CITY OF SEATTLE - UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APPROVED MEETING NOTES
Meeting # 100
June 9, 2009

CUCAC Meeting
7:00 – 9:00 University Tower – 22nd Floor

Members and Alternates Present
Pat Cowen, University Park            Chris MacKenzie
Betty Swift - Portage Bay/Roanoke Park  Ashley Emery
Mathew Stubbs – UW At-Large            Neal Lessenger
Dave Eckert                             Chris Leman
Daniel Kraus (Co-chair)

Staff Present
Steve Sheppard, City of Seattle, DON      Theresa Doherty, UW
Scott Kemp – City of Seattle, DPD         Brice Maryman – SVR Design
Melanie Davis – SVR Design                Paul Brown - UW
Jan Arntz, UW Environmental Planner      John Lebo, UW
Christine Kenny

I. Opening of Meeting/Approval of Agenda/Housekeeping

The meeting was opened at 7:12 by Daniel Kraus, Co Chair. Brief introductions followed. Mr. Krause asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda. Steve Sheppard asked that some time be given to the issue of participation as it was clear that there was a problem recently with achieving a quorum. The meeting notes for meetings 97, 98 and 99 were approved without substantive changes.

II. Special Recognition of CUCAC Meeting 100

Steve Sheppard noted that by official records this is a milestone – the 100th meeting of CUCAC.

He noted that some members have been with the Committee for a long time and wanted to congratulate people for sticking with CUCAC so long. He noted that Mr. Leman has attended since meeting 30 at the latest and that Pat Cowen had attended even before that. Members were presented small mementos including Yukon Pacific Trading Cards.

III. Husky Union Building Renovation

Jon Lebo project manager for the University of Washington, was introduced to provide an update on the renovation and expansion of the Husky Union Building, better known as the HUB. He noted that this is one of the student life projects that include: the HUB, the Ethnic
Cultural Center discussed at the last meeting, and a small remodel in Hale Hall. He noted that the students have now approved the projects and that the Student Services and Activity Fee Committee voted unanimously to recommend the establishment of a new fee to pay for these three projects. The Board of Regents will be briefed on Thursday and then next month in July we'll ask for project approval and approval of the funding for these three projects. We expect approval. It approved, the projects will be paid for with a $95 a quarter fee. The fee is proposed to start when each of the projects is complete. So for example, the HUB is currently about $128 million and is projected to start construction in the fall of 2010 and reopen in January of 2013. These fees will remain for up to 30 years.

Students were heavily involved in identifying elements of the renovation. Their identified criteria for design were: 1) that it be a place where students wanted to come and spend time there; 2) that it was a more open building with much more light into its interior; 3) that it be less confusing and easier to navigate; 4) that it provide ample space to consolidate offices for student; and 5) that it promote greater interaction between student groups and other students, as well as staff and faculty. They identified a sustainability goal to express the students' commitment to environmental values and cutting edge design. Wherever possible the design will optimize environmental sustainability. In addition they expressed a strong commitment to better integration of the building with its site and to utilize local materials.

The lowest level (basement) of the building will see relatively little change. However all of the upper floors will see major changes. The bookstores now located on the first floor will be moved down to the ground floor and the North Husky Den will be moved south. This will allow provision of daylight on both sides of the dining facility. Both the design and function of floors 1, 2, and 3 will change. The objective is to bring all of the student leadership organizations down to the main level and to create a large atrium to open up the building to be able to allow people to see through the different parts of the building and help identify way finding. This atrium will be a key element of the new building design and will totally change one’s experience of the building.

On the second floor, two ballrooms will be reconfigured to be adjacent to each other, taking advantage of the day lighting that will occur on the east side along Stevens Way and creating a ballroom large enough in area to accommodate large functions. The third floor will accommodate administrative staff areas, student legal services, offices for the graduate professional student senate and other meeting rooms.

Mr. Lebo then presented plans perspectives and elevations for the building. He noted that the building has been expanded and renovated many times over the years and therefore has quite a different character from different views. The challenge will be to open up the building for better ventilation and light while preserving what is referred to as the "legacy or heritage" front to the HUB - the 49 and the 52 façades. We're still in a concept phase so we don't have details of the exterior but a few are known. For instance, we intend to raise and enlarge the front plaza space so that the building becomes accessible at the main entry. He also noted that one of the challenges is how to handle major deliveries. Presently deliveries can block Steven's Way and efforts will be made to design a loading dock arrangement that avoids this.
He noted that the project will also include major changes to the landscaping around the building. The area around the HUB has become somewhat overgrown and part of this project is address this while retaining significant and important specimens. He noted that one of the major trees that will be lost is the large Sequoia. It is too close to the building and impinging upon its foundation. The remaining Dawn Redwoods will remain.

