

**Uptown Task Force Meeting Minutes**  
**December 7, 2017**  
**8:00 – 10:00 a.m.**  
**Center for Hearing and Deaf Services, 1945 Fifth Avenue**

**Present:** Roger Altmeyer (UPMC-Mercy), Terri Baltimore (Hill House Association), Derek Dauphin (DCP), Ruari Egan (PWSA), Yesica Guerra (Public Art and Civic Design Division, DCP), Tad Hale (Avenu), Amy Hart (Center for Hearing & Deaf Services Inc.), Josh Henschel (Uptown resident), Joan Hilton (Duquesne University), Laurel Johnson (Uptown resident), Debbi Linhart (Bethlehem Haven), Angie Martinez (Dept. of Mobility and Infrastructure), Breen Masciotra (Port Authority), Jeanne McNutt (Uptown Partners), Raymond Morrison (Uptown resident), Mary Ellen Solomon (Duquesne University), Joe Wingenfeld (Uptown Partners), John Wilds (Pitt)

**Regrets:** Anthony Boule (Parking Authority), Gary Desjardins (PPG Paints Arena), Rich DiClaudio (Energy Innovation Center), Craig Dunham (representing Pittsburgh Penguins), NAME(Duquesne Light), Bill Generett (Duquesne University), Court Gould (Sustainable Pittsburgh), John Kraemer (NRG), Brian Kurtz (PDP), Simona Loberant (SEA), Linda Metropulos (ACTION – Housing), Justin Miller (City’s Mobility and Infrastructure), Leslie Montgomery (Pittsburgh Blind and Vision Services), James Myers (Urban Innovation21), Kris Osterwood (GBA), Tim Parks (Life’s Work), Janet Strahosky (Bethlehem Haven), Wanda Wilson (OPDC)

**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), representative of CORE Realty

**Call to Order/Welcome:** Mary Ellen Solomon convened the meeting at 8:09 a.m. with a welcome and an introduction of all the present Task Force members. She then thanked the Center for Deaf and Hearing Services for hosting the meeting and asked Amy Hart to give an overview of the organization. Amy welcomed everyone and then discussed that the Center is the only non-profit in Western Pennsylvania that helps deaf, deaf and blind, hard of hearing, or any communication challenged people. They offer a wide variety of support to these people, including but not limited to, sign language interpretation programs, deaf youth and adult educational programs, and audiology programming. They also provide device and resource materials as they can. They are hoping to start a program to make hearing aids more affordable to those who need them, and are currently working on educating young people on how to protect their hearing.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mary Ellen motioned to have the previous meetings minutes approved that were previously distributed to all members via email. Jeanne McNutt mentioned two changes. Mary Ellen said that she would make those changes and redistribute the previous minutes to the group via email. This motion was left open.

**Agenda Discussions:**

**Presentations:**

1. **City Uptown Public Art Program** - Yesica Guerra from the Office of Public Art and Civic Design and Derek Dauphin of City Planning prepared a presentation about ideas for early implementation public art programming in Uptown.

The City has \$100,000 set aside for the public art program. There will be two \$25,000 projects and one

\$50,000 project, totaling 3 projects, and the program will be looking for match funding for the last two projects.

Yesica provided some context for the projects: They should not simply be a piece of artwork, but also a tool for learning, bringing awareness, and for getting the community more involved. They propose several different locations that the program is considering with the hopes that there is a geographical distribution, that they will be different types of art, and that both residential and commercial locations can be used.

*Tustin Park* - This project would be an object or experience-based, and it would combine art with education and playfulness. The hope would be to continue the momentum of work that has been put into this park already, and it would allow residents to continue to help improve it. Derek asked the Task Force if there were other features of this park that would allow for this project to be successful. Joe Wingefeld asked if Tustin Park had been decided on as the first site for this project? Derek said no, these are just the potential sites. Joe mentioned that he thought it had been decided that the sites would be decided through a sub-committee. Jeanne said that that has not been discussed, but a lot of work has already been done in the park, including a proposed new basketball court that is in the City's budget, as well as future construction across the street by ACTION-Housing. Jeanne mentioned that she is not sure of this as a site because of that construction or because of the City's future plans. Derek said the City will present 4 potential sites for 3 projects and hopefully get feedback from the Task Force in regard to location, the art itself, its connection to the community, etc. They would like to go through all of these sites and then see if the Task Force thinks there might be better ones that they missed. Moving on, Derek concluded that for Tustin Park, the big question is what is the plan for the rest of the park.

*DPW Workshop Area* - DPW will be moving the current activities of the building elsewhere due to surplus, so there is a potential to make this a new development site as well. The URA might release an RFP for their site on the west side of Dinwiddie first, and then a second RFP would be submitted for this site, but in the meantime, there is the potential to make this site, specifically the parking lot, an interactive art project. There is a wall that could have art displayed on it, or projected, or it could become an event or green space. It is adjacent to a residential area so there is an opportunity to get residents involved, and it could be a great artistic connector into Uptown.

*Forbes and Stevenson* (at fire station) - There is a bike share and bus stop already in place, and it is adjacent to Duquesne University, LifesWork, and UPMC-Mercy. Derek says that this arguably could be the easiest site to begin with if it is chosen. He then asks for any feedback. Mary Ellen mentioned that this fire station is one of the busiest stations in the city, so the fire trucks always backing into the station is something to think about. There were no further comments.

