

MPAC Framework Plan Committee Meeting
June 19, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Meeting Called to Order - 6:38 pm

Review of agenda and opening remarks: In the “about us” section of the MPAC website, MPAC articulates three standards for reviewing suggested changes to Midway, including to help preserve the historic integrity of the Midway, to use the guidance of the Framework Plan, and to make the Midway more enjoyable and to bring the park’s surrounding communities together. The open question for MPAC is how to improve the Midway in a way that respects the three standards.

Historic Properties Inventory Report: The Section 106 Historic Properties Inventory Report was issued in July (see City of Chicago website) and stated that the Winter Gardens were found to detract from the historic integrity of the Midway. (Current estimate is that the Winter Gardens take up approximately 10 percent of the Midway.) This finding will inform the work of the ACHP preservation agency. Important points/questions for consideration include:

- . The principles of an historic site are laid out and well defined in the ACHP rules.
- . It is possible to lose historic designation if too many historic components are compromised or removed.

Historic Preservation Considerations for the Midway - What is the tipping point?: The framework plan does not seem to include recommendations on the historic elements that should be maintained vis-à-vis the Winter Garden panels, or more broadly. Review of the written proposal for the Midway and park renderings depict Olmsted’s planned use of shrubs on the Midway. Olmsted wanted to maintain strong connections across the parks by creating open flexible meadows for use by various people and groups, and limited the use of shrubs to only the sides of the meadows.

It was noted at the meeting that it would be useful to invite experts on historic preservation to come to an MPAC meeting to inform members of the history of the National Historic Preservation Act, which was born out of losses of historic properties due to the Urban Renewal Program and Interstate Highway System. There are people who would be happy to come and talk to MPAC to say what historic preservation is good for and how to think about improvements/changes. Topics of discussion can include:

- . Within the national register there is a designation for rehabilitation; what historic preservation considerations are germane to planning enhancements/improvements?

- . Wheelchair paths were on both sides of the Midway to allow people who got off the boats to have their wheelchairs brought to them as they disembarked; how should we plan for modern day accessibility?
- . How do we think about horse paths?
- . Increased foot traffic from the south campus dorms presents an opportunity (more people on the Midway are welcomed!!) as well as questions about changes needed for proper maintenance/upkeep planning.

Updates from University of Chicago: The representatives from the University of Chicago noted that the University has no current active plans for the Midway panels, and reiterated the University of Chicago's interest in working with MPAC to help make the park more enjoyable for more people, and to do nothing to detract from the historic integrity of the Midway. Also, the University of Chicago reported that they finally have heard from Canadian National and hope to have a meeting in the near future. MPAC has asked to be invited to any discussions, and welcomes updates as it has been difficult to get the train company to be responsive.

Action Steps:

- National Historic Register and Section 106 Review Process/Materials posted to website (Mike and Don)
- Send us names of experts on historic preservation nationally and in Chicago to present at an MPAC meeting (Jack)
- Determine efforts at other Olmsted parks to make improvements with sensitivity to historic preservation (Bronwyn)

Move for meeting adjournment made, seconded, and carried.
Meeting adjourned at 7:35.