

## Revised Memo Respecting Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory Task Force Next Steps

From: William Lynch, Chair

To: Domes Task Force

Date: Nov. 26, 2018

At our next meeting the Task Force should make decisions based on what it knows now that will provide the framework for Phase III consulting and the content of the Phase III request for proposals (rfp). We should determine the capabilities of consultants to assist us with Phase III. If we decide the scope of Phase III should be different from what was previously specified, we should consider seeking approval of the expanded scope of the rfp from the County Board.

**Mission:** At some point the Task Force may need to draft mission statements for the future that will help guide our analysis of the two options under our consideration and the Phase III work. A working draft mission statement is consistent with the advice we received about the importance of adherence to mission. We may be able to do this without additional help from consultants. Also we may be able to articulate the relationship programs, activities and facilities should have to the core mission of the Conservatory. Also the Task Force might be able to identify who will be the beneficiaries of the Conservancy's programs and why they are worthy of charitable donations.

**Organizational structure:** Although, based on the recommendations of Phase I and II, the Task Force could now decide what recommendations it will make for altering the organizational structure of the Conservatory, we should wait until we know more about the recommendations of the new study of locating the Milwaukee Public Museum in Mitchell Park. If we decide that changes should be in phases, we should specify them.

**Programs and facilities:** We may also be able to establish parameters for investments to be targeted (option 4), including facilities, space, features, etc. The Task Force may also want to specify programs and facilities, both inside and outside, we want considered by the consultants as part of consideration of options 4 and 5A, including the extent to which adventure opportunities consistent with the Eco Dome focus should be included. We might also specify the extent to which we want the park and neighborhood included in the plans considered in Phase III. We should identify programs and facilities that may be affected by location of Milwaukee Public Museum in Mitchell Park or by the results of a Hemp Study now underway.

**Partner possibilities.** The Task Force may be able now to specify which partner possibilities should be pursued in Phase III. The Milwaukee Public Museum should be among them and our analysis should

consider the recommendations of the group studying location of a new MPM in Mitchell Park. Additional possible partners to be considered are discussed below.

**Matters not previously included in the scope of Phase III.** The results of Phases I and II mean that the scope of Phase III should include matters not specified previously. Meeting those needs may require additional capabilities of Phase III consultants. The team of consultants may need to have additional capabilities or a separate rfp required.

**Fundraising feasibility, the identification and evaluation of funding sources, and partnership opportunities** are matters that may require different expertise from that of architects and engineers. Should we treat these needs in a separate rfp, or incorporate them and urge a team response?

These matters are not necessarily within the purview of architects and engineers but may be something with which a professional fundraising firm and/or a financing consulting firm could assist. We may need to figure out who it is who can quantify the potential revenues and expenses of programs and activities and the impact of the synergies among them on net revenues. Might we need and benefit from the services of non-profit program development consultants?

During Phase II we were urged to conduct a fundraising feasibility study to determine the reasonable range of possible private, corporate and foundation funding. A fundraising feasibility study that includes obtaining responses from potential funders to the case statement should be specified in the rfp.

#### **Need for assistance respecting repair and restoration of the domes.**

We should also determine whether the Task Force will need the assistance of consultants in evaluating repair and restoration methodology proposals and their estimated costs.

Should we specify in the rfp that the Phase III consultants should work with the County Administration on defining the Domes structural repair and preservation methods and their cost? Should they have input to and review the results of the administration's efforts? Based on their review of previous studies, review of the results of studies now or soon to be underway, and their own independent judgement, they should provide a cost estimate range for the repairs and an estimate for how long it will be before significant repairs will again be needed, together with an estimate of the costs and frequency of inspection and routine and preventive maintenance. Their report should address the timing and phasing of Domes Structure repairs and the impact of them on operations, revenues, etc.

**Additional thoughts and proposals.** The discussion that follows is designed to illustrate what some of the implications may be of the issues addressed above and to further discussion of them.

