



Department of Planning Meeting Report

Subject: State Center Alliance Meeting

Date: ~~May 24~~ November 9th, 2006

Location: Union Baptist Church

Participants: Representatives of the Alliance's various neighborhoods: ~~(Upton, McCulloh Homes, Bolton Hill, Seton Hill, Mount Vernon, Madison Park, Charles North), Charlie Duff (Midtown Dev. Corp), Representatives of surrounding institutions, Maryland General Hospital, Maryland Department of General Services, MDOT, Maryland Department of Disability, Fran Allen (Honorable Elijah Cummings's Office), Douglass Memorial Community Church, Development Team (SBER and Partners), Wanda Watts, Office of City Council President Sheila Dixon, Chris Shea, Deputy Commissioner, HCD, Marty Baker June Johnson and Arlene McCain (both from McCulloh Homes), Thomas Curtis (MD Department of Disabilities), Rev. Al Hathaway (Union Baptist), Harold Young (McCulloh Homes), Henri Daniels (Midtown Chair), Richard Henderson (MVBA), Mark Henderson (MVBA), Connie Lieder (Bolton Hill), Sharon Grinnell (Doracon), Dominic Wiker (SBER), Marcia Hart (Bolton Hill), Yolanda Takesian (Bolton Hill), Randy Anderson (Madison Park), Keith Hobbs (Maryland General), Nelson Reichart (DGS), Marty Baker, and Theo Ngongang (both from City Planning)~~

Reporting: Theo Ngongang

Copies: Director Rolley, ~~Gary Cole~~ Bijan Yarjani, Division Chief

Purpose:

Regular ~~biweekly~~ monthly meeting of the Alliance, ~~Presentation of the next planning phases by the Development Team (SBER and Partners)~~

Issues:

~~After the usual introductions, Rev Al Hathaway led the Alliance into a prayer.~~

~~Theo Ngongang (Planning) highlighted the main point on the agenda: Report from the Development Team~~

~~Sharon Grinnell (Doracon) reported that there was still no binding agreement signed between the Development Team and MDOT. Current status of the project is same as stated in last meeting's minutes (October)~~

~~Dominic Wiker (SBER) presented the summary of the Development Team's series of interviews with Neighborhoods Associations (document previously distributed to the Alliance).~~

~~Dominic also mentioned that the Development Team was still conducting due diligence work in the area (information gathering such as environmental study, infrastructure assessment...) and was also interviewing stakeholders institutions in the area, such as Maryland General Hospital.~~

~~Q&A session followed the presentation.~~

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- A question was raised about the definition of moderate density. The Development Team answer was “no more than 6 story-buildings”.
- A question about anticipation of potential changes in the planning process due to the past mid-term elections was asked: The Development Team said that they do not anticipate any change.
- How would the design of the project interface with the current residents? The Development Team said that they have no plans yet and that the MDOT strategic document is the only document that speaks to the design intent of the project.
- Marcia Hart (Bolton Hill) stated that the Alliance does not “trust” that strategic document, since it was compiled with little community involvement.
- Sharon Grinnell stated that the Planning Process will actively involve the Alliance (surrounding communities)
- Nelson Reichart mentioned the history of some “old” drawings/plans that show the evolution of the development of the State Center site, and suggested that those plans might be revisited.
- Rev. Hathaway stated that his understanding of the planning process as explained to the Alliance by MDOT, did include a strong community participation.
- Sharon Grinnell stressed that the Development Team clearly understands that the project’s importance extends beyond the 25 acres of land owned by MDOT.
- Yolanda Takesian (Bolton Hill) said that the Alliance would like to “own” the plan.
- Harold Young (McCulloh Homes) echoed Yolanda’s point.
- Nelson Reichart (DGS) stressed the due diligence work that started

Meeting was adjourned after a prayer led by Rev. Hathaway.

-Next meeting ~~is~~ has been tentatively scheduled for Thursday January 11th, 2007 at 5:30 at same location, Union Baptist Church ~~for September 13, at 5:30pm at Union Baptist Church~~

- Three main items were on the agenda:

- Discussion about the formal structure of the Alliance
- Development Team Presentation
- Overview of the Alliance’s next steps and highlight of the next meeting

Note: Theo Ngongang of the Baltimore City Department of Planning acted as facilitator for this meeting, as had been discussed in the previous meeting. The change in facilitator was effected at the request of the group and was deemed more appropriate in shifting from the RFQ process to the development planning phase (in which it was felt that the State has a more vested interest).

~~Formal structure of the Alliance: After a brief discussion, decision was made to postpone this item to the next meeting, so that more time could be given to the Development Team presentation. In preparation to that discussion, Dr. Gary Rodwell will send to the group a synopsis of the meeting that took place the day before with Mr. Irvin Henderson, the President of the National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC). An electronic discussion should follow among the group and the conversation will resume at the next meeting.~~

~~On the issue of the status of the McCulloh Homes vis à vis of the State Center project, (issue raised by the Madison Park representative), Chris Shea responded and made it clear that the~~

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redevelopment of the McCulloh Homes was not on the table for now. He noted that HCD will support the McCulloh Homes residents in their effort to see improvements in their apartments. Chris Shea also added that there is no public money available at this time for McCulloh homes, which is among the best maintained public housing projects in the area.

On the issue of public outreach, it was mentioned that all elected officials with districts in the vicinity of the State Center project have been invited in the past to the Alliance meetings. Some have showed up occasionally and/or sent representatives but Planning agreed to go back to all of them and offer a standing invitation.

Development Team Presentation:

Caroline Moore, SBER, introduced her team and described the roles and responsibilities of each member:

- SBER and Doracon will focus on mixed-use, retail, for-sale housing, site infrastructure and due diligence duties
- McCormack/Baron/Salazar will focus on mixed-income housing
- Urban Strategies will lead the community/stakeholders' outreach

The development team reported on the International Council of Shopping Centers conference in Las Vegas where the full development team met with the Governor of Maryland. The Governor endorsed the panel selection and encouraged the development team to move forward with the project (State Center)

The development team explained that they are entering a 120-day non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with MDOT and that the Interim Development agreement (12 months) will include the development of a planning process and appropriate milestones. In response to questions from the group, it was clarified that the 120-day period was considered to commence in May, with an expected end date of late September/early October.

Susan Glassman from Urban Strategies presented the community outreach planning process and requested that each community group select a representative through which small meetings will be scheduled. Jennifer Goold from SBER will coordinate interview scheduling during the month of June (on Wednesdays). A draft "Stakeholder Baseline" list was distributed, including names of community organizations, elected officials, faith-based organizations, government agencies and major institutions. The list was reviewed item by item with request for specific contact information and additions from the group. Members of the group made several additions to the list, and were asked to provide contact information to Jennifer Goold at the end of the meeting. It was agreed that neighborhood walking tours would also be organized.

Next Steps

- After the January meeting, the Alliance will meet on a need-basis only, until the project's momentum picks up again per discussion at previous meetings.

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~~Work on assigning a team/committee to develop some options for the structure of the Alliance.~~

~~Next meeting scheduled for June 6th, 2006 at 5:30 at Union Baptist Church~~

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