



# Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 01 October 2014

**Project:** Master Planning Services for Bronson Park  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

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A kick-off meeting was held at Mayors' Riverfront Park and the following items were noted.

1. Welcome by co-chairs Sean Fletcher and Meka Phillips
  - a. There has been discussion of transferring ownership of Bronson Park from the county to the city.
  - b. There will be public comments at the end of the meeting.
  - c. Several focus groups have been identified to be part of the process:
    - i. PRAB
    - ii. Historic District West
    - iii. Parks and Maintenance Staff
  - d. There are no current clear-cut policies for art and placement of art within the park. Currently PRAB makes decisions on a case-by-case basis based on interested parties coming to the committee. They have not yet been approached for placement of the Lincoln Statue.
  - e. Once this Master Plan is assembled, it will be presented to the city commission for approval.
  - f. Project Goal: Master plan and cost estimate
2. Team Introductions
  - a. Sandy Bliesener: OCBA, 50 years in business, park planning is focus of OCBA, principal in charge, oversee process, primary project designer
  - b. SuLin Kotowicz: OCBA, project manager and facilitator, point of contact, will be point person sending out agenda packets, getting information back
  - c. Brenda Williams: QEA, historical landscape architect, role is to do inventory, analysis, evaluation of park as a cultural landscape, aspects of park that are significant and have integrity get worked into final design solution
  - d. Ruth Mills: QEA, historian, architectural – research
  - e. Stephanie Austin: QEA, project assistant
3. Bronson Park Master Plan: a transparent and participatory process, with a nine phase process outlined in the packet.
  - a. Phase 1: Kickoff Meeting: gather data and get ducks in a row.
  - b. Subsequent phases include focus groups and a public input event.

#### 4. Cultural Landscape Considerations

- a. These are very important to the park and are focused on including an approach to dealing with cultural landscapes.
- b. This is a similar approach to similar Landscape Architectural design processes, but is unique in several ways.
- c. What is a cultural landscape?
  - i. Place where people's interactions with the land have affected the land
  - ii. Understand and identify: people leave an imprint on the landscape: stories, memories, fences, buildings, vegetation, etc.
  - iii. Through that interaction, the landscape acquires historical/cultural value
  - iv. Historic buildings are somewhat easier to understand than historic landscapes, landscapes have a great amount of meaning to people in a community
- d. Understanding cultural landscapes
  - i. Our process is based on a number of sources (refer to slide)
  - ii. NPS and secretary of the interior standards: guidelines
  - iii. In handouts: link to Secretary of Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties and Cultural Landscapes
- e. Questions about the process: Brenda or check out the National Park Service website (links provided in packet)

#### 5. Cultural Landscape Approach

- a. Landscape Characteristics
  - i. Term used to organize aspects of landscapes
  - ii. Looking to these aspects for existing conditions, treatment recommendations
  - iii. Vegetation, topography, views... listed on slide
  - iv. When you think about a historic building, you think about the form, materials, scale, roofline, windows, doors, etc.... these characteristics are the aspects for landscapes
- b. Landscape History
  - i. Before looking to the future, look to the past
  - ii. Directed approach at researching the history of Bronson Park
  - iii. Historic background and context: why is it here? What factors went into development? Changes over time? How is it used?
  - iv. Establish chronology of change: document how landscape has changed physically over time
  - v. These feed into a statement of significance: what is really important about this landscape? What can we say to convey the importance of the landscape to Kalamazoo and the greater region?
  - vi. Historic significance: Why is it important? Big picture
  - vii. Historic integrity: How the landscape is able to physically convey sense of importance? What remains from period of significance, convey sense of the past
  - viii. Period of change plans are one of the tools, snapshots in time, compare how it changed over the years, informing significance and integrity

## 6. Cultural landscape approach

- a. What is significance, what type of integrity -> building blocks to developing a treatment approach for the landscape, which is integrated into design guiding principles for entire project
- b. There are four treatment approaches from Secretary of the Interior's Standards
- c. In addition to definitions in handouts, there are some additional standards that apply to each. They help provide an "umbrella" when we start to make decisions on what type of changes to make. Standards help to define what is appropriate.

