

MINUTES
WAR MEMORIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
BUILDING COMMITTEE/SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, September 14, 2017

The Building Committee of the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 14, 2017, in the Trustees' Board Room, War Memorial Opera House, Acting Chair Horn presiding.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Acting Chair Horn, Trustee Levin, Trustee Walker, Trustee Wilsey, Vice President Bechtle (*Ex officio*)

Committee Members Absent: Trustee Pelosi, Trustee Shultz

Non-Committee Present: Trustee Lui, Trustee Myatt, Trustee Moscone

Staff Present: Elizabeth Murray, Managing Director;
Jennifer Norris, Assistant Managing Director

Request from San Francisco Symphony to implement an “Immersive Lobby Experience” improvement project in Davies Symphony Hall funded by the Symphony Hall Improvement Fee:

Acting Chair Horn stated that in advance of today's meeting, Committee members received a copy of the Symphony's proposal for its “Immersive Lobby Experience” improvement project in Davies Symphony Hall, which project would be funded by the Symphony's per ticket Hall Improvement Fee approved by the Trustees at the February 16, 2017 meeting.

Acting Chair Horn welcomed and asked Russell Kelban from the San Francisco Symphony to review the proposal for the Committee.

Mr. Kelban noted that in February 2017, the War Memorial Board of Trustees approved the San Francisco Symphony's request to initiate a per ticket “Hall Improvement Fee” for ticketed Symphony events in Davies Symphony Hall to allow the Symphony to fund a series of improvements focused on enhancing the patron experience before and after concerts, particularly in the lobby areas. He stated that towards that end, the Symphony conducted comprehensive research with existing and potential ticket buyers to identify initiatives that would enhance the audience experience and increase frequency of attendance. He said that patrons who participated in the research rated various concepts and one of the most popular and highest rated concepts across all patron demographics is what the Symphony is now proposing as the “Immersive Lobby Experience.”

Mr. Kelban stated that Immersive Lobby Experience is designed to provide concert-goers with a digital storytelling experience and deeper sense of engagement, on both an informational and emotional level. The concept will also improve patron traffic flow throughout Davies Symphony Hall by reducing congestion in crowded areas and encouraging exploration across all lobby levels.

Mr. Kelban gave an overview of the Immersive Lobby Experience project which is designed to integrate with the architecture of Davies Symphony Hall and respect the overall integrity of the building. He stated that the project includes digital screens installed on various interior walls and interactive kiosks in select lobby areas which will allow patrons to experience various types of content before, during and after concerts including:

- Learning more about Symphony musicians, featured artists/conductors and composers
- Insights into the repertoire of current and future concerts
- Feature themed content surrounding classical music festivals, special events and holidays
- Educational content for schools and families during “Concert for Kids” and Music for Families concerts

- Historical background of San Francisco and the San Francisco Symphony
- Opportunity to coordinate with City Hall lighting
- “Coming Attractions”
- Wayfinding
- Improved lobby experience for late arrivals
- Potential for outside presenters

Mr. Kelban reviewed renderings of the proposed digital screens and interactive kiosks as they would appear both from the exterior and interior of Davies Symphony Hall. He noted that the design of screen sizes and locations will be integrated into the Hall’s architecture in a thoughtful and appropriate way. Mr. Kelban said that the rough cost estimate to implement the Immersive Lobby Experience project is \$2.1 million in capital expenditures over the course of the next three seasons. He stated that pending approval from the War Memorial Board of Trustees and Symphony Board of Governors, initial construction is expected to begin in the Spring of 2018.

During discussion Trustee Bechtle stated that she and Trustee Shultz had an opportunity to previously meet and discuss this proposal with Mr. Kelban and she feels the proposal is a very exciting and active concept. She said that while the design plan, which includes removing some of the interior wall “flutes” in order to install the digital screens, is planned to be very respectful of the Hall, she and Trustee Shultz asked if the flutes could be reinstalled or replaced in the future if it is later determined to remove the screens. Trustee Bechtle stated that they also felt that whenever the public is in the Hall, the screens should not appear as blank black screens, but rather should have either digital content or a default color that is coordinated with the interior Hall color.

Mr. Kelban responded that restoration of the flutes could be accomplished if so determined in the future. He added that there are many options for screen displays other than performance-related digital content including color, art or other pictorial options.

Following further discussion, Acting Chair Horn asked if there is a motion to approve in concept the Symphony’s proposal for the “Immersive Lobby Experience” improvement project in Davies Symphony Hall with the Symphony returning to the Building Committee for consideration and recommendation on progress drawings and final design. On motion of Vice President Bechtle, seconded by Trustee Wilsey, the following recommendation was unanimously adopted:

RECOMMENDED, By the Building Committee of the War Memorial Board of Trustees to approve in concept the San Francisco Symphony’s request to implement the proposed “Immersive Lobby Experience” improvement project in Davies Symphony Hall to be funded by the Symphony’s per ticket Hall Improvement Fee, with the Symphony returning to the Building Committee for consideration and recommendation on progress drawings and final design.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Building Committee, Acting Chair Horn adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Jennifer E. Norris
Executive Secretary