

Uptown Task Force Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 7, 2019

8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Duquesne University, Student Union, Africa Room

Present: Roger Altmeyer (UPMC), Dara Braitman (DOMI), Cory Day (UPMC), Derek Dauphin (City Planning), Simona Loberant (SEA), Breen Masciotra (Port Authority), Mike Madden (Pittsburgh Innovation District/Avenu), Sean Luther (InnovatePGH/Avenu), Alyssa Lyon (GBA), Laya Mathews (URA), Jeanne McNutt (Uptown Partners), Ray Morrison (UP Board/Resident), Sarah SanGiovanni (Uptown Partners), Kalyani Singh (InnovatePGH), Andreá Stanford (Allegheny County), Sarah Rizk (City Planning), Mary Ellen Solomon (Duquesne University), Paul Svoboda (Duquesne Light), Alex Toner (University of Pittsburgh), Marlene Williams (Uptown Partners), Joe Wingenfeld (Uptown Partners), Joan Hayek (Duquesne University)

Guests: Gene Boyer (HB Dev. Co.), Melissa Caruso (Michael Baker Intl.), Stephanie Joy Everett (City Planning), Justin Miller (Michael Baker Intl.), Derek Tillman (Bridging the Gap Development, LLC)

Call to Order/Welcome: Mary Ellen Solomon convened the meeting at 8:10 a.m. with an introduction of all present members.

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

Agenda Discussions:

(1) Fifth & Dinwiddie Development: Derrick Tillman of Bridging the Gap Development, LLC, and his team presented this important development project. A local team was chosen intentionally for this project as it is a significant set of parcels in Uptown and the goal of the project is to stick closely to the EcoInnovation District (EID) Plan. Bridging the Gap Development is a 100% minority and women business enterprise, and they're committed to promoting minority contractors as part of the development. There will be a significant commitment to workforce development in the neighborhood throughout the entire project, with apprenticeships being offered leading up to groundbreaking, as well as throughout construction.

Several project renderings were shared. The project has a theme of "live, work, play and ride" as it will include co-working spaces, apartment style living spaces, an outdoor urban living room, and a new BRT station. The renderings for the urban living room, or outdoor plaza area, showed multilevel spaces, green roof tops, a coffee shop, live music, and a potential outdoor art gallery. The developers want the overall feel to be very interactive and very community centered.

The project will include 167 apartment units that will be either a microunit, a 1 bedroom or 2 bedrooms. 80% of the units will be market rate while the remainder of the units will be affordable housing units listed at three different levels of AMI. In this building, there will be about 20,000 sq. ft. of commercial and retail space, which also includes a rooftop space and a basement area.

Across the street, the developers are proposing to double the square footage of the current building, making it around 40,000 sq. ft. which will be used for a number of different things such as commercial space, office space and retail space.

Overall, the investment in this project will be \$51 million dollars, with about \$40 million of that going into the housing site, and about \$10 million going into the other site.

Some questions posed by the Task Force members:

What is the timeline of the project? For the housing site, the team is hoping to break ground in late July/early August of 2020. They are already actively engaged in the community engagement portion of the project. They are also well into the submission process for funding from several different sources. The east site will have a different timeline due to the different funding sources that will be used, as well as the amount of stuff that needs to be removed from the building before the sale has closed.

How are feedback and retail ideas being gathered? The team is very open to any feedback and any ideas but there isn't a system in place yet. Hopefully the Uptown Task Force can provide guidance on how to set this up.

Is there going to be a playground? The team wants to create a play space but is not sure of the details yet.

Will there be parking? Yes, there will be about 2 and ½ floors of parking that will not be able to be seen from the street. The actual number of spaces is still in flux, and it will be open to anyone via a lease program.

Will there be added safety features? Yes, there will be a lot of added lighting, as well as an actual shelter for the bus stop with a display of real-time arrivals of the buses.

(2) Registered Community Organizations: As requested by the UTF, Derek Dauphin and Stephanie Joy Everett presented a background/primer on the development and implementation of City Planning's RCO program.

The purpose of registered community organizations (RCOs) is to incorporate community organizations into City Planning's formal processes which include current development and long-term planning. The definition of an RCO is just a formal status designation to a community organization that is issue-based or geographic-based. Some of the requirements for a RCO include 501c3 status, adopted by laws, a designated boundary, a conflict of interest policy, a purpose or mission statement, a transparent board selection process, a written communications strategy, and regular public meetings.

The benefits of becoming an RCO include the potential to initiate a neighborhood planning process with the City that would be adoptable by the City's Planning Commission if it follows City standards, and the requirement for a Development Activities Meeting in which the applicant and the RCO work together to hold a public meeting around a development project if it meets certain thresholds.

Some questions posed by the Task Force members:

There were questions about what the process would be like should Uptown Partners desire to move forward with its RCO application and how it would work with Uptown having two RCOs (Hill District CDC being the other). Derek and Stephanie Joy explained that neighborhoods can have more than one RCO and that in those cases City Planning staff would work to schedule community meetings with all designated RCOs, when appropriate. It would also be possible for an organizational like the UTF to become the RCO if it was sponsored by a nonprofit like Uptown Partners. City Planning is hearing from groups like this currently.

The group discussed that it was good to have this information in order to help guide the facilitated governance discussion. It was also helpful to know more so that the group can help Uptown Partners decide if it makes sense for them to become an RCO. Uptown Partners will be meeting with the Hill CDC to get a sense of their future developments, which will give them a better idea if they need to apply to become an RCO.

(3) Facilitated Governance Discussion Update: Mary Ellen, Jeanne and Joe all attended the Collective Impact Forum which provided a lot of helpful insight into this discussion. One of the main factors that came out of that forum was that in order to really move forward, staff and resources are needed. This group is certainly already doing collective impact, but it could be doing a lot more. A big part of this process that will be helpful in moving forward is that the chairs of the sub-committees will be meeting with the Uptown Partners' Board to discuss the roles and goals of the UTF sub-committees, if or how Uptown Partners' strategic priorities align with the implementation of the EID Plan, and possible new backbone models that can advance the Plan.

Sub-Committee Updates:

Community:

The October meeting was around the land trust model. There were two different presenters, and the group will be continuing the conversation in November.

Development

Dev Myer presented at the last meeting around different real estate in the area. The agenda for the November meeting will be sent out shortly.

Infrastructure:

The October meeting was around the implementation of the Blvd of the Allies project as well as tree planting.

Mobility:

The October meeting centered on BRT updates.

Member Updates:

There were no member updates at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 a.m.

Next Uptown Task Force Meeting - 8 a.m. on Thursday, December 5th at Duquesne University, Student Union, Africa Room