*Tustin Street* - This site could be created as a walk-through interactive experience as the art would activate the alley. There would be lighting for placemaking and safety installed, including on the curbs of the sidewalk. There are people who live on this street, so they would need to be readily involved as well as the community. This street is a key connector from the residential areas to the university and employment areas as well as to Tustin Park and is used by many pedestrians.

After presenting all four of these sites, Yesica and Derek asked for feedback from the committee. Jeanne mentioned that maybe a project should be a continuation of the branding of Uptown her organization has

already begun which could include signs like the mosaic tile sign that is already in place. Derek commented that these projects need to be site specific, but perhaps a “many sites” approach could be pursued that would allow for many smaller pieces of art over a larger area. A question was asked if funding was in place for the upkeep of the projects and both Yesica and Derek mentioned that it would be in place, yes. Debbi Linhart then asked about the standards that are to be set for the projects, which led Derek into discussing the goals of the RFP.

The five goals of each project will be equity, health, identity, connectivity, and performance. Derek asked how many of these aspects should an artist be asked to link together with their projects, and should any of them be prioritized over others. Joe mentioned that equity should be a baseline for all projects, and then the artist should link to other goals. Derek then asked what the committee thought about evaluation criteria for proposals? It was mentioned that equity should not only be a goal, but part of the evaluation criteria. Other aspects that should be considered include whether the project is educational, promotes leadership opportunities for residents, and builds capacity in the community.

Finally, Yesica and Derek discussed the timeline of the projects. The RFP is estimated to be submitted at the end of January of 2018. The project awards are estimated to go out in April, with the first project then starting in May. They are estimating about 6 months per project, and the next project will start before the previous one finishes. Before the RFP is finalized, Yesica and Derek offered to meet with the Community Subcommittee, as well as again with the Uptown Task Force for final feedback.

## **2. UPMC-Mercy Institutional Master Plan**

Roger Altmeyer provided a PowerPoint presentation that included a full rendering design of the newly announced the UPMC Vision and Rehabilitation Hospital at the UPMC-Mercy campus. In the 2012 Master Plan released by UPMC, originally, a new garage was planned for this area. A revision to the Master Plan has been made to account for the Vision Institution. The new hospital will be approximately 300,000 sq. ft. and will fulfill Certified LEED standards. The hospital will run research and clinical space. There is opportunity for potential expansion; but this would be the subject of a future change to Mercy’s Institutional Master Plan and community engagement.

On the first floor of the new hospital, there will be clinical space and indoor parking. On the second and third floors, there will be more clinical space. On the fourth floor, there will be mechanical space, conference room space, and an outdoor space for facility members. UPMC expects about 400 – 500 employees working in this new hospital, about half of those being new employees, and the new garage will have about 1100 spaces. At this time, it is unclear if the garage will be available to community members. Finally, it will feature an interactive staircase that connects all the floors, and allows researchers to meet freely and conveniently.

This new hospital will be connected via a new bridge to the current UPMC Mercy. The traffic pattern will change somewhat as the new plans will allow for a direct turn for ambulances onto Marion St. and go right into the ER area.

If all plans are approved, UPMC is looking at a late 2018 groundbreaking, with occupancy occurring in 2022. Roger then asked if there were any questions from the committee. Angie Martinez asked if a transportation study had been done to see how traffic, especially in Uptown, would change. Roger said that UPMC is looking into that and will release the information when ready. Angelica Ciranni from the

Green Building Alliance asked about the sustainability of the building. Roger said it would be LEED certified but not to a gold or platinum level. Angelica also asked if the garage would be built to a sustainability standard and Roger said they were not sure at this point.

#### **Update on Action Items:**

Dinwiddie design charrette – Derek shared that the charrette was very successful, with about 60 people attending. Next steps include surveying the participants to gain feedback on how to improve future charrettes and preparing open house materials for the community. The open house is tentatively planned for the end of January, which would be the last event to receive public feedback on the project before the URA released their RFP for development.

EID Plan – Derek said the plan was adopted with minor changes in September, with changes requested by the Planning Commission. Those changes have been made and the zoning will go into effect next week. There would then be a press release announcing the plan adoption the following week.

Uptowntaskforce.org – Mary Ellen said she did not receive any feedback from any of the committee members and thanked Jeanne for the photos for the site. She added the site is modeled after the Oakland Task Force website, and most importantly, the site is transparent to everything related to the Uptown Task Force. With this in mind, the meeting minutes will be posted, but are not up yet. There was some discussion from Jeanne about thoughts on the site and she requested an offline meeting with Mary Ellen. Joe asked if sub-committee meeting minutes could also be posted. After discussion it was decided they should be posted after the same review and approval process as the Task Force meeting minutes will also be posted.

#### **Subcommittee Reports:**

##### **New Business:**

Armstrong Tunnel Improvement Project - Derek said that Justin Miller attended the public meeting on this project and shared that the design did not seem to reflect the EID plan, especially concerning bicycle and pedestrian improvements/infrastructure. After some discussion it was decided that the Task Force should consider writing a letter of concern. As Mary Ellen also attended the public meeting she said she could produce an initial draft for circulation to Task Force members for review.

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

**Public art projects** – Yesica/Derek to meet with Community Subcommittee before finalizing RFP

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

**Letter of concern to County** – Mary Ellen to draft on behalf of Task Force members for review/approval

##### **Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

##### **Next meeting:**

The next meeting will be January 4, 2018, at LifesWork at 8 a.m.