## 7. Treatment Approaches

- a. Preservation
  - i. What is there today is what we want to protect
  - ii. Not choosing one period of significance over the others
  - iii. Embracing the whole representation of landscape change
  - iv. Taking care of features throughout the time period
- b. Restoration
  - i. Choose a particular point in time where something important happened
  - ii. Most significant conditions to represent
  - iii. Restore some features, remove others
  - iv. Focuses on a particular point in time
- c. Rehabilitation
  - i. Allows for repairs, alterations, additions as necessary for new/continued use
  - ii. Allows for preservation or restoration of particular features
  - iii. Provide for universal accessibility, programmed use, etc.
  - iv. Add or remove with respect for what we understand about historic significance/integrity
- d. Reconstruction
  - i. Applied the least frequently
  - ii. Highest level of significance and documentation
  - iii. Used for overall sites, but more frequently for individual features within a site

8. Integration of historic preservation concerns into the master plan process gives us a clear understanding of historic aspects and helps to guide the design process.

## 9. Steering Committee Visioning Session

- a. The design team asked all committee members to introduce themselves, the interest of organization that they were representing, and up to two likes or dislikes of Bronson Park to begin the input gathering process. A summary of the likes/dislikes is attached.
- b. OCBA explained that a vision statement would provide the framework to guide the committee through this process, and it would be revisited to ensure that it matched and guided the direction of the master plan design.
- c. OCBA will provide some examples of a vision statement and draft design guiding principles and goals as were utilized by their team for the City of Grand Rapids' Monument and

Veterans Memorial Parks Master Plan process. The steering committee members were asked to participate in “homework” – an exercise to explore a vision statement and design guiding principles and goals that were customized to Bronson Park. All committee members will be given a blank worksheet and asked to begin to share some ideas. Responses are to be e-mailed to OCBA by October 24, 2014.

- d. Deb and Monika mentioned that some master plans had been completed in the past for Bronson Park, but they were not for the entire park but rather for portions of the park (lanelli fountain, stage). OCBA and QEA will look into obtaining these plans.

#### 10. Website Content Expectations

- a. The City of Kalamazoo will create a “featured news” section, linked from the front page of their website. OCBA will send content to keep the page current with the progress of the project. For any website suggestions, please e-mail SuLin.
- b. Some data could include:
  - i. Background information about the project
  - ii. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with a link to the SOI website
  - iii. Organizations represented on the steering committee
  - iv. Schedule, includes meeting dates and a brief agenda synopsis
  - v. Process (history, focus group and public input, preliminary concept designs, preferred preliminary concept)
  - vi. Final Master Plan

#### 11. Project Schedule

- a. OCBA shared a process timeline for the project that depicted meeting dates and tasks for the nine phase process. A few inaccuracies have been updated, and the revised timeline is attached.
- b. The steering committee meetings will be at Mayors’ Riverfront Park from 5:30 – 7:30 pm on the dates shown. The public input event will be January 10, 2015, in a full-day open house format.
- c. This is not a short process, but will enable the design team to incorporate all information/input.
- d. An agenda packet will be e-mailed out to the steering committee a week ahead of each meeting.

#### 12. Public Input

- a. Chris Wright, Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission, thanked the steering committee for their work on this master plan.
- b. Michael Dombos, Committee for the preservation of Pioneer Fountain, also thanked the steering committee for their work. He said that it is important to keep in mind that one park cannot be everything to everyone; there are appropriate uses for certain spaces. It will be critical to consider in deliberations; that’s why we have such a diversity of spaces in Kalamazoo.

The aforementioned constitutes our opinion of matters discussed with decisions reached. If there are any corrections, additions, or deletions, please contact the undersigned within five (5) days of receipt of this memo.

Respectfully,

O'BOYLE, COWELL, BLALOCK, & ASSOCIATES, INC. & QUINN EVANS ARCHITECTS

**Attachments:** Likes/Dislikes Summary, Revised Process Timeline, Meeting PowerPoint Slides, Exercise 1 – Draft Vision Statement/Design Guiding Principles, Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

**Copies:** Steering Committee

**Steering Committee Meeting Sign In Sheet - 10.01.2014**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Company</b>
Stephanie Austin	Quinn Evans Architects
Sandy Bliesener	OCBA
D. Neil Bremer	Kalamazoo County Public Art Commission
David Brose	Kalamazoo Historic Preservation Commission
Deb Droppers	The Event Company
Paul Ecklund	Disability Network
Sharon Ferraro	City of Kalamazoo
Sean Fletcher, co-chair	City of Kalamazoo
SuLin Kotowicz	OCBA
Laura Lam	City of Kalamazoo
Beth McCann	Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo
Ruth Mills	Quinn Evans Architects
Pam O'Connor	Fountain Complex Restoration Committee
Meka Phillips, co-chair	PRAB
Monika Trahe	Kalamazoo in Bloom
Brenda Williams	Quinn Evans Architects
<i>Chris Wright</i>	<i>Guest, Historic Preservation Commission</i>
<i>Michael Dombos</i>	<i>Guest, Committee for the Preservation of the Pioneer Fountain</i>