

**Uptown Task Force Meeting Minutes**  
**February 1, 2018**  
**8:00 – 10:00 a.m.**  
**Duquesne University Power Center, 1015 Forbes Avenue**

**Present:** Roger Altmeyer (UPMC-Mercy), Terri Baltimore (Hill House Association), Cliff Blashford (NRG), Anthony Boule (Parking Authority), Angelica Cirianni (GBA), Derek Dauphin (DCP), Ruari Egan (PWSA), Bill Generett (Duquesne University), Tad Hale (Avenu), Amy Hart (Center for Hearing & Deaf Services), Josh Henschel (Resident), John Kraemer (NRG), Brian Kurtz (PDP), Simona Loberant (SEA), Jeanne McNutt (Uptown Partners), Kristen Osterwood (GBA), Rebekkah Ranallo (OPDC), Mary Ellen Solomon (Duquesne University), Janet Strahosky (Bethlehem Haven), Joe Wingenfeld (Uptown Partners), John Wilds (Pitt), Joan Hilton Hayek (Duquesne University)

**Regrets:** Gary Desjardins (PPG Paints Arena), Rich DiClaudio (Energy Innovation Center), Craig Dunham (representing Pittsburgh Penguins), Greg Alan (Duquesne Light), Court Gould (Sustainable Pittsburgh), Debbi Linhart (Bethlehem Haven), Breen Masciotra (Port Authority), Linda Metropolos (ACTION – Housing), Justin Miller (DOMI), Leslie Montgomery (Pittsburgh Blind and Vision Services), James Myers (Urban Innovation21), Tim Parks (Life's Work), Jennifer Wilhelm (URA)

**Invited/Absent:** Antoine Davis (Pittsburgh Police), Kirk Holbrook (Rep. Wheatley), Marimba Millions (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 8:10 a.m. with a welcome and an introduction of all the present Task Force members. She then asked every present member to sign a release form for their pictures to be taken by a photographer who was coming later in the morning to take pictures of the Task Force. Those members who wished to not have their pictures taken could opt out.

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

**Agenda Discussions:**

**Presentations:**

(1) NRG Uptown Plant: Cliff Blashford, Vice President and General Manager of the Business Unit for NRG, and John Kraemer, Marketing and Sales Consultant for NRG presented an update on the new NRG Uptown plant. The new plant is located directly behind PPG Paints Arena, and will have a chilled water system, as well as steam. The plant will service UPMC-Mercy, which will eventually be the site of the new UPMC Vision Institute. Along with heating and cooling, the plant also has the ability to provide back-up power to UPMC-Mercy. The plant is scheduled to be online starting in March.

As part of the presentation, Cliff stressed that any new developments that may be interested in NRG service should contact NRG very early in the development process—very early on during the development stage of a building. They advised that due to the complications of the connection process to already established sites, and because the plant is brand new, they only have a target of about a dozen customers in mind for the Uptown plant. They continue to have ongoing conversations with established buildings in Uptown, as well as potential developments.

There was a quick discussion about who might be a good candidate to be a customer of the new NRG plant, and Cliff discussed that a single-family establishment would not be, but buildings with larger yet consistent heating and cooling loads would be. There was another question about how conversations have gone

recently with potential new customers. John explained that they've had some discussions with City's Edge project developer, but it ended up being not a good fit, mostly due to the fact that the new project is an apartment building and each apartment will be responsible for its own heating and cooling bills, making it tough for NRG to break down the numbers. Also, the upfront cost, which is usually the biggest issue with most developers, wasn't feasible for the new City Edge project. Nate Boe, who was in attendance to provide a presentation on the City's Edge project, said that there is still a potential to connect the first floor, which will be a commercial space, to the new plant. Cliff followed up by saying unfortunately, every new building, for different reasons, may not be a good fit, for one reason or another. A follow-up question was raised, asking if the information can be used from the preliminary conversations with Nate and his developers to help educate and inform future developers about connecting to the new plant, what the information that they might need, and how they can prepare their designs to be more able to connect the plant. Cliff and John agreed that now that they have gone through this full process with Nate and learned a great amount, barring confidentially, they would be more than happy to work with supporting partners on putting together information for future developers and partners to use in regard to using the plant's resources. It was also suggested that Nate Boe should meet with the Development Sub-committee to further discuss potential for City's Edge to work with NRG.

Jeanne McNutt then asked Cliff if he and John would be willing to come meet with Uptown Partners to dive into more detail on the design aspect of the plant, especially in regard to lighting and green spaces around the plant. Cliff said that their first priority at the moment is to get the plant operational, and once that happens, they are open and happy to have any conversations with any partners in regards to the building and any issues that there have been, i.e. the Stevenson Street piping, lighting, etc. Cliff believed a good time for those conversations to start would be around third quarter of 2018.

*(2) City's Edge:* P. Nathaniel Boe, President and CEO of Midpoint Group of Companies and Larry Fabbroni, Associate at Strada, presented an overview and renderings of the City's Edge project. Nate discussed that the project was approved City Planning Commission on December 5 at 1450 Colwell Street (between the intersection of Crawford Street and Our Way in Uptown, right next to the new NRG Plant), which is currently a surface lot. Construction will begin in the second quarter of 2018 and the completion time will hopefully be summer of 2019 with occupancy starting in the fall of 2019.

Some project specifics: The building will be a 9-story mixed-income/mixed-use space. There will be 74 affordable housing units, and 32 market rate units, totaling 106 units in the building. This project started as an RFP for a parking structure from the URA, which the apartment building will now sit on top of. There will be commercial space on the first and second floor of the building, which after construction will be street-level at the corner of Crawford Street and Our Way.

