

November 3, 2014

Reinventing Oakland Mills Task Force Minutes

Attendees: Ginny Thomas, Bill McCormack, Kay Wisniewski, Tawania Williams, Jervis Dorton, Paul Verchinski, Janice Rattley, John DiTomasso, Sandy Cederbaum

Approximately 12 residents in attendance.

Opening Remarks

Mr. McCormack: Tonight's meeting will focus on updates for MP2/Community Plan

Ms. Thomas: Important to get this done in 4 sessions and sent it to the residents in draft form and then file with the County. Stressed that the task force has had many meetings thus far with 50 – 60 people in attendance. The task force's job is to produce a draft documents to the public by Jan. 2015 and then get the final versions of the MP2/CP to the County.

Ms. Wisniewski stated that they are looking at the 2007 Master Plan and new plan in segments. The new plan will give updates on the 3 levels of improvements outlined in the 2007 plan. Tonight's goal is to go over the accomplishments since 2007. At the 11/18 task force meeting the committee will talk about significant improvements, mixed use and full spectrum housing, a gateway connection to Downtown and high environmental standards.

Ms. Thomas, Ms. Wisniewski and Mr. McCormack referred to comments submitted to them by Charlie Baily. Mr. Baily's comments included the suggestion that the Multi-Use Path connect into the Blandiar Parking lot and continue on to Oakland Mills Road. He also commented that it should continue behind the Tarlton Townhome community. Mr. Verchinski did not agree with going behind Tarlton but agreed it should connect into the parking lot and to Oakland Mills Road. Issue is who is accountable to do the work? Task force agreed that ultimately the path should extend to Long Reach and Owen Brown.

Mr. Verchinski suggested we invite the new County Bike Coordinator to a meeting. Mr. Verchinski attended a recent meeting and informed the committee that the county will shortly submit their 20 year bicycle pathway plan to the County Council – this plan will be an integrated plan for the county.

Ms. Wisniewski will add additional wording and incorporate Mr. Baily and Mr. Verchinski's comments into the draft document regarding the pathway improvements. She will include text about getting appropriate parties involved (CA/Park & Rec/HHC).

Additional wording "implementing actions" will be incorporated into the draft.

Signage: It was noted that additional work is necessary for improved signage. The County has no consistent signage program. Signage improvements have fallen short of what was envisioned in the 2007 plan. We need a coordinated signage program for the village center.

Advertising: Noted that this was a very difficult area. Draft will have text indicating that readers should refer to “part 3” for a full discussion on how to improve advertising for the village center. Advertising and promoting the merchants remains a problem.

Mr. Stancil (OMIC) was in attendance and asked that the task force mention the regionally recognized Art Gallery in the Meeting House under number 4. It will be added.

Task force noted ongoing concerns with roadways and speeding. Ms. Rattley asked about street humps on Stevens Forest Road.

Mr. Verchinski asked that the draft include the improvements to the crosswalk at 175 and Thunder Hill Road (south), the median and crosswalk at Thunder Hill and Lightning View and the crosswalk in front of Thunder Hill ES.

Number 7 will better define the new streetscape going from Santiago to Whiteacre to Basket Ring.

Moderate Improvements

Will add additional text about various uses of the Youth and Teen Center at The Barn. Someone asked if the programs offered there serve our community optimally.

Number 2 – We will add text to refer to Part 3.

Discussion followed focusing on a reinvented Oakland Mills with any and all possibilities. Many scenarios do not include a food store.

Mr. Verchinski suggested adding URLs where appropriate in the MP2/CP.

History of the Barns:

Per CB 29 2009 we should include information of historical significance. Mr. Verchinski does not think the Barns should be designated for Historical Preservation because of the limitations that may come along with such a designation. Word historical will be deleted from draft and in instead working referring to the significance of the Barns will be included.

Mr. Dorton shared two different design drawings he created. The context behind each design was based of the recent CA/County Village Center Market Study.

Each of the designs included a pedestrian/bike bridge over Route 29 and also another bridge for vehicles. One concept drawing had some retail fronting Stevens Forest Road, a variety of high rise, townhome and apartment housing most luxury, upscale or above market, improved bicycle and foot path connections to go through the middle of the village center. The best housing asset in the village in this drawing was a portion of both Grande Point and Autumn Crest. Some housing suggested would be 50% for sale and 50% rentals. Upgraded ice rink and swimming pool included in the drawings.

One concept drawing had retail as a small main street concept with Thunder Hill Road extending in front of the Barns as a main street. Santiago would only extend from Stevens Forest to the parking lot entrance to the Meeting House and be closed beyond that point. The ice rink would be improved as would the swimming pool. The second drawing displayed would have townhomes at the location of the Stevens Forest Professional Building and professional office located where the Little Caesars/Sams Mart are located. The green space next to Sams, owned by Shadow Oaks, could be a 5 story hi rise. He incorporated 277 new residential unites in the heart of the village center. Mention was made of the idea of an outdoor ice rink (MP 2007). Mr. Dorton said these drawings could serve as a roadmap for potential development. He noted that all drawings were in the idea stage.

The Master Plan 2/Community Plan serves as an advisory document for the County. When a developer submits plans to the County the plans are reviewed for consistency. Important not to lock in anything but have a plan with ideas.

Ms. Thomas spoke to the need to finish the Master Plan 2/CP. We can't get locked into specific ideas and need all sorts of developers to look at Oakland Mills. She noted the need for an expanded sports complex and questioned how specific we want to get.

Mr. Dorton said issues of redevelopment will resolve over time with developers expressing interest in OM and that we need a starting point.

Mr. McCormack noted that we need a laundry list of ideas and the draft will show input from all meetings. We will need to include sever more pictures with all kinds of ideas.

Mr. Engelke said that we should collect images, take pictures as most people cannot understand the concept drawings.

Mr. Verchinski suggested a section in MP2/CP to include illustrative concept plans for moving forward.

Ms. Rattley suggested limiting the number of drawings. We should be prepared to identify and handle the downside of the plans. Need to evaluate the pros and cons.

Mr. Dorton said drawings need to be based on reality and that his two drawings are based on the recent market study.

Mr. DiTomasso asked Mr. Dorton if the 3rd interchange to downtown was an integral part of the plan and noted that it would be a big step for the county. He asked if the plans would be viable without the interchange (roadway)? Mr. Dorton does not think the plans would be viable without a new roadway.

Noted that going forward flexibility is key. Noted need to talk in terms of housing density.

Next meeting date: Tues. Nov. 18 at 7:00 p.m.
Sandy Cederbaum, minute taker