

Uptown Task Force Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 2, 2019

8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Uptown Partners, NeighborWorks Office, 710 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1000

Present: Roger Altmeyer (UPMC), Gwen Bolden (PPAP), Dana Braitman (DOMI), Derek Dauphin (DCP), Gary Desjardins (PPG Paints Arena), Ruari Egan (PWSA), Bill Generett (Duquesne University), Krysia Kubiak (Duquesne Light), Debbi Linhart (Bethlehem Haven), Simona Loberant (SEA), Laya Matthews (URA), Breen Masciotra (Port Authority), Tracey McCants Lewis (Pittsburgh Penguins), Jeanne McNutt (Uptown Partners), Tim Parks (LifesWork of Western PA), Mary Ellen Solomon (Duquesne University), Joe Wingenfeld (Uptown Partners), Marlene Williams (Uptown Partners), Caroline Woodward (Bethlehem Haven), Joan Hayek (Duquesne University)

Guests: Kevin Acklin, Pittsburgh Penguins

Call to Order/Welcome: Mary Ellen Solomon convened the meeting at 8:08 a.m. with an introduction of all present Task Force members.

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. The motion was approved with no dissent.

Agenda Discussions:

(1) Lower Hill Redevelopment Update: Kevin Acklin of the Pittsburgh Penguins began his presentation by giving an overview of all of the partners and consultants working on this redevelopment project that is occurring in the Lower Hill. The lead developer of the project will be InterGen. The lead architect will be Gensler, and the three main contractors will be PJ Dick, Massaro and Mascaro. All of these partners, including the Pittsburgh Penguins, want to be extremely mindful of the history of the Lower Hill District while this project is coming together. They have done a lot of research to see what markets are needed in the area, as well as what worked for other cities, in order to conjure the current project projections. The vision is for the Lower Hill to become the connection of Downtown, Uptown and the Hill District, all while paying homage to the neighborhood and having a positive impact on the area. If all goes according to plan, they will break ground by the end of 2019.

The project will take place within the space of 28 acres and has been broken up into development blocks. Block A and B are located across from City View and will include housing. As of right now, the plan includes 288 units of housing with 20% of the units falling under the affordable housing label. Block C is still open for ideas, while Block E now includes a music venue with a parking garage located underneath that will have about 800 to 900 parking spots. Block F will consist of a business tower, potentially reaching up to 42 floors, and could have a hotel adjacent to it. In between these development blocks will be two parks, culminating in over one acre of green space, which will be used to connect the project from the Crawford Square townhouses all the way down and across the Crosstown Boulevard.

Included in this redevelopment plan are many action items around community collaboration and workforce development. The plan will focus on areas like job creation, using women and minority owned businesses, inclusionary housing, wealth building, and coordinated community development strategies. There will also be access to different trades through trainings, and the developers plan on doing some subcontracting with local businesses. Finally, the Pittsburgh Penguins plan to give the \$25-million-dollar tax abatement right back to the Hill District to be continually reinvested into the neighborhood.

Kevin completed his presentation by stating that the first community meeting in regard to this project will be held on May 15th at the Energy Innovation Center.

Some questions posed by Task Force members:

Is there a district energy plan? Coming soon, yes. There are plans to plug into the Clearway Energy Center, along with storm water mitigation plans with the PWSA. There have also been conversations with Duquesne Light around a microgrid and potentially a solar component as well.

What is the plan for parking? Outside consultants have been hired to look at this and they will be presenting options in about 6 weeks. There have already been several conversations with Duquesne University, UPMC, as well as the Port Authority on different ways that the parking problem in the area could be handled.

Is there a road closure plan? There isn't a plan yet as the traffic management study has not been seen, but they should know more soon.

Will there be preferential leasing to Hill District residents? That is not in the plan right now, no.

With no further questions, Mary Ellen thanked Kevin for his time.

(2) Uptown Partners Strategic Plan: Jeanne McNutt started her presentation by giving an overview of what Uptown Partners (UP) has been focused on as an organization for the last 9 years. Their primary focus has mainly been serving as a conduit of community information, supporting neighborhood development, reclaiming vacant or blighted properties, encouraging mixed income housing, integrating the arts, and providing a clean environment to the Uptown neighborhood. Then, when the EcoInnovation District Planning began, a survey went out asking how Uptown could be improved. The top answers included public safety, more stores and restaurants, improved appearances and public spaces, and new affordable housing options. After the EcoInnovation District Plan was complete, it included 88 implementation recommendations, 14 of which Uptown Partners was named the lead on, while also facilitating 64 others. For this reason, as well as due to UP's heavy involvement in 6 city led EID projects, as well as other development projects including the old Burrell Building, the Board thought it was time to come up with a new strategic plan.

