

# Grady Stadium/Lakewood Stadium Facility Renovation/Improvement Committee 26 September 2008

## Attendees

See attached sign-in sheet

## Attachments

1. Meeting Attendees (Stadia\_26Sept08\_Attendance.pdf)
2. Meeting Agenda (Agenda-Stadia\_PC1.pdf)
3. Preliminary Issues List (Meeting Notes\_08May08.pdf)

## Meeting Notes

The following is a compilation of information points, issues and comments from the first full Project Committee meeting for the renovation of the two APS stadia. The notes are further amended by follow-up e-mails from the committee, coming the week after the meeting.

## Process

- Jere Smith and Dennis Madsen (both from APS Facilities) gave an overview of the effort thus far, and the expectations for proceeding:
  - The Project Team is comprised of Jere Smith (APS Facilities, Director of Capital Improvements), Dennis Madsen (APS Facilities, Design project Manager) and Brett McIver and Dick Spangler (Manley Spangler Smith Architects);
  - The official "Client" for this project is APS Athletics (Billette Owens-Ashford, Director). The primary goal for this project is to make sure that the wants and needs of the Client with regards to the stadia are satisfied to the utmost, within constraints of the built environment and the budget;
  - The schedule anticipates that design documents will be completed and ready for bid in the early spring of 2009. Construction could begin in late spring of 2009 at the earliest. These dates will be refined as the Project Committee (PC) process continues;
  - The approximate budget for the renovations is \$9.5M. This includes both stadia, and includes design and construction. The architect will begin to estimate costs as the PC process moves forward, to make sure the project comes in at cost;
  - The PC is convened to help provide input into the design process, making sure that the Project Team has identified any and all issues, and is carefully considering and addressing the needs of the Client.
- Brett McIver and Dick Spangler (architects) reviewed the existing conditions and design constraints of the existing stadia, and presented potential strategies for renovation. A preliminary list of issues is attached, but the architects reviewed the project in greater technical detail. Beginning with Grady Stadium:

- The Grady Stadium is approximately sixty years old, and has never had a significant, comprehensive rehabilitation;
  - There are numerous code issues that need to be addressed in any scenario. None of the access ramps meet code for handicap accessibility, and guardrails are either non-compliant with code, or missing altogether;
  - There is concrete “spalling”, meaning pieces are falling away. Currently, this does not represent serious structural deficiencies, but it should be addressed nonetheless;
  - The locker rooms are overused, undersized and outdated;
  - The public restrooms are significantly below the required fixture count for the stadium occupancy, and many of the locations are inaccessible and poorly lit;
  - The press box requires updating;
  - The field experiences heavy use, beyond what the natural turf can accommodate;
  - Stadium entry and circulation is problematic. Approaching sidewalks are narrow, entrance plazas are undersized, and access is difficult to control;
  - These are not the only issues (see again the Preliminary Issues List), but these were some of the most pressing.
- The Project Team began by looking at the access issues, and directed the architect to examine schemes that might be able to address multiple issues. After a number of iterations, the Project Team looked at one particular strategy, that of creating a single, primary entrance to the facility from 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The facets of this include:
- Creating a larger pedestrian plaza. With the current entrance on Monroe, large crowds often spill out into the street, which is especially dangerous at that intersection. This would allow for more queuing area and better crowd flow. New sidewalks would also be a part of this effort;
  - Improving Access. A number of possible schemes were considered for locating the entry plaza. The current east plaza on Monroe was too small, and Monroe is seen as a more dangerous frontage than 10<sup>th</sup>. There is room on the 8<sup>th</sup> street end of the field, but it was felt that locating that close to a residential neighborhood would be a bad idea, and would take a potentially iconic structure and put it in a relatively obscure area. The corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and Monroe was discussed and discarded, given the possibility that some portion of that corner will be reconfigured under the aegis of the BeltLine redevelopment;
  - Improving accessibility. The plaza on 10<sup>th</sup> would thence be connected to the stands on both sides via a semi-circular colonnade/promenade. From the upper portion of the promenade, wheelchairs, the movement-impaired and the elderly could more easily access the cross aisle of the stands. In addition, the cross aisle would be expanded to include wheelchair spaces and companion seating;
  - Creating additional facility space. Below the plaza as currently shown, there would be enough room for new locker rooms and field offices. These uses, currently located under the stands, could be relocated, freeing up more space;

