

June 17, 2014

Reinventing Oakland Mills Task Force Meeting

Attendees: Virginia Thomas, Bill McCormack, Reginald Avery, Tawania Williams, Paul Verchinski, Kay Wisniewski, Jonathan Edelson, John DiTomasso, Lee Skaggs, Sandy Cederbaum

Resident Nancy Smelzer: Addressed committee on the issue of lack of affordable single level villa housing in Columbia. Suggest we looking Dell Webb model found in “Sun Cities”.

Inner Arbor Trust, Merriweather Park at Symphony Woods

Michael McCall, President and CEO of Inner Arbor Trust

Acreage: Merriweather Post Pav. (MPP): 10 acres, Merriweather Park/Symphony Woods (MPSW) is 36 acres

Showed slides of the propose site features. County views this area (MPP and MPSW) as one neighborhood. Timeline attached. MPSW opportunity to change the identity of the area.

Showed slides of Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen and Millenium Park in Chicago.

Timeline letter attached.

May 10, 2013 Inner Arbor Trust formed. One goal to weave MPP and SW together to make a whole place. Used such words as “wonderous”, “sensuous park” to establish identity.

Unique features: Merriweather Horns Sculpture with daily audio flourish, Library Corner Boardwalk that ends at decking Lily Pads, Merry-go-round Playscape, Little Pocket Parks, Elevated Picnic Table, Caterpillar –Art of Bounds, 3 D green wall technology tube, Chrysalis, Butterfly Guest Services.

Regenerate the existing forest. 78% will be a “green growing park”, 22% paths and buildings, 94% will be pervious surfaces.

Q & A session

Q: How much money is in the Trust – is the only current money from taxes?

What has IA done to raise outside funds ie. HHC, arts groups.

Why does the trust refuse to have open meetings.

A: Described 501C3, audited statements and 990 to IRS and process for soliciting money.

Currently putting together fundraising strategy, Martin Knott is fundraising chair. Looking at Corporate sponsor opportunities; possible “sell” planks or something similar to selling bricks.

Not required to have open meetings, many meetings deal with confidential contract information and would need to be closed.

Comment: Loves design. Think about ways to echo IA design in the rest of Columbia.

Q: Has IA thought about concepts outside of MPSW? Many people don’t know Columbia is special, how do we make Columbia special again.

A: Current focus is MPSW but agrees with statement.

Q: We have not seen an overall cost estimate. What will all of it cost?

A: 20 mill is current estimate but Mr. McCall thinks it will be more and his estimation is 30 mill.

Q: Will all of the facilities be free?

A: Yes, with the exception of food and ticketed events at MPP. Idea is for MPP to be open to the public when not in use. This is not a formal agreement at this time.

Q: What was the process from Plan A: Symphony Woods to Plan B: MPSW?

Plan A, CA was to maintain ownership of the land, went through a charette process, Plan B did not go through charette process.

A: Ask CA – the IA Trust was charged to do exactly what they are doing. As per their charge at the end of April 2014 they submitted an SDP to the county as part of their agreement. There is a perpetual easement granted by CA.

Comment: There are a lot of problems with the village centers. MPSW could be the spark for redevelopment of the village centers.

Q: Love design. How do we get the current plan to move people, raise awareness.

A: IA Trust is a lean organization. Mr. McCall speaks wherever and whenever asked. It is going to “take a village” to make it happen.

Bill Santos, Former Wilde Lake Village Board Chair Village Center Redevelopment

Opportunity to learn from other villages.

In 2006 Giant closed in Wilde Lake. Faced with struggling village center and Interfaith center that wanted to add a 2nd building. WL board realized there had to be a better way to deal with this issue.

Kimco could not replace Giant. Approached WL with the idea to redevelop.

WL RAC was trying to figure out how to deal with new development, beyond their scope.

Established non-residential guidelines and architectural advisory committee.

See sec. 7.04 of the village covenants.

When redevelopment occurs the developer goes to the AC first and then to the county.

Caution to board not to comment during these meetings that anything is approved. The plans must go to the Architecture Committee. Board can give feedback then developer submits and application.

~ CB 29 – gives VB input into the county process.

- Village Board can write a community plan

- Community Plan is given to the Planning Board before public comment

- Establishing village center boundaries is very important

- Define building heights

- Define parking areas

- Give residential density numbers

VB will provide responses to justification criteria for new village centers

*refer to p. 251 of HC zoning regulations ~ refer to questions asked

~Talk to current property owners and get them involved in redevelopment

Q & A Session:

Q: Why did WL BD decide not to put low income housing as part of new residential housing at VC?

