

Uptown Task Force Meeting Minutes
January 4, 2018
8 – 10 a.m.
LifesWork of W PA

Present: Derek Dauphin (DCP), Craig Dunham (representing Pittsburgh Penguins), Ruari Egan (PWSA), Grant Ervin (City Planning), Bill Generett (Duquesne U.) Tad Hale (Avenu), Josh Henschel (Uptown resident), Breen Masciotra (Port Authority), Jeanne McNutt (Uptown Partners), Raymond Morrison (Uptown resident), Kris Osterwood (GBA), Tim Parks (Life's Work), Mary Ellen Solomon (Duquesne U.), Janet Strahosky (Bethlehem Haven), Joe Wingenfeld (Uptown Partners), John Wilds (Pitt)

Regrets: Roger Altmeyer (UPMC-Mercy), Terri Baltimore (Hill House Association), Anthony Boule (Parking Authority), Gary Desjardins (PPG Paints Arena), Rich DiClaudio (Energy Innovation Center) , Court Gould (Sustainable Pittsburgh), Amy Hart (Center for Hearing & Deaf Services Inc.), John Kraemer (NRG), Brian Kurtz (PDP), Simona Loberant (SEA), Linda Metropolous (ACTION – Housing), Justin Miller (City's Mobility and Infrastructure), Leslie Montgomery (Pittsburgh Blind and Vision Services), James Myers (Urban Innovation21), Wanda Wilson (OPDC)

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), representative of CORE Realty

Call to Order/Welcome: Mary Ellen Solomon convened the meeting at 8:10 a.m. with a welcome and an introduction of all the present Task Force members. She then thanked Life'sWork of Western PA for hosting the meeting and asked Tim Parks to give an overview of the organization. Tim welcomed everyone and then provided a brief overview of LifesWork, which provides support and services to individuals of all ages with disabilities and or other employment barriers. Founded by the National Council of Jewish Women in Uptown nearly a century ago, LifesWork provides opportunity, employment and independence to more than 2,000 individuals each year through various business and human services programs and community partnerships.

Approval of Minutes: Mary Ellen motioned to have the November (corrected as per Jeanne McNutt) and December meetings minutes approved that were previously distributed to all members via email. Jeanne McNutt mentioned she'd like to discuss some possible changes to December minutes. Mary Ellen and Jeanne to discuss offline. November minutes were approved. December motion was left open.

Agenda Discussions:

Presentation:

Fifth & Dinwiddie Charrette:

Derek reported the charrette was held on November 29. It started with a presentation about the site, what the plan calls for, zoning; followed by three 30-minute sessions to work on topics (building and use; open space/green infrastructure; access and parking); followed by a final work session to create a single design for the site. Each table had different approaches for the site. Staff spent December reviewing design proposals that came out of the charrette which will help to inform RFP; open house to present design will be held on

January 17 from 6:30 – 8 PM at Avenu; will include boards and a variety of ways to get further input; will help to determine if we got it right boiling it down to one design which will be challenging because design concepts submitted were all so different

Details about 5th & Dinwiddie site: surface lot with vacant rowhouse; surface lot with DPW building that will soon become surplus; could put two parcels together as one site; has opportunity to become catalytic; most design concepts proposed 2 buildings; parcels are 1.8 acres together; designs called for 20-30% of the site to be open or green space; park at corner was key feature; need feedback on what happens in that open space (green infrastructure, public art, BRT stop), all groups proposed repurposing DPW building; could expand it out; flex space, maker space, incubators, ground level retail

Jeanne commented she thought charrette was well done and was glad there was a planner or architect at each table to facilitate discussions; Derek said outreach to design/development community was intentional

Craig commented if input was actually going to be distilled to one design that all feedback be included in RFP so that responders know all the community context – could be an attachment to RFP

Update on Action Items:

Public art – Community Subcommittee to meet with Derek Dauphin and Yesica Guerra, Public Art & Civic Design Manager for City, on January 22 to discuss the three potential public art sites, basics of the projects, background, feedback; Joe indicated the Subcommittee may want to talk about other art projects beyond the three proposed

Website – Mary Ellen and Jeanne to meet in January to discuss photos, etc.

