

Uptown Task Force Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 1, 2020

8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Via Zoom

Present: Roger Altmeyer (UPMC), Derek Dauphin (City Planning), Gary Desjardins (PPG Arena), Lilly Freedman (URA), Amy Hart (CHDS), Joan Hilton (Duquesne University), Simona Loberant (SEA), Alyssa Lyon (GBA), Mike Madden (InnovatePGH), Breen Masciotra (Port Authority), Brittany McDonald (Uptown Partners), Kaylani Singh (InnovatePGH), Mary Ellen Solomon (Duquesne University), Paul Svoboda (Duquesne Light), Alex Toner (University of Pittsburgh), Marlene Williams (Uptown Partners), Caroline Woodward (Bethlehem Haven)

Call to Order/Welcome: Mary Ellen Solomon convened the meeting at 8:05 a.m. with an introduction of all present Task Force members.

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

Agenda Discussions:

(1) Member Updates re: COVID-19 Pandemic:

- **Duquesne Light:** There are still some customer assistance funds available for those having a hard time paying their bills.
- **Duquesne University:** COVID-19 mitigation efforts seem to be working well. The University continues to work with community partners to support them during this pandemic, as well as keeping the students and community members safe. All students will be remote after Thanksgiving through the winter break, and the University is currently finalizing the spring semester schedule. The UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse is set to be completed in January.
- **PPG Arena:** Yesterday it was announced that the arena has major plans to change many of their concessions, converting them to grab and go stations and touchless checkouts. There will also be changes to some of the retail stores, as well as the KidZone, adding additional grab and go food stations and drink markets, in an effort to prevent crowds from gathering when purchasing food and drinks. The Pens App will also be upgraded so that fans can order food ahead of time from their seats using their phones. The arena will also be creating a premium seating area in Section 120 by removing 200 seats and adding back only about 30 to 40 of those seats, while leaving space for standing room, concessions, etc. This area will be sponsored by Rivers Casino, and will be called the Rivers Sportsbook Deck. Betting, however, will only be allowed via phone. All of these renovations are set to be completed by December 1st. As far as the schedule of events goes, there isn't a sense as to when events will start back up again. The arena is also still waiting to hear from the NHL on their decision for the 2020 – 2021 season. The earliest the season will begin is January 2021.
- **University of Pittsburgh:** COVID-19 mitigation efforts seem to be working well on campus. The majority of positive cases have been off-campus. To help with this, Pitt is launching an off-campus ambassador program to help keep the University apprised of students not following COVID-19 safety protocols. Pitt's IMP is set to move forward with the Planning Commission in October. The Central Oakland housing plan on Atwood has been removed from the plan. Pitt's Civic Action Week launches next week.
- **Uptown Partners:** The Forbes Fund approved the \$20,000 grant application submitted by UP in partnership with the UTF. UP is working to schedule a follow-up meeting with the Forbes Fund to discuss the details. A sole donor has come forward to pay for the community Wi-Fi project with MetaMesh. UP's lease on the Fifth Avenue office space is up, so they are looking for a new space.

- **UPMC-Mercy:** The foundation work on the new hospital has been completed, and the parking deck is slowly coming out of the ground. There will be large steel tresses coming in the next six weeks that will mark the new entrance, and will start to give the building the look that was outlined in the renderings. There will be an event to mark the occasion. As soon as details are available, they will be passed along.

(2) Priority Projects for Funding: There still isn't a final decision on what project will receive the funding previously discussed over the last several months. Conversations continue around the different projects, and it is most likely that several projects will be able to benefit from the funds. Derek hopes to share a final decision announcement at the November meeting.

Sub-Committee Updates:

- Community: The sub-committee is still working on the new work-plan, hoping to center it more around food insecurity, financial literacy and mental health. The group has been in discussion with Amplify Church and Mayor Peduto's Office about a potential Narcan fair. They are also hoping to increase food drives in Uptown.
- Development: Kaylani gently reminded the group that their feedback is needed as soon as possible on the Fifth Avenue Business Corridor District document. There were no other updates.
- Infrastructure: The sub-committee's next meeting will be a round table discussion on district energy with the development sub-committee.
- Mobility: The contract for the parking and TDM study in Uptown has been executed.

Mary Ellen adjourned the meeting at 9:06 a.m.

Next Uptown Task Force Meeting - 8 a.m. on Thursday, November 5th via Zoom.