In response to a question, Mr. Lebo noted that the building is not particularly historic. An historic evaluation of the building was completed and identified only a few items as deserving possible preservation. The building is very modest in its design in comparison to some other more architecturally significant gothic buildings on campus. He noted that the large murals that are referred to as the Norrling Mural will be retained and probably moved to the first floor.

IV. Changes Near Denny Yard.

Kristine Kenny was introduced to discuss the renovation of Denny Yard. Ms. Kenny stated that much of the yard is being impacted by construction staging and when construction is completed this may result in the opportunity to renovate the yard. The University has received a small grant to complete a study of this situation and has hired SVR Design but presently has no money allocated for construction. She then introduced Brice Maryman from SVR to go over the report.

Mr. Maryman stated that the purpose of the study is to provide guidance concerning the form that the lawn will take as well as look at tree and soils perseveration and wayfinding. He noted that Denny Yard is a significance open space within the campus. While is smaller than many other such significant open spaces on campus it has a special character and significance. Denny Hall was the first building built on campus. It was built on a high point, and was the front yard for the campus. Early plans for the campus treated it more much more significantly than today. These early plans envisioned the yard as an oval around which the campus would be organized and whispers of those plans can still be heard today. Denny Hall’s prominence was reduced both by the Olsmtead plan and changes to the campus associated with the Alaska-Yukon Exhibition. It became a kind of middle ground space – a transition between the old oval plans and the more axial plans that dominate the campus planning today. This function was solidified both in the regents plan of 1915. Later plans have even called for buildings to be located on all or part of Denny yard..The 1962 plan by Paul Theory envisioned buildings in Denny Yard, and the current campus master identifies the west portion of the yard as a building site.

When looking at how the yard might be renovated there are specific challenges. First is the diversity of architectural styles that surround it and the fact that many of the surrounding buildings do not relate to the yard. Only Denny Hall really faces the yard. It was designed in the Chateaucasque style, popular in 1880’s. It is unique on campus as later buildings adopted first the Campus Gothic style (Raitt Hall) and then modern design (Balmer and Mackenzie Halls). Packer Hall, is currently under construction.

The result of the spaces transitional function, and the hodgepodge of surrounding architectural styles, is that Denny Yard is a place on campus where feel you have license to wander aimlessly. It is not a main circulation corridor so people sit in solitude reading, and studying for class. Occasionally in good weather actually classes are held in the Yard. Many feel that this is a character to preserve. There are still problems. The space just bleeds off to the west lacking a clear terminus. In addition circulation is so informal that various informal worn paths exist in the
lawn area. There are also ADA issues related to providing accessibility through the Yard and to Denny Hall.

Chris Leman noted that CUCAC has had issues with the removal of trees on Memorial Way adjacent to the Yard. He observed that Memorial Way functions as an extension of Denny Yard, and that any plan for the renovation of Denny Yard should look carefully at what can be done to tie them together. He noted that trees were planted on Memorial Way in memory of UW students killed in World War I, but one at least one or maybe more were removed without really consulting with CUCAC. There was a student uprising at the time so commitments were made that CUCAC would be notified/consulted about tree removals. In addition he expressed dissatisfaction with the use of Memorial Way for Metro and Tour Bus parking and the nature of the changes to the turnaround at the termination of Memorial Way. He stated that in his opinion, each of these changes had adversely affected the feel of Denny Yard. He stated that his hope was that at some point, we can’t rethink these changes and try to get back some of lost qualities.

Mr. Maryman then continued with a discussion of the health of the planting in the area. He noted that they have looked at the health of all of the plantings and identified those that have health issues. Important or significant trees were also identified. Those include *-the large Meany Oak, a monkey puzzle tree, and a black walnut. Some of the evergreens are important but others pose problems and might be removable.

Mr. Maryman noted that there are three options on the table. The first is a restoration that reestablishes that formal access going between the Quad and Denny Hall. It includes more formal plantings, some of which might be edible harkening. The second option focuses on creating a central plaza space in the middle so you have a plaza. This option adds more trees. The final option segments the area into zones.

