

## **Uptown Task Force Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, July 2, 2020**

**8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

**Via Zoom – Virtual Meeting**

**Present via Zoom:** Dara Braitman (DOMI), Derek Dauphin (City Planning), Gary Desjardins (PPG Arena), Jamilah Ducar (University of Pittsburgh), Lilly Freedman (URA), Ben Grunauer (PWSA), Leonard Hammonds (Rep. Jake Wheatley's Office), Joan Hilton (Duquesne University), Tracey McCants Lewis (Pittsburgh Penguins), Simona Loberant (SEA), Sean Luther (InnovatePGH/Avenu), Mike Madden (InnovatePGH), Breen Masciotra (Port Authority), Christopher Roach (Uptown Partners Board), Kaylani Singh (InnovatePGH), Mary Ellen Solomon (Duquesne University), Joseph Wingenfeld (Uptown Partners), Marlene Williams (Uptown Partners), Caroline Woodward (Bethlehem Haven), Megan Zeigler (GBA)

**Call to Order/Welcome:** Mary Ellen Solomon convened the meeting via Zoom at 8:03 a.m. with an introduction of all present members.

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

### **Agenda Discussions:**

#### **(1) Member Updates – COVID 19:**

- **Duquesne University:** Duquesne will limit events, gatherings, and external visitors for the foreseeable future; therefore, Uptown Task Force meetings will be held via Zoom for the remainder of the year. The University is currently working on de-densifying the dorms, but is planning to have students on campus in August. The move-in schedule has been changed in order to spread out the arrival of students and their families. More details will be shared in August.
- **InnovatePGH/Avenu:** Kaylani Singh has returned to the InnovatePGH team as the Inclusive Innovation Manager. She will be supporting Mike Madden on Development Sub-Committee initiatives. Mike recently passed the EcoDistrict Accredited Professional certification test.
- **PPG Arena:** The arena continues to host events in the surrounding parking lots such as food bank distributions. Pittsburgh was not selected as one of the NHL's hub cities. There may be changes involving retail spaces. Currently scheduled events will be evaluated for postponements or cancellations pending COVID situation moving forward.
- **PWSA:** Most crews and contractors have resumed work in the field. Reopening of main office has been postponed and employees continue to work from home.
- **SEA:** Construction continues on the 579 CAP project with new sanitation and cleaning protocols in place.
- **University of Pittsburgh:** Pitt has created a website that discusses how the University is working to combat Coronavirus on campus and in the surrounding communities. The link is: <https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/>
- **UPMC:** The section of Van Braam Street between Locust Street and the Boulevard will be closed starting July 15<sup>th</sup> through September of 2021 for the construction of the new parking structure.
- **Uptown Partners:** They continue to explore different types of social distancing events. The opening day of the community garden went well, and the virtual pizza party was successful, connecting 45 families via Zoom. UP is currently looking to improve and enhance access to internet services for residents and is seeking partners to support those efforts. UP Board is close to announcing the new Executive Director.

(2) Update on Forbes Funds Grant Application: The main application is ready to be submitted by the Uptown Partners Board for the July 24<sup>th</sup> deadline.

(3) Priority Projects for Funding: Derek continues to explore details and have conversations to make final recommendations on priority projects for implementation. He will try to provide final recommendations at the August meeting.

(4) Presentation – Mobility Sub-Committee Annual Work Plan: Breen presented progress on 2019/20 Work Plan as well as the proposed plan for 2020/21.

Some key projects the Sub-committee will be focused on for the next year include serving as an advisory committee to the traffic study, and supporting/leveraging other projects, such as BRT and other development. Meeting agendas in the coming year will focus on pressing matters.

At the conclusion of the Work Plan presentation, members discussed the changes in public transportation use by residents due to the health crisis. Port Authority launched the [Room To Ride program](#) which allows riders to see how many riders are usually on buses at certain times, therefore allowing riders to plan accordingly based on the amount of people on a route. They are hoping this program makes patrons more comfortable taking public transportation during this pandemic.

(5) Adoption of Development Sub-Committee 2020 Work Plan: Mary Ellen asked for a motion to have the Development Sub-Committee 2020 Work Plan adopted that was previously presented at the June meeting and then distributed to all members via email for review. The motion was approved with no dissent.

(6) Adoption of Community Sub-Committee 2020 Work Plan: Uptown Partners asked to delay a motion to adopt the proposed work plan until an ED is hired and they can take a new look at community needs during the pandemic. The work plan will be revisited as soon as possible after the ED is on board.

#### **Sub-Committee Updates:**

- Infrastructure: The sub-committee did not meet this month. The July meeting will focus on letters of support for capital projects. The August meeting will include an update on the BRT as well as from PWSA.

Mary Ellen thanked the UTF for their time and efforts, and adjourned the meeting at 9:38am.

**Next Uptown Task Force Meeting** - 8 a.m. on Thursday, August 6th via Zoom.