

Uptown Task Force Meeting Minutes
May 3, 2018
8 – 10 a.m.
UPMC Mercy

Present: Roger Altmeyer (UPMC-Mercy), Terri Baltimore (Hill House Association), Derek Dauphin (DCP), Ruari Egan (PWSA), Tad Hale (Avenu), Simona Loberant (SEA), Sean Luther (Innovate PGH), Breen Masciotra (Port Authority), Jeanne McNutt (Uptown Partners), James Myers Jr. (Urban Innovation21), Kristen Osterwood (GBA), Mary Ellen Solomon (Duquesne University), Andréa Stanford (Allegheny County), Joe Wingenfeld (Uptown Partners), Joan Hayek (Duquesne University)

Regrets: Greg Alan (Duquesne Light), Anthony Boule (Parking Authority), Angelica Cirianni (GBA), Cliff Blashford (NRG), Gary Desjardins (PPG Paints Arena), Rich DiClaudio (Energy Innovation Center), Craig Dunham (representing Pittsburgh Penguins), Bill Generett (Duquesne University), Amy Hart (Center for Hearing & Deaf Services), Josh Henschel (Resident), Amber Jackson (Bethlehem Haven), Debbi Linhart (Bethlehem Haven), Shantalaya Mathews (URA), Justin Miller (DOMI), Ray Morrison (Uptown Resident), John Kraemer (NRG), Brian Kurtz (PDP), Linda Metropoulos (ACTION – Housing), Leslie Montgomery (Pittsburgh Blind and Vision Services), Tim Parks (Life's Work), Rebekkah Ranallo (OPDC), Janet Strahosky (Bethlehem Haven), John Wilds (Pitt)

Invited/Absent: Antoine Davis (Pittsburgh Police), Kirk Holbrook (Rep. Wheatley), Marimba Milliones (Hill CDC), Carl Redwood, Jr. (Hill Consensus Group), Sonny Williams, Daniel Wood (Councilman Lavelle)

Call to Order/Welcome: Mary Ellen Solomon convened the meeting at 8:12 a.m. with a welcome and an introduction of all the present Task Force members. Mary Ellen said a special welcome to Sean Luther who is a returning member and will now be representing InnovatePGH at Uptown Taskforce meetings.

Approval of Minutes: Mary Ellen asked for a motion to have the April meeting minutes approved that were previously distributed to all members via email. With the exception of correcting one type, the motion was approved with no dissent.

Agenda Discussions:

Presentation:

Development Sub-Committee Projects: Tad Hale presented a few of the main projects that the Development Sub-Committee has been working on over the last few months. The big question that they have been trying to answer is “What are we dealing with, development wise, in Uptown?” The Sub-committee has been working on a developing a neighborhood map which includes the major land owners (UPMC and Duquesne University), properties that are tax delinquent or condemned, as well as building condition on a scale from A – F. Work continues to enhance the map into a heat map, featuring different layers, so that ultimately, they could get a sense of what could happen and what couldn't happen in Uptown.

Some questions posed by Task Force members at this point:

Will this be put into JavaScript Format? Yes, it would.

How will this map be shared outside of the Task Force? The Sub-committee had discussed sharing it, and they were open to sharing it with inbound inquiries, including developers, in a .pdf format. Joe Wingenfeld, who has been helping to develop the map, said that he was hoping to add lots of layers that would be helpful to developers, such as labeling owned properties and rental properties. He is also hoping to be able to zoom in on different sections, turn on and off different sections or certain pieces of information, etc. Derek Dauphin then mentioned that the City had been working on a map that showed the prioritization of retail in Uptown,

storm water in the right of way, etc., and he thought that the Task Force would be able to use that information and add it to this map.

There was additional discussion as to how the Sub-committee thought inbound inquiries should be handled. When developers come into the neighborhood, they usually just want a quick snapshot of why they should work in that neighborhood. Tad said that he had experienced this when working with developers in Oakland, so he had devised a one-page sheet that allowed him to show those developers why they should work in Oakland (shown on screen). He thought that this would be a good resource to put together for Uptown as well. The Sub-committee had discussed some of the information that should be put onto this sheet, emphasizing that Uptown is extremely unique, is easy to get to, has lots of growth and opportunity, is extremely diverse, is part of the KIZ Zone and Opportunity Zone, and is one of the first neighborhoods to have a development plan in Pittsburgh. The Sub-committee will continue to refine the sheet based on Task Force input and will look to develop a graphical treatment for it.