Chris Leman asked if the future building site; is that in the comprehensive plan? Theresa Doherty responded that the site was identified and passed in the 2003 plan. Mr Leman responded that he don’t know how that got by CUCAC and that it is troubling to him and that he hoped that the University might include a look at how Denny Yard might function if this site is not utilized. Ms. Doherty responded that the University is not going to take the site off the table right now.

Several CUCAC members stated that the option that accepts the informal paths appeared to be very interesting and that elements of this should be included in plans. There was also some discussion the accessible pathways. It was noted that the maximum grade is 5% and that this results in a longer path. Mr. Maryman noted that the location of utilities and the need to access the assessable entry to Denny Hall restrict options and that none are without shortcomings.

Chris Leman asked, what the University is proposing for that building site was. Ms. Doherty responded that there is no specific proposal at this time. Mr. Leman asked Mr. Maryman if he had been authorized to look at the treatment of that site. Theresa Doherty responded that this is not within the scope of the study. The purpose of this study is not to restudy or re-consider any building site.

V. Minor Amendments Related to the Student Housing Project.
Theresa Doherty noted that CUCAC has been briefed on this issue and asked if CUCAC had any specific comments on this issue. She noted that the amendment has three: 1) increase in the number of proposed beds from 1,000 new beds during the lifetime of the master plan to 2,500 new beds, 2) Some changes to setbacks, and 3) inclusion of the Cavalier Apartment building as part of building site 35W. She noted that the DPD decision will be made in later July.

Chris Leman noted that the Eastlake Neighborhood had discussed the issue about and that they liked the idea and appear supportive of the University approach. Chris MacKenzie stated that the Wallingford Community Councils position is that the amendments appear reasonable and appropriate.

Chris Leman noted that at past meetings, CUCAC has expressed some concern that there were some fairly blank streetscapes in some of these, and asked what changes were being made that might address this concern. John Lebo responded that a lot of work has been done to activate the street levels and include public amenities. Retail uses will also be included where appropriate. A moderate size (about 10,000 square foot) urban market will be located along NE Campus Parkway and the Ave for students and residents. In addition there are two potential retail spaces about 2,000 to 2,500 sq. ft. retail for rent retail spaces available along 41st along Sites 32 and 33.

Chris Leman stated that he was comfortable having CUCAC endorse the first two issues but that the third (relief of the setbacks) be deferred until there was more clarity on the streetscape elements. He noted that if this were a City project rather than a major institutions project then these mixed use would be required with more ground related and that there was clear concern about that previously. He suggested that CUCAC either not approve the amendments now or approve on condition that the University come back with greater street related retail or human activity.

Theresa Doherty noted that the issue is setback relief. In most of the areas where setback relief is requested there are special circumstances. Street activating retail will be located along both sites 33 and 32 and up on 31 relief is sought to accommodate walkup brownstone type apartments.

Niel Lessenger Moved:

That the City University Community Advisory Committee approve the University of Washington’s Minor Plan Amendments related to the new Student Housing projects.

The motion was seconded. Discussion followed.

Chris Leman asked that the motion be amended to include a provision that the University be encouraged to come back to CUCAC with some additional proposals to improve the street life around these buildings. Mr. Lessinger stated that he did not consider this a friendly amendment. The chair asked for a second to Mr. Lemans amending motion. None was forthcoming.

Ashley Emory noted that at previous meetings the architects talked about the difference between urban and suburban life and that members had expressed a preference for a more livable space and they showed us pictures, remember, of have coffee and such sitting out there (little tables,
conversation), and narrow sidewalk. In addition, some second floor plaza seating has been discussed as an option.

Mr. Leman stated that he hoped that CUCAC members understood the implication of the setback relief and noted that moving the buildings closer to the street would appear to run counter to what Mr. Emory noted was CUCAC’s previous concerns. He noted that he could support, with a few reservations, the displacement of the people currently in the Cavalier and the increased bed count. However, he again stated that he felt that endorsement of the reduced setbacks was premature and asked that CUCAC consider voting on each of the three elements of the amendment separately so that the vote might indicate unanimity on those two issues and offer an opportunity for members to reconsider the third part. He noted that he was trying to achieve as much consensus as possible.

After brief further discussion, the question was called.

The vote was eight in favor, one opposed.

A quorum being present and the motion having received a majority of those present, the motion passed.

Mr. Leman noted that he wanted the record to show that he opposed the motion and that he deeply regretted that CUCAC did not allow separate votes on each different portion of the proposal.

VI. Adjournment

No further business being before the Committee the Meeting was adjourned.