The strategic planning process included stakeholder interviews, neighborhood tours, and review of the staff and their work. The key findings of this process were as follows:

- UP cannot execute properly with their current capacity
- Ongoing staff efforts were not included in the EID plan
- Adding a Neighborhood Advocate is necessary to diversify staff
- UP is too reliant on foundation funding and needs to focus on revenue diversification
- The UP Board needs to be more active
- UP displays characteristics of multiple "life cycle phases"

From these key findings, a one-year plan was set with multiple priorities and other impacts such as prioritizing staff workload, determining where added capacity might be needed, effectively communicate EID plan goals, enhancing funding requests and amplifying community benefits through relationship success.

Discussion by Task Force members:

The Task Force members took a few minutes to discuss the presentation, agreeing that the “How to Better Uptown” survey should drive the conversation around where Uptown Partners goes from here. There was a mutual agreement that there is a lot of generalized work that UP does and UP should figure out what they need in order to accomplish this work and how to tackle it so that they don’t feel overwhelmed and under accomplished. There is a group of select Task Force members who will be meeting in the next few weeks to discuss how to have a facilitated conversation around the Task Force governance structure moving forward and how the needs of the neighborhood could be addressed while still implementing the plan. This conversation will also help UP as a work plan for the organization continues to come together, so the group agreed that it might be beneficial to have a few UP Board members present at that meeting so they can hear about all the work that is happening.

With no more questions, comments or discussion, Mary Ellen thanked Jeanne for her time.

(3) Community Sub-Committee Proposed Work Plan: Joe Wingenfeld, chair of the Community Sub-Committee, began his presentation by showing the revised purpose statement. The new statement reads as follows, “The purpose of the Uptown EcoInnovation District Community Sub-committee is to invest in existing residents, preserve affordable housing, promote diversity and an inclusive economy, build on Uptown’s existing character and identity, collaboratively tackle blight and improve community safety, expand institutional partnerships.”

The active members of the community sub-committee are currently Duquesne University, Conservation Consultants Inc., URA, City Planning, GBA, Uptown Partners, Hack PGH, and at least 5 active residents. Since November of 2017, the sub-committee has met 12 times and accomplished the following:

- Prioritize projects and initiatives (March, April, and May meetings in 2018)
- Review City-led art projects (February and July meetings in 2018)
- Present Duquesne University on Community Initiatives (June meeting in 2018)
- Review of ProjectConnect (August and October meetings in 2018)
- Establish metrics to track performance (November 2018 and January 2019 meetings)
- Finalized Community Sub-Committee Work Plan (February 2019)
- Held meeting focused on Community Programming (March 2019)

Joe then walked through some of the priorities of the sub-committee for the upcoming year, which fall under the categories of general; investing in existing residents and promoting affordability; community identity, programming and public art; clean, safe, and green; and partnerships. Each priority has a list of indicators set by the sub-committee, 26 in total. Finally, Joe finished by showing the group the calendar for the rest of the year which listed the topic for each month. The sub-committee meets the last Thursday of every month at 6pm at HackPGH and in May the group will be having a public art working session.

Sub-Committee Updates:

There were no sub-committee updates at this time.

Member Updates:

UPMC: UPMC Mercy Vision and Rehab Hospital construction is on-going; primarily bulk excavation. The new oxygen tank “farm” was installed during the weekend of April 13th-14th.

Uptown Partners: The Community Cleanup in partnership with Duquesne and Amplify Church on was held on April 13th. UP reviewed Epic Development's initial development for 1717 5th Avenue which included 46 residential units and 3,000 sq ft of commercial space. UP is attending the EcoInnovation District Incubator on April 25 through April 27. UP will also be a major participant in the Accelerating Investments in Healthy Communities, having recently attended a travel team meeting in Chicago and put together an agenda for the Home Team meeting on April 24th.

The Uptown Task Force members decided to change the date of the July meeting due to the holiday to July 10th from 8am – 10am. The meeting adjourned at 10:02 a.m.

Next Uptown Task Force Meeting - 8 a.m. on Thursday, June 6th at Duquesne University in the Africa Room, 3rd Floor, Student Union