their good presentation.
- Commissioner Pedro thanked the design team for putting the presentation together. He expressed that it was very helpful to see the materials and the boards. He commented that seeing the public comments from the first round of outreach was helpful to guide his decision. He expressed a preference for options A and B, with elements that blend in well with the surroundings and fit the guidelines the city is trying to achieve. He said that he was really inspired by the existing activities in the waterways, and that it was great to see new ideas for additional activities. He commented that he believes the way the space is designed reflects the comments about inside/outside connections.
 - Commissioner Venkat echoed what has been said. She expressed a desire to push for more inclusive activities for people who aren't swimming or boating. An outlook could attract people from different cities. Things like paddle boats, such as the swans at Echo Park in LA, attract people from areas outside of Foster City, and could attract young folks who want to brag about what they're doing. These elements would also stimulate economic activity downtown. They commented that this new area could be used by local businesses to host off-site events and activities. She expressed a preference for Options A and B (leaning toward B), commenting that the darker options look more timeless.
 - Commissioner Haddad commented that he works at a lot of public schools, but that this is his first time with a development of a Recreation Center. He commented that it seems like the waterfront amenities will take up a lot of cost. He asked if there is a percentage of the cost for the waterfront amenities to the total cost, while the Recreation Center is the main focus.
 - Dawn Merkes responded that the new building, surrounding area, bocce courts, and parking are all the elements that are included in the current project budget. She clarified that the funded project for the Rec Center Rebuild does not include the waterfront project. That will be under a different project scope and budget. The Council approved the masterplan design work for the waterfront. She mentioned that the project budget breaks the sections of the budget down in detail.
 - Commissioner Haddad asked if the site work is \$8M in cost.
 - Dawn Merkes clarified that the site work budget is \$7.5M, including the site directly around the building out to Shell, improvements to the existing parking, and the Lagoon, which all go into the escalated budget of \$31.8M.
 - Commissioner Haddad asked if the demolition work is part of the cost of the project.
 - Dawn Merkes responded yes; our cost estimating consultant TBD has a full detailed cost model for the conceptual design which the design team is presenting here in a simplified format.
 - Commissioner Haddad inquired about sustainability.

- Dawn Merkes replied that the team is designing LEED silver and is looking at elements to be incorporated into the base design that will embrace sustainability goals. The building will be designed to be all electric, and photovoltaic-ready (though PVs are an alternate in the budget at this time) and could be net-zero with the right combination of elements.
- Commissioner Haddad inquired about other sustainability aspects.
 - Dawn Merkes listed a variety of different elements which are included in the project's LEED checklist. The design team is looking at LEED silver as a base, but the project could easily attain Gold with added sustainable elements such as PVs.
- Commissioner Haddad commented that water usage is a big issue. He inquired if the design team has thought about collecting rainwater for greywater uses.
 - Dawn Merkes explained that in Northern California we do not have much rain for a long period of time over the summer, so water retention on the site would not get refilled for much of the year. Ultimately a project would pay a lot for the infrastructure, but it never gets refilled to be used. She commented that often-saving runoff from the roof will not have a good return on investment.
- Commissioner Haddad commented that there is a lot of emphasis on the lagoon side of the building.
 - Dawn Merkes responded that this presentation is only focusing on views from the lagoon, but this building has no front as visitors can approach from all sides. The design team will continue to develop the other sides of the building and will be bringing images of these to future presentations.
- Commissioner Haddad commented that he is involved in a lot of solar installations. Most PVs are on flat roofs of existing commercial buildings.
 - Dawn Merkes responded that the design team is looking at attaching PVs to the curved metal roofs with the use of clips. This is a durable and efficient long-term installation for the PVs, and the flat roofs are occupied by the building's mechanical equipment.
- Commissioner Haddad commented that the current design looks a lot like the Burlingame Community Center (BCC). Foster City is different. He expressed worry that this is too close to BCC and would like to see the design be more different. He suggested that the design could use PVs on the façade to make the design more different.
 - Dawn Merkes responded that the floor plan and roof lines are significantly different between the two designs. BCC has butterfly roofs, ours are curved. She added that the most cost-efficient installation for PVs is on a rooftop.
 - Jonathan Hartman commented that modeling PVs on a vertical or more steeply sloped application shows that these are not as good as sloped panels on roofs. He explained that when we balance the opportunities, we need more than 50% of the project's floor area will need to be PVs to get the building to net zero as a rough estimate. If we do vertical applications that are less efficient, that number increases, and is more expensive. We could look at opportunities to do a hybrid approach. Even if one approach is not the most efficient, it can still be a useful application, and could be used to demonstrate other applications of this technology to the community.
 - Commissioner Haddad commented that a hybrid option would be good, perhaps including wind power as well. He added that in his thinking about the PVs, these could be used as an architectural element of the design, where in addition to the

roof, one side might have solar panels. He brought up the example of the La Seine Musicale in Paris which incorporates a moving PV array. In the conceptual sail design, one side of the sail could be PVs, and the sail could rotate to maximize the efficiency of the vertical array. He expressed that he wants to see something unique in this design that will differentiate Foster City from other cities. He commented that the presentation focuses on the waterfront side and design, and he would like the design team to look into his comments about the design of the building and come up with other options that include these concerns and get it priced to let the City Council decide. He reiterated his concern that all three options are very similar to BCC, and he does not see a special design for Foster City. He acknowledged that cost is an issue, but that could be addressed. He reiterated that how much the waterfront amenities cost will take away from the core design of the recreation center, which is more important. He expressed that he hopes to see a different design next time.