The Sub-committee has developed an inventory and timeline of infrastructure projects that will occur in Uptown in the next two to four years. The projects include, but are not limited to, the rehab of the Armstrong Tunnel, the Blvd. of the Allies paving, the UPMC Mercy additions, the rehab of the Duquesne Light Sub-Station, the Duquesne University Palumbo Center project, and the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. The list of projects was shared with a project manager at PennDot to hopefully begin coordinated communications among the various entities. There was some discussion as to what role the Mobility Sub-committee should be playing in trying to coordinate communications efforts – a topic to be explored again at the next meeting.

Some questions posed by Task Force members:

Do we have a plan for re-building the sidewalks when these construction projects are wrapping up? Derek Dauphin of City Planning said that all upcoming development projects shown on this list have checked in with the city and they do all have appropriate plans for their sidewalk rebuilds. What those sidewalk-rebuilds include is on a case by case basis. There are a lot of meetings that will be held over the next four months that will be helpful in this planning as well. Breen Masciotra from the Port Authority then mentioned that they work on a case by case basis as well as infrastructure projects come up along the BRT route. She stated that a lot of the details are still being ironed out in regards to the BRT such as branding, fares, etc., but the project was about 50% through the design phase. The current round of public meetings regarding BRT revolve focus on the service plan, particularly the changes in the Mon Valley, but over the summer, the other topics will be covered.

How does retail stay alive during all of these infrastructure projects? This is going to be a major challenge for the neighborhood with all of this upcoming construction. A business meeting with the URA and others should be held to discuss further.

After these questions were posed, Tad thanked the Task Force for their time, and mentioned that the next sub-committee meeting would be May 14th at 8:30 am at the Paramount Building. The agenda included a presentation by the URA regarding land acquisition, as well as continuing to work on the map interaction.

Sub-committee Updates:

Development Sub-Committee – No other update outside of their presentation.

Community Sub-Committee – They will finish compiling project priorities by the middle of May which will allow them to set the agenda for the Sub-committee for the next 12 months. The Sub-committee voted for an RFP process similar to the Tustin Street meeting on April 12 and they will continue discussions on the Slow Streets projects. The new signal lights have been installed on Gist and Forbes and should be operational in the coming weeks. The next Sub-committee meeting will be May 31st at 6pm at the Paramount building.

Mobility Sub-Committee – There was no update at this time.

Infrastructure Sub-Committee – There was no update at this time.

Member Updates:

Allegheny County: At the last Task Force meeting, the Task Force discussed their concerns about the Armstrong Tunnel renovations. Those concerns have been shared with the County Executive's office and remain under consideration.

Avenu: They are currently trying to activate new spaces. They are also losing the first floor as a meeting space due to a tenant moving in and taking over the entire first floor, so they are working on trying to find alternative community meeting space. Tad is traveling to Cincinnati with 3CDC to learn about their benchmarking, etc. He will report back after his trip in June.

City Planning: UPMC Mercy will be building the first infrastructure hub at the new vision hospital. In order for the hub to qualify, it will have to meet at least 3 out of 10 requirements. Some of those requirements include, but are not limited to, secure bike parking, charging stations, a bike share station, renewable energy sources, and storm water treatment from the street using green infrastructure. UPMC Mercy is also working on ways to open up their new future parking lot to residents. In regard to the Slow Streets Project, the Community Sub-Committee decided that there could be a better way to involve the public than through an artist educator, so they will continue to work on that and come back to the Task Force. The City received five proposals for the first Public Art Program. They were all good, but unfortunately, incomplete. So, the RFP was cut in half, making it easier for artists to apply and re-opened for another month. Please share the new RFP with your partners and spread the word throughout the community that we are re-opening the application process and it is now easier to apply.

