

Uptown Task Force Meeting Minutes

November 1, 2018

8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Duquesne University, Student Union, Africa Room

Present: Roger Altmeyer (UPMC-Mercy), Cliff Blashford (NRG), Angelica Ciranni (GBA), Derek Dauphin (DCP), Ruari Egan (PWSA), Amy Hart (Center for Hearing & Deaf Services), Simona Loberant (SEA), Sean Luther (InnovatePGH), Breen Masciotra (Port Authority), Shantalaya Mathews (URA), Jeanne McNutt (Uptown Partners), Ray Morrison (Uptown Resident), Tim Parks (Life'sWork), Mary Ellen Solomon (Duquesne University), Andréa Stanford (Allegheny County), John Wilds (Pitt), Joe Wingenfeld (Uptown Partners), Joan Hayek (Duquesne University)

Regrets: Greg Alan (Duquesne Light), Terri Baltimore (Hill House Association), Anthony Boule (Parking Authority), Brian Brown (GBA), Gary Desjardins (PPG Paints Arena), Rich DiClaudio (Energy Innovation Center), Craig Dunham (representing Pittsburgh Penguins), Grant Ervin (City of Pittsburgh), Bill Generett (Duquesne University), Tad Hale (Avenu), Carol Hardeman (Hill District Consensus Group), Josh Henschel (Resident), Amber Jackson (Bethlehem Haven), Debbi Linhart (Bethlehem Haven), John Kraemer (NRG), Brian Kurtz (PDP), Mischelle McMillan (De Ruad Resident Council President), Linda Metropoulos (ACTION – Housing), Justin Miller (DOMI), Leslie Montgomery (Pittsburgh Blind and Vision Services), Stephanie Moyes (Bethlehem Haven), James Myers Jr. (Urban Innovation21), Kristen Osterwood (GBA), Rebekkah Ranallo (OPDC), Lama Shehadeh (DCP), Janet Strahosky (Bethlehem Haven),

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)

Guests: Rod Dobish (Duquesne University), Terri Leasure (Duquesne University), Mark Minoski (Duquesne University)

Call to Order/Welcome: Mary Ellen Solomon convened the meeting at 8:07 a.m. with an introduction of all present Task Force members.

Approval of Minutes: Mary Ellen asked for a motion to have the October meeting minutes approved that were previously distributed to all members via email. The motion was approved with no dissent.

Agenda Discussions:

Duquesne University Institutional Master Plan: Rod Dobish, Associate Vice President and Chief Facilities Officer at Duquesne University, presented the University's proposed Institutional Master Plan. Rod provided a presentation that included these projects:

- Palumbo Center renovation, which includes bumping out and remodeling the façade, enclosing the field behind the current facility, and interior updates. As announced in October, the newly renovated facility will be called the UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse
- Renovation to the Rangos School of Health Sciences, including a new cadaver lab
- Enhancements to the athletic facilities around Rooney Field which include a visitor's locker room, seating additions along Academic Walk, athletic office renovations and enhancements to the press box
- New student housing along Forbes Avenue that would feature full apartment style living. This housing complex would be completed in two phases and would help de-densify the current dorms. It would also hopefully attract more students to live in Uptown.
- A community development/visioning plan for the Fifth Avenue retail corridor. The University owns several properties in this area and wants to work with the community to develop those buildings to reflect the community's vision for that area.

- A gateway park at the corner of Forbes Avenue and Boyd Street, as part of the EID plan's vision for Watson as a blue alley.
- A new, mixed-use building on the campus for the health sciences program.
- A new Alumni House located behind the Administration Building.
- A build out adjacent to the Power Center, which would be a stretch for the 10-year plan.

Rod shared renderings of the projects and discussed a timeline that would potentially have the proposed plan put forward for appropriate City approvals in January. Over the next two months there will be meetings with the community and various other constituents. A website has been created with plan details: (www.duq.edu/imp).

