NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION MEETING

Project: CSU Bay Farm Horticulture Center

Date: January 8, 2015

Planner: Ryan Mounce

Applicant: Colorado State University (CSU)

CITY PRESENTATION

Ryan Mounce started the meeting with a presentation to introduce the project and provide information about the development review process.

- This meeting is for a CSU project north of the Gardens on Spring Creek, called the Bay Farm Horticulture Center
- The City will be processing this proposal through a Site Plan Advisory Review (SPAR) process, which is different than the City's standard development review procedures.
- SPAR is a process defined at the state level for projects by public entities (schools, utilities, universities, etc.)
- Projects are reviewed as to their location, character and extent
    - Location: Consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan & City Structure Plan Map
    - Character: Conforms to architectural, landscape, and design standards adopted by the applicant's governing body
    - Extent: Identify functional and visual impacts to public right-of-way, facilities, and abutting private land.
- SPAR process – shortened timeframe compared to standard development review process. The City will be reviewing this project in January and February. The project will be presented to the Planning and Zoning Board hearing on February 12th.
- Anyone who received a mailed notice for the neighborhood meeting will receive a mailed notice of the Planning & Zoning Board hearing.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

David Hansen, Landscape Architect in CSU Facilities Management, gave a presentation about the plans for the Bay Farm Horticulture Center.

- Described the location of the project, as north of The Gardens on Spring Creek, east of the existing USDA greenhouse, south of the existing Aggie Village South, and west of Centre Avenue.
- In total, it's about a 6.5 acre site that is proposed for redevelopment
- Various land ownership interests are associated with the site and surrounding area: CSU Board of Governors, USDA, CSU Research Foundation, State Land Board, and City of Fort Collins.
- On-site today is a 100-space parking lot, Bay Drive (private drive owned by CSU), and the CSU Challenge Course
- There is FEMA floodway in the southern portion of the site.
- This proposal puts the building on higher ground, outside of the floodway.
- Arthur's ditch runs through the middle of the site, which presents constraints.

- Approximately 21,000 square feet of greenhouse, plus a 6000 square-foot head house with classroom and lab space.
- Architecture: looking at this project as a joint horticulture center with Gardens on Spring Creek, so modeling off of the GOSC's greenhouse buildings.
- There's a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and CSU about gardens and horticulture facilities within the City. This plan contributes to the intent of this agreement.
- Proposing a parking lot to off-set the parking that would be lost with the new building. The number of spaces is within 10 spaces of the existing parking. USDA will be moving all of their parking onto their adjacent parcel.
- About 2.5 acres of research plots
- The Challenge Course would be removed from the site. Much of the apparatus would be reused at the Pingree Park Mountain Campus. Bulk of the users of this course is not students, even though it is student funded. CSU feels that there would be a better use of student funds.
- The building itself includes a head house and greenhouse, with landscape improvements around the building. Landscape enhancements will also be made in the parking lot.
- Sidewalk connections will be added out to Centre Ave.
- The intent is to break ground on this in March, with a functioning greenhouse in July. This will replace greenhouse space removed by the stadium project.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Question (Attendee): If I understand correctly, if there is a disagreement, the final decision is made by the CSU Board of Governors. So is this meeting irrelevant?
Response (CSU): With a 2/3rd vote by the Board of Governors of Colorado State University, they can overrule a decision made by the Planning and Zoning Board.

Question (Attendee): It's relevant whether this parking will be used for game days or just normal operations. It would be useful to understand if there will be additional noise and tailgating impacts.
Response (CSU): We're not yet sure how this lot relates to game day management or future student housing. That has yet to be determined.

Question (Attendee): Will the lightning strike indicator be removed? It's either an asset (safety) or a liability (noise).
Response (CSU): We have not discussed that yet.

Question (Attendee): This is a move for the stadium, to replace what the will be removed by the stadium, correct?
Response (CSU): That is correct, and this includes additional enhancement for what the PERC gardens and department currently have at the Lake Street site.

Question (Attendee): Are you moving the trees in the arboretum?
Response (CSU): No, the arboretum is part of the section of PERC that will remain on-site on Lake Street.

Question (Attendee): Is there grading or floodplain work?
Response (CSU): The research plot area will need to go through a FEMA process to ensure there's a no rise situation. Any material added will need to be off-set on the site so as not to increase flooding potential. The building and greenhouse is located north of the Arthur Ditch and is not located in the FEMA floodway.

Question (Attendee): After the initial construction, soil gets added and amended. Will you be keeping track of maintaining the floodway commitments?
Response (CSU): Yes, that is modeled and managed through the FEMA process.

Question (Attendee): What kind of research and activities will occur in the greenhouses?
Response (CSU): CSU Greenhouse Crops Extension Specialist (Steven Newman) – the kind of research is in line with the research occurring in the existing PERC greenhouses on Lake Street including production support for annual trial gardens, and experiential learning for CSU students. We'll be maintaining a strict regimen to ensure diseases are not introduced to the site. No pathogen research will be taking place.