- Expanding and renovating the restrooms and concessions. The current concourse beneath the stands will be moved outwards and widened, allowing for new and improved facilities under the stands. In addition, the ramps will be replaced with stairs, to help satisfy emergency egress requirements;
  - Additional improvements include press box improvements, artificial turf on the field, new sealant on the concrete, repair of faulty expansion joints (to prevent some current leaking problems), and new perimeter fencing.
- A separate discussion was then had for Lakewood. It is acknowledged that as the newer facility, Lakewood has fewer pressing issues, but it does still have a number of items that need attention:
- Life safety and accessibility. While not as severe as the ramp issues at Grady Stadium, there are railings that need to be replaced or installed. This is particularly important given the steep slope of the upper stands;
  - Like Grady, there are issues with the condition of the concrete; indeed it is more pronounced at Lakewood;
  - Restrooms, locker rooms and the press box need upgrades;
  - There are issues of crowd capacity. Lakewood is often sold out, and might work better with additional seating.
- As Lakewood was not as complex as Grady in its approach, the architects did not present a formal schematic model. However, regarding expansion, it was believed that the best approach would be to add seating on either side of both stands, keeping them symmetrical and keeping seating close to midfield. More detail will be presented in future PC meetings.
- Following the presentation, the Project Team had a "Q&A" session with the Project Committee. Among the items discussed:
- A question was posed regarding the spaces underneath the stands. Assuming relocation of the locker rooms and expansion of the restrooms/concessions above, there would be a fair amount of unprogrammed space beneath both stands. APS facilities stated that the build-out of additional program space for use by Grady High School is **not** in the scope of this project. However, the project is keeping in consideration potential future uses of the spaces under the stands, and as such is avoiding the placement of stadium programming in those spaces. In short – this project does not plan to renovate those spaces, but also does not currently have plans to utilize them for Stadium functions. The PC mentioned a number of potential uses, primarily for Grady High School, and these will be kept in consideration;
- Reiterating the BeltLine discussion, it was recommended by the PC that the Project Team meet with ABI and the planners currently looking at the Monroe/10<sup>th</sup> intersection, to address any potential conflicts as early as possible. APS Facilities is currently trying to schedule that meeting;
- Practice space. As mentioned above, the field and the areas surrounding it are used quite heavily. The PC wanted to make sure that the proposed strategy for addressing circulation and access did not have a deleterious effect on practice space. The architect stated that they felt the design would infringe minimally, in particular on the NE quadrant. The colonnade itself would be permeable, so as not to cut that space off from access, and it would hug the track rather than cut through open space.

Billette also promised to get with Grady Athletics to examine the scheduling and usage in greater detail. Similarly, it was felt that if the natural turf was replaced with an artificial field, more usage could occur on the field proper, helping to accommodate any potentially displaced functions;

- In a follow-up after the meeting, the PC provided information re: the Piedmont Park Conservancy's stance on construction around the park. While it is anticipated that any new structure on 10<sup>th</sup> would be visible from the park, it should have less impact than the existing stadium structure. However, the Project Team will review in detail.
- Though mentioned as part of this project, a future consideration should be kept in mind re: outdoor space planning, particularly if the NE corner is reduced or eliminated by a BeltLine-oriented realignment of the 10<sup>th</sup>/Monroe intersection.

### **Questions/Next Steps**

1. Review and comment on meeting notes. (All)
2. Continue with design development, and follow up on PC suggestions. (Project Team)
3. Schedule next PC meeting. (D. Madsen)