

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING  
SOUTHAMPTON VILLAGE  
MARCH 4, 2021**

Pursuant to Executive Order 202.1 adopted by the Governor of the State of New York on March 12, 2020, Article 7 of the Public Officers Law (Open Meeting Law), is suspended “to the extent necessary to permit any public body to meet and take such actions authorized by the law without permitting in public in-person access to meetings and authorizing such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceeding and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed.”

The public hearing of the Planning Commission for the Village of Southampton on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 5:00PM via Zoom.

Chair Eldon Scott, Marc Chiffert, Laura Devinney, Robert Essay, Michelangelo Lieberman, Edoardo Simioni and Paul Travis were present. Edward Corrigan and Pamela Gilmartin were absent.

Chair opened the meeting.

Siamak Samii, Isabelle Marino and Joe Diamond were present for a special presentation.

Siamak Samii began his presentation on improving pedestrian infrastructure and in planning that was at the root of design for the commercial district. The design makes it so that people can come in and park and lock into the pedestrian infrastructure. Also, important was the establishment of an Arts Center for the Village, that was accomplished with the Cultural Arts Center, African Museum, Southampton Historical Museum, and the Marino Foundation, which is the newest venture. It basically started work more than a year ago on its restoration and will be partially opened this summer. The focus of this presentation today is the pedestrian infrastructure.

This project started around 2010, originally Southampton Historic Museum came to them and asked how they can improve access to the museum. They opened an alley walk connecting Main Street to the museum, this increased access by about 25%. So, basically, they realize that pedestrian infrastructure improves accessibility. They also extended an alleyway between Silver’s and Village Hall to open up to the Cultural Arts Center. There is an arboretum that was more accessible at that time. They are trying to recreate Samuel Parrish’s pathway and improve the walkway. Throughout the years following this path from Main Street was established, they worked on the west lawn and opened grounds of the arboretum to open up to Jobs Lane by opening up a walk in the brick wall. The emphasis on walkability has become more important for use of outdoor space because of COVID. On an annual basis they have a gala to raise funds for the Arts Center, however, this year they had a small dinner fundraiser and that was successful. This brought the importance of why we should further enhance our grounds and outdoor activity.

The presentation of the Proposed SAC Arboretum Improvements had old photos that showed the original entrance facing east toward Main Street, the current main entrance is now on Jobs Lane. Part of the proposed improvements was to improve seating in the arboretum. There was an aerial to show the additions demonstrating how it appears now, they have focused mostly on Jobs Lane walkway, but now

they are focusing on the Caesar's Quarter. That area is behind the parking lot to the east, there is an alley walk that has linked Main Street and the Arts Center, it is brick and was paved about four years ago. They will be undertaking and hopefully completing the extension of this walk by this summer, it will take the brick walkway to connect to the Marino Rose Court and the entrance to the Foundation. This connects the north south path to the east west Marino Rose Court. They propose saw cutting asphalt and introducing a brick paver and this would be a continuous and protected walkway toward the east entrance of center. This is key for establishing the east entrance walkway, it ties to the north south parking.

They will put a board identifying the museum which will contain historical information, they will plant dogwoods along the edge. At the Caesar's Court they will brick pave it and add a collection of steel edgings that are two to four inches surrounding the bases with gravel so that landscapers will not damage the statue bases. It will be a formal court for social activities pertaining to the museum and for public display. He pointed out that there is a proposal to push back the parking by one parking space, it is a wasted space in horrible condition, this shift of 18' expands the grounds of the center and brings the Marino Foundation into play and the architecture included in the center. The Marino Rose Garden will be connected both east west and north south to the arts center. It is a quadrangle with four small rose gardens on either side and a 5' hedge separates it from the Caesar's Court, and it identifies it as distinct and special. They also addressed issues on north and south grounds of the center. There is a fence that has fallen down, they plan construct a new fence and remove an overgrowth of bamboo. The fence will be dark gray and stand six feet tall and at the top it will be open fence. There is currently a large yew that will be moved to the corner behind the Polo Ralph Lauren store. It creates more continuity and provides connectivity to Job's Lane, but necessary screening to the back of shops. Creation of an amphitheater is planned, not for this year but possibly next, so not part of the proposed scope at this time. They showed an aerial rendering facing the original east entrance, they will be restoring that **entrance and painting the façade**. An aerial from Job's and Main was shown, the Rose Court was demonstrated as well. The original entrance to the museum will be used as an architectural feature for a view from the Caesar's Court. They will plant yew along the foundation as it is in bad shape, they will also plant specimen trees on either side of the entrance as well. The west fountain is not in use at this time, but once they do the work on the building, the fountain will be restored and have an that access will feature a curved bench. The new fence with plantings will be behind, it will be a clustering of plants, the transplanted yew will be in this area.