- Commissioner Jagtiani commented that while we want to support the existing and new activities on the water, the City should consider the amount of traffic that will result from these (Berkeley and Sausalito have a lot of people coming in from the outside). How much of these amenities should be for people not from the community. If the rec center, which is meant for the community, gets overcrowded with outsiders it will keep community members from enjoying the Center, and the City should consider this when choosing activities. He expressed concern over the safety of a pool, especially with the Beer garden nearby. He commented that the boat shed we have could be improved on. He asked if the materials shown here are similar to BCC.
 - Dawn Merkes explained that BCC has a rust orange metal panel and a dark rock as a base. This is very different from any of the materials we are showing. None of the accent materials we are showing are on BCC. The EIFS system shown, which is the most cost-effective base system for the exterior, is used at BCC.
- Commissioner Jagtiani expressed his support for a combination of material options A and B, with a little more of the dark brown and the blue from option A. He added that we don't want to have activities that will be too noisy and overcrowded, which could bother neighbors. He thanked the team for including the waterfront design and activities as they helped the public understand what to expect.
- Committee Member Ryzak commented that while she loves the design, she would like to see some more uniqueness to Foster City, and that a new design could be shared with the Study Session members at a later date.
- Commissioner Venkat commented that she has been to BCC and doesn't think it looks like what has been presented. She added that she thinks the timeless and dark warm materials and bringing nature in are things that many communities are moving toward, and that it's good that we're moving toward that. She expressed that the things that make us unique are the water activities and amenities in Foster City, which should be focused on to make the City and a destination. She added that she doesn't think people are looking at the specifics of the design in relation to other community buildings around the Bay.
- Chair Baer commented that Foster City needs a modern community center, not a rec center. He mentioned he's not sure how to address this in the design. The community is changing, and we need to be careful about what we do so we're moving forward. He expressed that he likes where we are with the design, but this is a concern. He

added that Foster City still has a 50-year-old master plan that still has elements that haven't been completed, which is a dilemma.

3. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

1. None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Venkat, seconded by Commissioner Haddad to approve the Minutes of May 4, 2023 Regular Meeting, carried by roll call vote, passed 4-0-0-1 (Absent: Bronitsky)

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING

1. None

6. NEW PUBLIC HEARING

1. REQUEST THE APPROVAL OF A TWO-YEAR PERMIT EXTENSION OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED SEVEN-STORY HOTEL PROJECT WITH 151 GUEST ROOMS AND ASSOCIATED SITE IMPROVEMENTS (UP2019-0006, RZ2019-0002, EA2019-0001) ON THE VACANT LOT AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF METRO CENTER BLVD. & SHELL BLVD. (GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT/PLANNED DEVELOPMENT COMBINING DISTRICT) – UP2023-0031
 - Application not proceeding to hearing.

7. OLD BUSINESS

1. None

8. NEW BUSINESS

1. None

10. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORT

1. Director Mangalam welcomed Commissioner Pedro and provided an update on the recent developments regarding the Housing Element Update. Following the Planning Commission Regular meeting on May 4th, the City Council adopted the Housing Element Update, incorporating all the suggested revisions. Additionally, the City Council took action on the Final EIR, Zoning, Text, and other General Plan Amendments. Subsequently, after the City Council Special meeting on May 22nd, the staff sent the Housing Element to the State department (HCD) for review. HCD has 60 days for the review, and any updates regarding the review will be posted on the Housing Element webpage.

11. STATEMENTS AND REQUESTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

1. Commissioner Pedro expressed gratitude and thanked everyone for their help.
2. Commissioner Venkat thanked the staff and extended a warm welcome to Commissioner Pedro. Greeted everyone a Happy Pride month. Commissioner Venkat also mentioned an

upcoming event at Leo Ryan Park to commemorate Juneteenth on June 17th, scheduled from 1-4 pm.

3. Commissioner Haddad expressed appreciation to the staff for their diligent efforts, welcomed Commissioner Pedro, and extended well wishes to everyone for an enjoyable summer.
4. Chair Jagtiani thanked the staff for a commendable report, welcomed Commissioner Pedro, and mentioned attending a countywide Planning Commission meeting on May 30th along with Commissioners Venkat and Pedro on new State Laws.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 9:20 pm to June 15, 2023 Regular Meeting.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Planning Commission of the City of Foster City at a Regular Meeting thereof held on August 17, 2023 by the following vote:

AYES, COMMISSIONERS:

NOES, COMMISSIONERS:

ABSTAIN, COMMISSIONERS:

ABSENT, COMMISSIONERS:

RAVI JAGTIANI, CHAIR

ATTEST:

SOFIA MANGALAM, SECRETARY