Sustainable gardening, local farm production, student sustainable development group, research on irrigation scheduling, best management practices research, plant select gardens that support the Plant Select program. Intend to be a showplace as much as anything.

Question (Attendee): How will the fan noise compare to USDA?
Response (CSU): The fans will not have an instant start and will be brand new of the latest technology to be quiet and efficient, and will not have a screeching start like the USDA fans. Will monitor to make sure the bearings are well-lubricated. I don't predict any additional contribution to the fan noise that is already there.

Question (Attendee): It's very loud now. The lights and noise level have increased at USDA recently. If anything gets added to that it will be unbearable.
Response (CSU): The fans we're hoping to add will be state of the art and will probably not create as much noise.
Response (City): Polly Lauridsen with Neighborhood Services has been working with the neighborhood, the USDA, and NRRC on fan noises at several building. So far, there have been no noise detected above the thresholds in City Code, but will continue to monitor the situation and keep the dialog open with these facilities to improve the situation.

Question (Attendee): Are the any places in town that have recently installed these fans? And how many fans are there?
Response (CSU): There may be similar fans at the new Cargill greenhouses. We haven't worked with greenhouse engineers to decide how many fans are needed, but it would probably be around 12 fans. They are probably about 42-in diameter.

Question (Attendee): The noise is something the neighborhood worries about quite a bit. There hasn't been information on how much noise will be generated by the stadium. The problem with the stadium is that it will be multi-use, and the impacts could be far-reaching. The neighborhood could be surrounded with noise.
Response (CSU): I understand. We are listening. For this facility, we are pursuing LEED certification and are trying to implement what is modern and efficient for the industry. We also work at the facility and our concerned about noise and energy levels.

Question (Attendee): Can you tell us anything about the lighting?
Response (CSU): There will be supplemental light in the greenhouses. Much of what we are producing requires significant hours of darkness, so lights will not be run 24-7. The plants I grow require 12 hours of darkness. There is not a lot of light use at the PERC site on Lake Street now.

Comment (CSU): For the bottom area, our intent is to make it a better space for everybody. There is currently student gardening and organic gardening on the site. A lot of the stormwater for the university is handled on the site, and we are anticipating potential future stormwater improvements on site.

Question (Attendee): What is the State Land Board land?
Response (CSU): The SLB is part of the Department of Natural Resources for the state. It is land that is put into trust for the state, and the board legislates how they oversee it. This land was granted to the board for the benefit of the university.

Question (Attendee): What is the relationship to the current greenhouses south of Prospect, east of Whitcomb? Will it have any interaction with what you're proposing?
Response (CSU): That is the USDA sugar beet crop research facility. Their parcel of land is long-term leased by the federal government for that purpose. There are a number of researchers and a small staff in the facility. We're hoping to have more collaboration and synergy with their facility. We will be visiting with the leadership of that facility very soon.
Question (Attendee): North of that is student housing?
Response (CSU): The current CSU Master Plan shows that as student housing. Specific plans have not been determined.

Question (Attendee): Are there going to be any improvements to the Prospect and Centre interchange and getting people to campus?
Response (CSU): This project does not trigger those improvements.

Question (Attendee): Is there adequate parking for this project?
Response (CSU): Yes, we are adding 15 spaces on-site, which is comparable to the existing PERC site.

Comment (Attendee): The real concern we have is the stadium.
Response (CSU): A significant portion of the existing PERC gardens will remain. This is a great opportunity to provide a high-quality facility for CSU.

Question (Attendee): Do you envision any kind of public gardens that people can walk through, like those on Lake Street?
Response (CSU): We have a committee looking at the potential for public gardens along Centre or other parts of the site.

Question (Attendee): Do you have concerns about deer moving through your research plots?
Response (CSU): Yes, that is a concern we have. I believe we are restricted from fences, so they could be amongst the research plots.

Question (Attendee): How soon do you plan on planting the lower area?
Response (CSU): Next year.

Question (Attendee): Do you know what the construction materials will be for the building?
Response (CSU): There's some CMU block, brick coursing, with some Colorado red sandstone, Masonville stone. It will look similar to other CSU buildings and will be quite attractive. The design is also intended to reflect and be compatible with the existing Gardens on Spring Creek.

Question (Attendee): If for some reason the stadium does not get built, and you go through the expense of moving this facility, what happens? Is this something that has been in planning apart from the stadium?
Response (CSU): This has been planned in conjunction with the stadium. Those greenhouses were built in 1949 and don't represent modern technology.

Question (Attendee): Do lighting requirements vary by season?
Response (CSU): Yes, they vary by season and crop. It depends. There will probably be some light research that occurs at this facility.

Question (Attendee): Will there be solar panels on the roof?
Response (CSU): No, there won't be any solar panels on the roof.