A: Idea of residential brought to them by Kimco. 250 units planned (scaled down from request of 500 – 700). Added residential to the village center brings consumers.

Wanted a mix of housing. Currently there are 2, 100% subsidized complexes within a 3 minute walk of the center and all others are condos. The new residential units would be rental apartments which is what is lacking and bring a housing mix.

Q: What stores are in the center?

A: Davids will expand, no supermarket. Some same merchants, restaurants, new restaurant at site of KFC, and a CVS. 1st floor retail in the residential building.

Q: What do we do w/current OM village center having multiple property owners and Cedar that doesn't want to invest.

A: Suggest how we might encourage some kind of asset improvements. Communicate with Cedar, get the conversation going.

Work on covenant enforcement in the village center ie. uniform lighting

Q: Boundaries

A: WL Boundaries include schools, interfaith center, CA properties.

All properties w/in boundaries are invited to meetings, they are part of the center and need to go through VC boundary planning.

WL got rezoned through major redevelopment process.

Q: Can village include apartment complexes within vc boundaries.

A: We are given the authority to make reasonable and compelling, justifiable decisions. Village boards get to make "first cut" at boundaries.

*Task Force – looking for answers to questions regarding amending CB29 w/regard to boundaries.

Q: What assistance did they get from County and CA?

A: Got county support from planners, Randy Clay and Bill Mackey, talked through process and CB 29; got assistance from HCC Mediation Center; CA – Jane Dembner was hired ½ way through process. CA provided data and demographics.

Entire process is more fine tuned now than when WL started.

OM should see what is going on in Long Reach.

Stevens Forest Road/Whiteacre Streetscape Improvements, Concept Plan Discussion (attached)

Bill McCormack gave overview of project and timeline.

Comments:

~Keep to the scope of plan which includes Stevens Forest Road

~Have county measure traffic volumes as SF is a primary feeder road

~Thunder Hill Road (between 175 and village center) – humps have slowed traffic but there is an increase in traffic. There is not one median on that stretch of roadway, no “parking lanes” and the width equals about 5 lanes of traffic. This is a main road into the village.

Request bike lanes, medians, make the entire stretch of Thunder Hill road more inviting, create a neighborhood feel.

Q: How do we get Thunder Hill Road addressed as part of this plan

A: Will work on a list of requests and include this as part of the conversation.

~County is only proposing ½ way on Whiteacre, stopping at Basket Ring with no study to continue Whiteacre to Thunder Hill Road and the remainder of SF Road.

~last year the county striped SF Road at Robert Oliver Place and striped a pedestrian crosswalk with idea that they would come back and put in medians. They are now coming through with promise. Also suggested that TH Road have medians.

~If there is money and the county wants to make improvements we welcome that as a new positive look for Oakland Mills, get the momentum going. Suggest that the county create a master streetscape plan for OM which includes Thunder Hill, SF, Whiteacre now and then create as funding is available.

~Roundabouts are a concern for pedestrians and bike traffic, both of which are encourage. Do not want a roundabout for those reasons.

~Scratch Whiteacre from plan, improve TH and SF

~TH/SF – increased traffic volumes, more speeders.

~TH/Whiteacre intersection – create a great visual streetscape that says “you are arriving at a special place”

Q: is it either chose Option 1 or Option 2 or lose it?

A: we don't know if there are other options.

Housing Committee Update

Bill McCormack:

Will discuss w/county 3 different development plans for Verona. Jervis Dorton will be working with Tom Carbo.

Discussed the CA Market Analysis and have no definitive answer about what the best housing mix is around a village center.

Discussing how HC and HUD can phase low income housing .

Education Committee Update

Jonathan Edelson and John DiTomasso

Meeting 2 weeks ago focused on draft objectives

Tonight's meeting agenda was scratched due to the transfer of Mr. Ron Morris, Principal of SFES to a promoted position next year. In attendance tonight were Mr. Morris, the new incoming principal Mr. Ernesto Diaz and Linda Wise, HCPSS Deputy Superintendent.

Discussed administrative changes and modes used to communicate this to the community.

Suggested a better system to communicate information. They understand that the community is engaged and want to have 2 way communication.

Wrap Up:

Ginny and Bill thanked everyone for attended and encourages involvement.

Asked for suggestions on guest speakers.

All information will be available on our web site.

Upcoming Meeting:

The July 1 meeting has been canceled.

July 15 – Meet with Mr. Geoff Glazer, VP Kimco