Chair Scott noted it was beautiful and it is exciting. His only question was how expenses are being covered. The Marion Foundation and Arts Center will be primarily undertaking funding. The Village will only be undertaking the brick work for walkways and maintenance of grounds. Mo Masonry will restore all brick work of the Marino Foundation. The Village will extend the contract with Mo Masonry. The costs of the fence on the west and plantings will be handled by the Southampton Arts Center. L. Devinney noted that the north side from parking lot of the parking lot seemed closed off a bit on the north side. S. Samii noted that touches on the next phase of this project. Basically, the key proposal was introduction of new entrance on parking side, it is rational as the majority will access from the parking lot. The fourth entrance on parking side will be introduced but they will need a formal gateway to the museum and grounds, it will be something in line with Jobs Lane but not as formalized. Some brick piers, lanterns, and a walk into the grounds. This entrance has to accommodate services for catering as well as general entry, so work needs to be done over there. L. Devinney understands, but in the interim the line of hedges that is proposed closes off that north hedge. S. Samii noted that they actually do not plan on doing that at this time, they will focus on the center area, they may add that

when constructing the north entrance and possibly with the acquisition of a small parcel that will be reworked to make the corner more attractive. They will keep it as open edge at this time, but in the future they may.

M. Chiffert was wondering whether they had considered an access to both fountain and pool. S. Samii noted they are the east and west fountains, they both function as fountains and they basically following guidelines back in 2000 when the Parrish was planning to expand on the grounds of the arboretum. There was resistance because it eliminated open space and greenery. A landscape architect from Boston was brought in and provided them with a comprehensive report and they created a series of recommendations for improvements. This fountain always floated but they will introduce a porched terrace in the future and that would open to a lower terrace and then once on the grounds there has to be a way to walk on both grass and pavers.

P. Travis asked Isabelle to talk about Marino Foundation. She noted that it is a lifelong passion of her father. He wants to have a rotating art collection on display, and they will be sister organization with SAC and give infusion of culture. They hope to open this summer, they are doing flooring now but don't have a concrete date for the opening. P. Travis loves the building work that has been done. M. Lieberman asked about perennials and native grasses in the area or does that not fit in. He also asked if the fountain could be modernized. S. Samii noted that it is important to blend the two, every generation puts their stamp, he would be open to interpretations as they go along. It does not have to copy the old, but since not the focus at this time he would not want to commit one way or the other since they are not ready, but he is open to reinterpretation. They have to blend the planned landscape with deer resistance and ease of maintenance, since they do not have a huge maintenance budget. They try to pick specimens that lend to informal or English garden, it is not a formal garden. Beyond that, this is landscape with trees floating in the landscape. They are shooting for having outdoor functions going forward and create a conservancy that will access programs on the grounds that would provide teaching about landscapes, perennials, local plants, etc. M. Lieberman noted he wanted to express that he agrees with L. Devinney on accessibility and the north entrance. M. Chiffert asked about night lighting. Last year they introduced lighting off the west side. They are all lit from underneath and they have up lighted a few trees, it is all night sky compliant. It is not to light up the garden, but it is focused, so there is not a sea of dark. They do not plan to light up the paths, they select locations for security and focal points. They will be LED. E. Scott asked how Caesar's Court was conceived. Parrish decided that in late 1800's it needed culture, at the time seat of culture was focused on Rome, so Parrish flew to Italy and commissioned the busts to be carved, the stands are more precious than the busts themselves. It all has historical relevance now. They were originally indoor, and in the 1950's they were moved out onto the grounds. They have fared well but have had some abuse inadvertently from landscapers which is why the gravel and steel edging will be protective. The sculptures are also affected by iron rich water from sprinklers, so rust is a problem. They get whitewashed with a bleach solution every year, which is not good for the sculptures as well. So, the walkway work will prevent this damage.

Chair feels a lot of thought has gone into this project; this work is not recent. R. Essay noted the architect was Clover Atterbury, he used a clinker brick, and he thinks something should be done with that, he also noted there are rare specimen trees in the arboretum. S. Samii shared a letter of support from Tom Edmunds to the ARB regarding the master plan for the museum and it will link the properties. He read the letter to the Commission. The letter fully endorses the project. Chair agrees with the letter. P. Travis noted that the Trustees would like to know that this fits into the Master Plan vision. That vision was to make the arboretum a central village feature.

The Commission will write a letter of support. S. Samii noted that they present to the Trustees on March 11<sup>th</sup> and a letter of support from the Commission would be appreciated. The Commission is in support of this and Chair will pen a letter in support that he will circulate to the members.

L. Devinney noted that the Marino Foundation has been conducting a beautiful restoration. S. Samii feels that this summer we will see and be walking on what was presented tonight.

Chair asked if there was any other business, since there was none, he thanked S. Samii for the presentation.

Chair closed the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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JoLee Sanchez

File Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Village Clerk