Duquesne University: At the previous Task Force meeting, the Director of Athletics presented the Palumbo Center Renovations. The result of that presentation was that Rodney Dobish, Assistant Vice President and Chief Facilities Officer, scheduled meetings with the GBA and the PWSA to discuss some of the feedback presented by Task Force members. The University is also beginning its new Institutional Master Plan (IMP) process and is working with City Planning to provide feedback on the new best practices guidelines developed by CP. May 11th is Commencement and May 12th are the diploma ceremonies, so there will be increased traffic in the area on those days.

GBA: The 2030 district progress reception was about 2 weeks ago. The expansion into Uptown was announced, as well as new relationships with affiliate partners.

Hill House Association: This past weekend was the August Wilson Block Party. It was the largest block party that the HHA has ever hosted, with performances, activities and numerous food trucks. The HHA has been working on updating the exterior of the building, and they have raised almost \$5 million dollars to update the inside. They have also hired Walter Hood to help with new landscaping around the building.

Port Authority: On May 17, the Uptown Community meeting regarding the BRT project will be held at the Paramount Building. The meeting is open to the public. Also of upcoming interest is the Rail-voluton conference. This year, Rail-Volution has asked the Pittsburgh Port Authority to do a webinar with a biking and walking organization in June, ahead of the conference in October that is coming to Pittsburgh. Breen requested that a presentation on the conference be added to the June Task Force agenda.

PWSA: PWSA met with UPMC Mercy to go over storm water management for the new vision hospital. The green roof will be at grade on one structure and above grade on the second structure. There will also be tree pits along the sidewalks to manage storm water on the ground. PSWA is continuing to work with them to identify other opportunities that would help them to meet storm water requirements. PWSA will also be meeting with Duquesne Light about the realignment of Moultrie Street to see if they can work storm water management into the project. The storm water grant program was pulled from the PWSA Board agenda, so no updates there.

UPMC-Mercy: They are currently planning precursor activities to the ground-breaking of the new vision hospital. They are currently going through the IMP process with the City and are hoping to present to City Council in June. One of the feedback items that they received from the City was that they need to do more community engagement around the new hospital, so they will be holding a community meeting on May 19 from 9 am – 12 pm at UPMC Mercy where they will be answering any questions about the IMP.

Uptown Partners: Duquesne's Sustainable MBA Team made their final project presentation on April 19. The group had made significant progress in studying solar potential in Uptown and available tax-credits and subsidizes, along with studying the Community Choice Aggregation. They have also developed a model for energy efficiency return on investment on two Uptown Properties (Souper Bowl and a row house at 115 Van Braam). This model used data from Energy Star and can be used for any residential/commercial building. UP will follow up with Dr. Sroufe over the summer to get more hands-on with these projects. UP worked with the URA to make an offer on 2025 Tustin Street. This land is crucial to preserving the Tustin St. Community Garden. They will be discussing acquisition options with the URA in the next Development Sub-Committee meeting on May 14. Several developers have expressed their interest in 23 Miltenberger Street. The URA will decide on the proposal process. UP has sold 125 Moultrie Street to Mike Sell for redevelopment. The final property at 121 Moultrie will likely be sold to Mike over the summer as well. Mike hopes to begin renovation on Phase 1 (two-three of the Moultrie Street properties) over the summer. UP testified in favor of the Mercy Eye and Rehabilitation Institute at the April 17 Planning Commission Hearing. They also renewed its commitment with Sustainable Pittsburgh to promote the Sustainable Restaurant Program to funnel sustainable renovation funds into Uptown restaurants. Open Streets will be coming into Uptown on May 27. The Half-Marathon will also be coming through Uptown the morning of Sunday, May 6. Anyone is welcome to cheer on runners at the cheering tent in-front of the 5th Avenue School Lofts. Finally, UP has submitted a grant to McAuley Ministries for \$75,000 over the course of 3 years. This would fund the new Neighborhood Advocate position and provide limited help with increased rent and operations.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 a.m.

Next Uptown Task Force Meeting - 8 a.m. on Thursday, June 7th, at LifesWork.