

St. Petersburg Pier  
Pier Advisory Task Force Design Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, August 17, 2009, 3:30pm

Subcommittee Members Present: Will Michaels, Marilyn Olsen, Brad Bell, Susan Reiter, Johnny Bardine, Randy Wedding

Other Task Force Members Present: Robby Thompson

City Employees Present: Chris Ballestra, Stephani Esposito, Clay Smith, Lynn Gordon, Joe Zeoli

Other Attendees: Bill Harvard Jr., John Clees, Maria Rauls, Wally Guthrie, Carol Everson

Subcommittee Chair Will Michaels called the meeting to order at 3:31pm.

Approval of 8/17/09 Agenda

The 8/17/09 meeting agenda for the Design Subcommittee was unanimously approved.

Opening Remarks

Will Michaels welcomed the subcommittee members as well as the other attendees and talked about how important this project is. Mr. Michaels thought it would be a good idea to hear from the original architectural firm (Harvard Jolly) that created the inverted pyramid. This icon is known to the community and beyond. Mr. Michaels introduced Bill Harvard Jr. (Bill Harvard Sr. was the original designer of the inverted pyramid, Maria Rauls (Bill Harvard Jr.'s daughter) and John Clees (also with the original firm).

Before Mr. Harvard started his discussion, Randy Wedding, gave a brief account of the original "million dollar pier". In the winter of 1964/spring of 1965 the St. Petersburg Architects Association (SPAA) undertook the process of redesigning pier – a generalized conceptual plan was adopted by City Council. Mr. Wedding shared alternative studies/graphics for the reconstruction of the Pier as produced by the SPAA in the mid 1960's. These designs included attributes such as a lighthouse feature, a tree lined approach and various new structures north/south of the approach amid a park like setting along with gondola's connecting to a parking structure on what is now the Al Lang parking lot.

Following Mr. Weddings preamble, a brief history was given to explain where the current inverted pyramid design originated from. Mr. Harvard feels that the Pier should remain a landmark. It should be highly visible and a gathering spot for the community, visitors and tourists.

### 1971 Pier Building Design Review – Bill Harvard Jr.

The existing structure was used to create a sculptural solution as it is today. The unusual building has five levels open to the public. The design keeps the main pier open with the smallest space 60 x 60 feet square at the base of the project and each successive floor expands in an inverted pyramid for to produce the greatest floor area at the top of the building. This design allowed for the weight of the structure on the center 4 pilings which were driven down 60 feet into bedrock, surrounded by layers of sheet pilings with poured in place concrete.

The first level was a glassed in lobby area with glass “rain curtain” extending upward to the second floor. The second floor was to be used for exhibitions, art shows, etc... The third floor is 10,000 SF and can be used for a multitude of things though is constrained in terms of open space by two elevator shafts in the center. The fourth level is a restaurant, cocktail lounge and banquet facility which currently houses the Columbia restaurant. It also takes advantage of a greater view because of the higher elevation. The fifth level was a sun deck, promenade and glass enclosed observation deck. It was designed to enclose the area for future expansion. The sixth level was strictly used for mechanical equipment.

Why was the old (“million dollar”) pier torn down? The old pier needed extensive renovation and repairs. The consensus was that the new pier should be designed as an icon – specifically identifiable to the City of St Petersburg.

The retail enhancements came later along with the waterfront park and waterfront design.

The 4,000 SF core’s stability should not be in question but will require a full structural analysis if it is to be retained. It is the approach and the surrounding pier head that is rapidly deteriorating according to City engineering.

The project had identified transportation issues during design, and the challenges with access given the length of the approach. As noted, a gondola was considered in one design exercise to make access easier, even “Disneyesque”, but was dropped due to budget constraints. Bill Harvard Jr. noted that that distance and the transportation to it continues to be a “weak link” as it was in 1971.

Questions were asked and answered and the discussion continued. After this topic was thoroughly discussed, Mr. Michaels thanked the folks from Harvard Jolly for their presentation.

### Other Business

Mr. Michaels discussed the presentation of the Pier Advisory Task Force to City Council. Chris Ballestra indicated that the date of the presentation progress report to Council is scheduled for Thursday September 24<sup>th</sup> at 2pm in City Hall. The following

week on Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, staff will present Bermello Ajamil to Council for approval as the consultant to the project.

Will Michaels recommended the focus of the next meeting on August 31 should be on the Pier Aquarium's Marine Science programs and tie in to USF. He said he would look into seeing if Howard Rutherford from the Pier Aquarium can attend and speak to this topic.

#### Closing Comments

Will Michaels thanked the architectural firm of Harvard Jolly for their time.

#### Adjournment

A motion for adjournment was made by Marilyn Olsen and seconded by Brad Bell. Meeting adjourned at 4:20pm.