Subcommittee Reports:

Community: Joe said they will do a call with Conservation Consultants Inc. to discuss the County's Healthy Homes program; working with BikePGH to determine 50 sites for bike racks within the public right of way; Open Streets will return to Uptown on Sunday, June 24 from 9 am - noon

Development: Tad reported that they're working on a real estate map with DCP and URA that could be interactive; want to better understand assets in Uptown; subcommittee will meet the third Tuesday of every month at 8 a.m.; modular housing demo unit will be coming to Uptown in next few months; will be available for community use; about 200 sq ft; PWSA has been working with about water and sewer hookups

Mobility: As Justin was absent, Derek said he thinks the next meeting will identify a few new projects; no update from FTA on grant app

Infrastructure: Grant said they've had two meetings; general direction is to focus on key projects for green infrastructure and energy; Duquesne Light is doing some work around electric vehicles; trying to identify targeted projects to get off the ground; vertical development with NRG plan is making good progress with some challenges with what lies beneath the streets; City has made great strides with Building Benchmarking legislation which requires commercial buildings to disclose/report energy use; will go into effect in June 2018; they're providing educational materials for building owners and operators and using EnergyStar portfolio (free EPA tool) to share data; he suggested they may want to do presentation to Uptown Task Force in the

Spring; Bill asked what penalties are for non-compliance; Grant advised it's a voluntary program and that a large percentage of the buildings already participate in 2030 District so they're already do a lot of this work; Jeanne asked if NRG could be invited to do a presentation to the Task Force; Uptown Partners had met with them a while ago about lighting and façade design and they'd like to know where those elements of the project stand

Subcommittee Meeting Minutes – Joe asked for clarification of whether subcommittees are to record/approve minutes and submit them for public posting on www.uptowntaskforce.org; after discussion it was decided that monthly Task Force meetings (and its meeting minutes) will serve to report subcommittee activities and that if subcommittees have updates (especially about specific projects) otherwise they will provide them for posting to website

New Business:

Armstrong Tunnel Improvement Project – As was discussed at the December meeting, Mary Ellen circulated a draft letter to the County regarding the information received at the public meeting in December to Task Force members via email.

Members discussed a number of issues including content, suggesting some minor edits, and protocols for allowing members to abstain/exempt from supporting the letter. It was suggested that members could express desire for abstention and it be noted “for the record” with the Task Force. Grant suggested copying Ann Ogourec at the County, Karina Ricks and Justin Miller at City.

Uptown Partners and GBA indicated they had discussed the letter and asked if they could share it with BikePGH when it was completed. Task Force consensus was that it was OK to share it.

Member Updates:

Port Authority – new CEO arrives on January 16; Railvolution national conference will be held in Pgh Oct. 21 – 24; Task Force will be in the loop on how members can participate

GBA – North American Passive House conference in Pgh Oct. 17 – 21; still working on 2030 District expansion in Uptown, will meet with partners in next month; meeting with UPMC Mercy to discuss sustainability goals for new Eye Institute

Avenu – strategic plan cycle finishing; focusing on attracting and retaining businesses; looking at tactically what they're doing in Uptown and Oakland and broadening tactics as the two neighborhoods are different; will share plan later this month

PWSA – working with BRT to look for locations for infrastructure and updates; Mayor's Blue Ribbon panel looking at restructuring and recommendations

Duquesne U – community engagement efforts ramping up in Uptown, Hill, Hazelwood, Mon Valley; director was hired for Center for Community Engaged Teaching and Learning; moved into new office at 18 Chatham

City Planning – Jack Macheck of 10,000 Friends still planning future presentation to Task Force; in meantime he's going to do some support work to help with fundraising for Colwell Trail and/or Tustin Park

Pitt – work continues on campus master plan and Institutional Master Plan required by City; continuing efforts on Community Engagement Centers as part of the University’s strategic plan (Homewood & Hill)

Bethlehem Haven – in holding pattern with properties that were recently purchased; will begin to look at options late spring/early summer

Penguins – hosting 2nd of 3 charrettes related to lower Hill residential development; getting deeper into site planning (54 units mixed income; 200 units market rate); hosting construction trades job fair on Saturday, January 27 from 10 am – 7 pm at PPG Pains in partnership with Builders Guild of Western PA and Master Builders; Duquesne’s Law Clinic, CCAC and Energy Innovation Center will also participate

Life’sWork – marketing space for lease – 25 – 30 % of building space for office, assembly space, commercial kitchen

Duquesne Light – working with Port Authority on BRT underground preparations including infrastructure upgrades when sidewalks are torn up

Uptown Partners – DU Sustainable MBA students presented the business case for developing Uptown focused on green retrofits of existing buildings; met with developers interested in renovating several Fifth Avenue buildings; properties on Moultrie working their way through City Property Reserve process will soon be transferred to a developer for renovations; intern Charles Succop is researching historic properties in Uptown and sketching out a non-official contributing structures district in Uptown

Action Items:

NRG – Mary Ellen to contact John Kraemer/Cliff Blashford to request presentation at February 1 Task Force meeting

Armstrong Tunnel Letter – Mary Ellen to revise draft based on feedback and circulate to Task Force members for final approval

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 10 a.m.

Next meeting:

The next meeting will be February 1, 2018, at Duquesne University Power Center at 8 a.m.