The project has been meeting most of the goals of the Uptown Ecolnnovation District Plan and the Greater Pittsburgh Master Plan. 90% of the structure will be indoor, 10% will be outdoor (mostly along Pride St.), as well as a rooftop terrace on top of the parking structure. 10% of the units (totaling 11) meet Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS), and the building itself will get the Enterprise Green Certificate. There will also be a computer kiosk located in each lounge area for the residents to use.

Potential tenants for first and second floor commercial spaces are an urgent care or pharmacy, a day care featuring an after-school program, a restaurant, a community space, and a small business incubator.

Building design also includes three large photographic panels that will go on the Our Way side of the building

on the parking garage outer wall. The three photographs will be made out of perforated metal, which is more durable and lasts longer than any other option. A question was asked about how the photographs will be chosen. Larry said that the Hill CDC and Uptown Partners will help to identify the photographs that will reflect the neighborhood's history. A comment was made that it would be too difficult for a committee to choose these photographs, so it might be more effective for Uptown Partners to select one person and the Hill CDC to select one person and then those people can select the photographs. Larry and Nate agreed with this thought process.

A question was raised about any closures to Colwell Street or the surrounding streets. Larry said that there will be a partial closure of Colwell St. during construction. On-street parking will be removed, but it will still be a two-way street. Another question was asked in regard to the developer going after LEED Silver instead of just the Enterprise Green Certification. Nate said this was mostly due to processing/paperwork costs associated with LEED certification. A last comment was made about the light spillage coming out of the parking garage onto the street, if there was a plan to try and dim those lights on the outside. Larry said at the moment there was not, but they will take a look at it.

*(3) 10,000 Friends* – Jack Machek, President & CEO of 10,000 Friends, shared that his organization is currently working to help identify green space projects that would qualify for Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grants in 2018. He asked if the Task Force knew of potential projects, and if so would the Task Force like to suggest a one for a grant application. The exact deadline has not been announced, but Jack mentioned in the past it has been in April.

There was a positive discussion among the Task Force about getting something together to submit in April. Derek mentioned the Colwell Trail, or the Tustin Park area. Others suggested the Curtain Call project at PPG Paints Arena. Derek asked Jack about the amount of money the proposal could be for, Jack was not sure of the exact amount, in the past he said there has been planning money involved, and it comes with a match component. Joe suggests that another meeting should occur offline with interested Task Force members to further discuss potential projects. Members agreed, and interested members can get in touch with Terri Baltimore to participate in the meeting.

#### **Action Items Updates:**

*Request to NRG for presentation* – Mary Ellen advised that she had made that outreach and that NRG presented at this meeting.

*Armstrong Tunnel project* - Mary Ellen said the county will be doing a presentation of the tunnel at the March Uptown Task Force meeting and that there would be further discussion about the letter/issue process later on this agenda.

#### **Sub-committee Updates:**

*Development Sub-Committee* - They are working on creating a document to share that will allow input on priorities and strategies for projects for the sub-committee. They did also mention they were concerned about who should actually be on the Sub-Committee. They have been approached by some developers who want to be on the committee, but Kristen and Tad said they did not want them on the committee due to conflict of interest.

Mobility Sub-Committee is currently working on scheduling their meeting. They are working on a Slow Streets mini grant program, as well as a survey that will go out to Uptown residents.

Community Sub-Committee - They said that the Tustin playground site (the top lots) has definitely been chosen for the project of the Uptown Public Art program and will be the focus of the first RFP. They will be working finalizing the RFP and are planning to hold an info session for artists before the RFP is posted.

Infrastructure Sub-Committee will be meeting mid to late February. They are prioritizing projects and have upcoming meetings with stakeholders. There is an opportunity to collaborate on a new project to add electric car charging stations to the streets and on various sites in Uptown.

Update on Dinwiddie Charrette - All the charrette designs were presented at the open house along with a design that attempted to capture common elements. DCP and the URA received good input from all those present. DCP staff are going to meet with the URA tomorrow to begin writing the RFP for this project. At this time, there is no timeline for the URA's RFP, but it is a high priority.

#### **New Business:**

Protocol for Issues/Task Force letters - At the December meeting, it was decided that the Uptown Task Force was going to draft a letter about the Armstrong Tunnel Construction to the county, which led to deeper discussions about process in regard to issues. Mary Ellen shared that she thought it was best to open the floor for discussion about comfort levels, confidentiality among the committee, how we share information with other entities, etc.

Derek mentioned that the discussion among the City departments on the Task Force was a concern about getting the tone of the letter correct given the need for all public agencies to work together on a daily basis. The edits/changes the City requested enabled them to support the letter. Derek added that the Task Force should think about how draft letters are handled. If they are shared at an early stage it potentially could look like organizations have signed on to what the letter is saying when they haven't done so yet.

John Wilds then mentioned that the Oakland Task Force operates in such a way that if there is a single objection, then the letter does not go out. But, if there is an abstention, the letter still goes out, just without that name. Anthony Boule then suggested that the letter should be confidential until it is finalized, and expressed some concerns about sharing sensitive issues/letters with outside entities/organizations.

Mary Ellen suggested that future protocol should include that any letters should be finalized/approved and the Task Force members should agree to sharing them with external entities/individuals before any individual Task Force members shares them. And, until the letter is finalized, it should remain confidential moving forward. Task Force members agreed.

#### **Member Updates:**

Due to time constraints, member updates were tabled. Jeanne asked everyone to check out the new Uptown Partners website at [uptownpartners.org](http://uptownpartners.org).

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

Next Uptown Task Force - 8 a.m. on Thursday, March 1 at Avenu, at Paramount Film Exchange Building.