

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** November 23, 2011

**TIME:** N/A

**PLACE:** N/A

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Alan Endall, Chair  
Norm Shearing  
Arno Matis  
Jim Huffman  
Helen Besharat  
Alan Storey  
Greg Borowski  
Jeff Corbett

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE:

Christopher Little  
Richard Tetrault

**REGRETS:** MEMBER OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

James Cheng  
Jane Durante  
Geoffrey McDonnell  
Robert Barnes  
Scott Romses

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE:

Rachel Lafo  
Patrick Prinster  
Sita Kumar

**OTHERS**

**PRESENT:** Bryan Newson, Public Art Program Manager  
Richard Newirth, Managing Director, Cultural Services  
Brent Toderian, Director of Planning  
Jon Stovell, Reliance Holdings

**RECORDING**

**SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. West Pender Place Art Piece

**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Endall called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. after reading a disclosure statement regarding the public attendance at the meeting.

**1. Address: West Pender Place Art Piece**

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Chair Endall called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. after reading a disclosure statement regarding the public attendance at the meeting.

Brent Toderian, Director of Planning, made an opening statement. He stated that the results they are looking for need to be reasonable as there is a public investment in the public art process. He added that turning off the art is not supported but that there could be an opportunity to improve the impact of the art.

Mr. Toderian passed around copies of the questions that the joint Urban Design Panel and Public Art Committee were asked to comment on:

Since its initial activation, the light installation has been altered in the following ways:

- 10 pm turn-off time (turn on at dusk)
- 9 pm 45% reduction in brightness
- 30 minute “waterfall” effect has been reduced to 10 minutes in the cycle

Staff had two primary questions, but encouraged any general commentary or advice:

- Do you believe these changes have resulted in a reasonable result, reflecting a balance between livability/quality of life aspirations, and artistic and cultural aspirations in this location?
- If additional alterations are necessary to achieve a reasonable balance, what are your opinions on any or all of the following additional possibilities?
- an overall 10-15% reduction in brightness at all times. Other percentage reductions could also be tested for effect.
- A “seasonal variation” to the hours with a consistent time that they are on (for example, 4-8 in Winter, 5-9 in Spring, 6-10 in Summer and 5-9 in Fall).
- A reduction in the length of time of the brighter colour components of the cycle, to 10 minutes from 30, similar to the change to the waterfall effect.
- A shutting off of the lights from Sunday-Wednesday, and showing between Thursday-Saturday, each week.
- A shutting down of one or both towers, except on “special occasions”.

Rich Neuworth, Managing Director of Cultural Services described the context behind the art work noting that it is symbolic of BC sunrises and sunsets, water, water reflecting off buildings and has a waterfall effect. The artist Tamara Frank is from the Netherlands and was selected through a public art process. The developer came up with a plan for integrating the art into the building after hiring an art consultant, Jane Durante. Mr. Neuworth added that they interviewed approximately thirty artists and then a jury looked at five of the applicants. The artists came and presented to the jury with the jury unanimously selecting Tamara Frank’s art piece.

Mr. Toderian mentioned that the Pacific Rim Hotel has poetry written into the side of the building on the lower floors but that this was the first example of light art on a piece of architecture in the city. He added that it was breaking new ground and they want to learn how to sensitively integrate light art into architecture. He noted that the architecture goes through various design reviews but that there isn’t any process for public art. He said he wasn’t sure

that staff would like to negotiate art the way they do architecture but that the staff might have to change their approach.

Mr. Neuworth stated that all the reviews said they should address livability but didn't have the process before the art was turned on and the impact was known. He added that it is important to maintain the integrity of the artist's work and that Mr. Stovell has been working in collaboration with the artist to find a solution.

Mr. Stovell of Reliance Holdings noted that they have reduced the intensity of the brighter states recently but were willing to take another look at the intensity.

**Related Commentary:**

- The Panel acknowledged that there isn't an easy solution to the impact of the art on the neighbours;
- The Panel agreed that they didn't want to see public art have to get public approval;
- The Panel also agreed that every effort needs to be made to find a reasonable balance;
- There is a need in the future to have models that show the concept better, particularly active pieces;
- The Panel agreed that reducing the intensity of the light without eroding the value of the piece and the story it tells was the first priority;
- The nature of the illuminations is important and that the optical play should be taken into consideration;
- Shutting off the art piece would be a disappointment to the uniqueness of the piece and what it does for the building;
- It is an integral part of the architecture so removing it should not be an option;
- Shutting off the lights during the week or having the piece turned on for special occasions and holidays also does not work;
- The duration that the art piece is turned on could be changed as well lowering the intensity;
- Light art is a growing technology and there will be more pressure for this type of art on buildings in the future;
- Perhaps this type of art should not be allowed in residential areas but in commercial areas where there would be less of an impact;
- The only one who can say if the work is compromised is the artist but since she is willing to work to enhance the liveability every effort should be given to find a solution;
- The Panel would like to see seasonal variations in the piece that is sensitive to feeling of the seasons given the theme of the art;
- Some of the Panel members were concerned that developers might not propose anything like this again which would be a shame;
- There was some concern that the art would be compromised and not nearly as effective as it once was and the residents would still not be happy;
- It is hard to say whether an appropriate balance could be found without being one of the residents who are being effected by the piece;
- The modulation doesn't reduce the intensity up close but hopefully increasing the scan rate will reduce the intensity;
- The Panel thought there could be a solution from the manufacturer;
- The Panel thought the project was a departure from the rest of the architecture in Coal Harbour;
- The Panel acknowledged the incredible effort by the developer, artist and the City to make the art piece work to reduce the impact on the neighbouring residents.

Mr. Toderian thanked the Urban Design Panel and the Public Art Committee for their opinions and comments. He acknowledged that the team was still working on finding a solution. The recent changes are a good step in the right direction but they haven't found the balance as yet. He said they will take the Panel's comments and continue to try the various options. He

stated that turning off the piece is not a reasonable solution. Mr. Toderian said they would continue to work with the neighbourhood not only to find a solution for this piece but they also want to see what can be done for future art pieces of this type.

Mr. Newirth also thanked the Panel and the Committee for their comments. He noted that public art evolves as technology evolves. As a world class city we need to take some risks but still address the concerns. He added that we may end up as a leader in terms of how this type of art is addressed as he wasn't aware that any other city had faced a similar situation. They want to make sure the art piece works and still be an integral part in the architecture.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.