**Mission.** Here is a proposed draft mission statement that might be considered as a starting point for our discussion.

The rfp should identify the core mission of the Conservatory to be to maintain and improve a horticultural collection available for the public to experience and learn from. The Conservatory will educate the public on the role of horticulture in our environment and its contribution to our economy

and quality of life. The Conservatory will provide access to and experience with varied climates and ecosystems and how they compare.

#### **Relationship of activities to mission.**

Activities, facilities and programs should be related to the basic mission of the Conservatory and not interfere with or detract from it. They should encourage support for and participation in the core mission of the Conservatory.

#### **Scope of RFP, park and community.**

The rfp should specify the area adjacent to the Domes and Green House complex that comes within the scope of the work. The area should include the former Sunken Gardens area and the pavilion and lagoon. A separate fee outdoor area should be included. Schematic plans, installation, maintenance, operations costs and projected revenue for a children's garden and outdoor instructional gardens/classrooms should be specified. Outdoor instructional gardens /classrooms include, for example, gardens that demonstrate green infrastructure establishment and maintenance, bioswales, water management plantings, roof gardens, etc.

**Active and passive areas.** Both within the Domes building complex and outside it, areas for active recreation and quiet areas should be specified and appropriately separated.

**Year-round out-door activity and program areas.** *Outside areas* should be specified for activities year-round. Examples might be sledding, skating, and a water pad or other active water play option for children. Areas for community gardens, therapy gardens, etc., should also be delineated. Possible art installation locations, both temporary and permanent, should be identified. For each of these installations cost estimates and upkeep and maintenance costs should be specified.

**Domes Repair and restoration. Maintenance.** The plans for Domes improvements should include proposing means for access for inspection, maintenance and repair that have minimal adverse impact on the collection, and their capital, operations and maintenance costs compared with current methods of gaining access and making repairs. Opportunities for other improvements (e.g., Canopy walk) to improve access for inspection, maintenance and repair, should be identified.

**Repair and restoration goals.** Modifications of the Domes to improve access to sunlight, reduce shadows, and otherwise improve how they function should be included.

**Space needs.** The rfp should specify the desired additional space for education programming. This specification should be made by the Task Force. E.g. Triple classroom space? Similarly, the Task Force should specify the size of a meeting room. Food service improvements should be specified. The Task Force should determine specifications for the level of food service and for when that level should increase. (limited service, full service, etc.) The option of a restaurant that is open outside the hours when the Conservatory is open to the public should be considered, including how to provide access to it and how to close off access from the restaurant to the rest of the facilities. The business plans for food service options should be included. The same should be done respecting a gift shop. These specifications may be affected by locating the Milwaukee Public Museum in Mitchell Park.

**Impact of revenue generating activities.** For revenue generating activities their impact on visit time and their relationship to the mission of the Conservancy should be specified.

**Partnership possibilities.**

The task Force should specify the partnership possibilities to be considered in Phase III. Potential partners should include Boerner Botanical Garden (two sites for horticultural education and experiences), Milwaukee Public Museum, MATC, MMSD, medical institutions and the VA respecting therapeutic horticulture, the Milwaukee County Zoo. Others?

**Financing option analysis.** The rfp should specify that consultants are to work with the Comptroller on financing options, particularly respecting bondability of proposed capital expenditures. E.g., Will modifications of Domes to prevent moisture infiltration be “new” and therefore bondable? Preservation funding experts should be consulted respecting possibilities for grants, loans and historic tax credits? Financing options should include the potential for naming rights and eligibility for Government and private grants.

**Staff needs.** Personnel needs should be specified to support revenue and expense projections and the feasibility of sustainability. Staff should include management, education, fundraising, marketing, communications, horticulture, exhibit, maintenance, food service, event, retail sales, and accounting. Other staff?

**Parking needs.** Consultants should address the need for additional parking, including potential locations, surface, structure or underground, costs and revenue potential. These specifications may be affected by locating the Milwaukee Public Museum in Mitchell Park.