Some questions posed by Task Force members:

Will there be a focus group of students to help plan the retail/programming for the new dorm? The University would like to put together focus groups as it gets deeper into the project timeline to better reflect the desires of the students who would be currently enrolled.

The expired master plan included adding floors to the Power Center. Is that going to happen? No.

Will the new residence hall be restricted to students? Yes.

2) Infrastructure Sub-Committee Work Plan Update: The Infrastructure part of the Eco-Innovation District Plan breaks down into six categories: (1) open space; (2) green connectors; (3) landscaping; (4) underground infrastructure; (5) energy; and (6) waste management. The Sub-committee has focused on: what are the priorities that were most critical, what is actionable in the short-term and the long-term, and how is performance being tracked.

The Sub-committee has identified the following projects based on the categories above:

- Open Space: Tustin tot lot; Fifth and Dinwiddie lots
- Green Connections: Boulevard of the Allies Riverfront Project; Colwell connection; Heritage Trail
- Landscaping: Street trees; Vacant lots
- Underground Infrastructure: Influence private property storm water management; MLK Field Project; BRT coordination
- Energy: Solar power; Reduction of energy burden on residents; 2030 District commitments; Microgrids
- Waste Management: Piloting waste management education; Public trash/recycle receptacles

In addition to establishing priority projects, the Sub-committee developed a number of metrics that could be used to measure progress, as well as information around availability and "ownership" of various data sets.

Next steps include continuing conversations with the University of Pittsburgh regarding an energy base line, developing a plan for sharing relevant information with developers and finalizing a presentation of all progress to date.

3) EID Consultant Projects Update: Derek Dauphin presented three open spaces that Stoss has focused on: Tustin Park; the Fifth and Dinwiddie lots; and the Watson Blue Alley.

Tustin Park: Could expand across the street so the developers had been placing a lot of focus on how to make that street feel like it was a part of the park. Consultant used feedback from the Block Party and last year's charrette and used it to create their concepts. Focus is on basketball court and playground, an emphasis on slowing down traffic, the importance of improving light for night-time use

Design option 1: nature oriented, showing half the park as a play park and half of it as a nature park. The street that runs through the park would be raised and painted, and tree pits would be added in on either side, so that traffic would have to very slowly zig-zag through the area. There would either be a full-size basketball court or a half-size court depending on the expansion, and some of the play areas would be under green mounds. Community garden would include planters and an orchard.

Design option 2: more play oriented and less nature oriented. The play mounds would be associated with more equipment instead of grass, and there would be a water play area. The community garden would planters only.

City planning is continuing to get input to refine the design choice before moving ahead with City approvals.

Watson Blue Alley: Watson Street has many different uses including loading docks, parking, services and pedestrians.

Design option 1: To enhance activity and address storm water issues addition of trees, seating and pavers to the Boyd Parklet and up through the alley, creating an area that is both art and nature focused. The City is working with Duquesne University regarding options for the parklet at the end of Watson Street.

Design option 2: more trees in the park area but less along the street. It also shows more opportunity for programming, quite similar to Point Park's Village Park area.

Fifth Avenue and Dinwiddie Street: Both concepts are centered on creating an open space feel.

Design option 1: lots of trees and covered seating that would open up to the new BRT station. There would be retail along Dinwiddie Street as well as public art installations.

Design option 2: fewer trees and more separated spaces that feature ramps and seating. More focused around programming and having local organizations plan events in the space, maybe even a farmer's market.

Some questions posed by Task Force members:

Who creates and pays for the open space programming in some of these areas? Stoss is going to give the City an estimate for what programming might cost in those spaces and is considering a variety of options for funding it.

Sub-Committee Updates:

Community: The Sub-committee hosted an evening community open house focused on the redesign of the Tustin Top Lot and the Tustin Community Garden. This project includes public art, improved recreational amenities, green infrastructure, and tying together both parks across Tustin Street. At the next meeting in November, the Sub-committee will work on selecting metrics and assessment protocols.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Next Uptown Task Force Meeting - 8 a.m. on Thursday, December 6 at Duquesne University in the Africa Room, Student Union