

CHAUTAUQUA MASTER PLANNING MESSAGE POINTS

11/16/06

CCA'S MISSION AND VALUES

The mission of the Colorado Chautauqua Association (CCA) is to preserve, perpetuate and improve the site and spirit of the historic Chautauqua by enhancing its community and values through cultural, educational, social and recreational experiences. The chautauqua experience is based on lifelong learning, love of nature, voluntary simplicity, and music, oration and the arts. Historic significance, traditions, cultural relevance, respite and enrichment are among the community benefits provided by the Colorado Chautauqua.

WHY IS CCA MASTER PLANNING FOR CHAUTAUQUA'S FUTURE?

The CCA board and staff have been thinking strategically about Chautauqua's SECOND century for several years, of course, but there is new urgency in light of Chautauqua's recent National Historic Landmark designation. CCA board and staff are committed to protecting this special place, and to reinvigorating it – to revitalizing the place AND what it can and should mean to the Boulder and larger community. We have rededicated ourselves to the original mission. The needs of this community asset and national landmark (both physical and programmatic) exceed our ability to fund through existing sources of funds or through typical non-profit fundraising. We are committed to creating and fulfilling a strategic master plan that includes a long-term business plan and that identifies long-term funding needs and opportunities. We are exploring visionary approaches to ensure that we preserve and protect Chautauqua for the next 100 years and beyond. We are committed to thinking outside the box to ensure Chautauqua's future. We really have no choice, given the importance of the asset and its many needs. We are at the very beginning of this process.

WHAT IS THIS LODGE CONCEPT?

Ideas were suggested recently by our board and staff as part of a kick-off to master planning, including the concept of creating a new source of funds to ensure Chautauqua's sustainability for the next 50 years. As part of this brainstorming exercise, members of the board were encouraged to think outside the box and to offer BHAGs (Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals). It was in this context that the idea of a lodge (along the lines of the lodge at the original chautauqua in New York) was raised. We are exploring that BHAG, as well as other ideas.

WHY ARE WE EVEN TALKING ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF USING OPEN SPACE?

The very conceptual brainstorming about possible use of Open Space land adjacent to Chautauqua is rooted in the fact that the adjacent land (both to the southeast and to the west of Chautauqua) was purchased by the City of Boulder back in 1898 for the chautauqua (75 acres) and for possible expansion of the chautauqua (additional 100+ acres). This exploratory exercise is in the vein of “what if”... While it may not be feasible at all, the exploration of this particular big idea (including possible on-site locations) probably will spur other big (and small) ideas that are feasible. We would be remiss in not exploring and researching all mission-appropriate possibilities for Chautauqua, even those that ultimately (or possibly quickly) prove to be unfeasible or undesirable. The mere process of exploration is likely to lead to new and possibly important ideas.

WHY ARE WE SPENDING PRECIOUS MONEY ON EXPLORING THIS BHAG?

We are using a small portion of the budget set aside for master planning for preliminary feasibility analysis of this concept that would create a new source of funding to create long-term sustainability for Chautauqua. The money will be used to pay a design consultant to (1) prepare base mapping (which we would need to do in any event as part of the master planning), (2) do more detailed visioning and planning around essential program elements (that we might well use elsewhere on the site) and how those elements fit together to create the footprint, mass and scale of a building, (3) determine what such a building might cost, and (4) determine what sites (if any) might accommodate that footprint, mass and scale, with pros and cons analyzed for each site.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THAT?

The data generated will enable the Chautauqua board to decide if there is any reason to pursue this concept further. We expect that the preliminary feasibility analysis will generate other relevant data and ideas for exploration.

BOTTOM LINE

We are sorry that this VERY early, VERY conceptual, VERY brainstorming, VERY internal effort has been shared externally and is creating consternation for some folks in our community. We hope that the community will give us room to explore ideas, and to derive real benefit from the process of that exploration, before jumping to negative conclusions.