November 18, 2014 Reinventing Oakland Mills Task Force Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Virginia Thomas, William McCormack, Paul Verchinski, Kay Wisniewski, Jonathan Edelson, John DiTomasso, Tawania Williams, Jervis Dorton, Sandy Cederbaum

Residents: Approximately 25 resident/community attendees

Opening Remarks: Virginia Thomas, OM Board Co-Chair

Outreach to apartment complex management and residents is a vital part of the reinventing task. Presently trying to set up a meeting with Forest Ridge residents. Ms. Thomas, Mr. McCormack and Ms. Wisniewski met with the Regional Manager of Grande Point. Grande Point is a publically traded company and currently 90% occupied. Management mentioned more problems occurring since County purchased the Verona complex and noted that the same issues are also occurring in Long Reach in property located near another County owned complex.

Ms. Wisniewski congratulated Mr. McCormack on being named to the Kittleman Transition Team on Housing. Mr. McCormack's appointment is vital to Oakland Mills. Ms. Wisniewski informed the attendees that tonight's task force session is a worksession to bet the Master Plan 2/Community Plan (MP2/CP) drafted and get it out to the community for comment and a public meeting in January. Ms. Wisniewski referenced the Wilde Lake process which had community input, a questionnaire and comments. The revised WL plan incorporated the community comments. The plan will be refined as needed over time as will the OM plan due to constant change, changes in New Town (NT) zoning, Howard Plan 2030, growth projections. A plan can always be amended but needs to be drafted to comply with CB 29-2009).

Mr. Verchinski noted that the MP2/CP will be an advisory document and that the County has final say over development. We hope to get the OM plan to HC DPZ by February, 2015.

Ms. Thomas stated that after the MP2/CP is filed with the County we then could ask the County to declare the OM a redevelopment area which could include rezoning and funding opportunities. The County will tackle NT zoning and Plan Howard 2030. OM will aggressively pursue concepts of the MP2/CP. The board has and will continue to have meetings with developers. She stated that developers go where they are welcome.

A resident expressed concern for the village center if Food Lion is to leave.

Mr. Dorton mentioned p. 4 of the draft regarding Moderate Improvement with regard to traffic stating that Streetscape defines traffic flow and improves appearance.

Draft text pertaining to Significant Improvements: Bottom of page 6, need to claify the \$35 mil option for the bridge. Updates will be forthcoming on the multi-use path.

P. 7 B: very general with regard to parking and intention to include parking behind buildings and mention should be made of on and off street parking. Mr. Dorton will work with Ms. Wisniewski on wording pertaining to parking.

Discussion followed about increased density around the village center, what the increased density would look like and type of mixed use housing.

Environmental Standards – add bullets reglating to use of renewable energy such as solar and geothermal.

MP2/CP will incorporate some drawings and pictures from Master Plan 2007 and include new diagrams and pictures.

Section on Upgraded Housing – Ms. Wisniewski suggested we have a housing implementation plan similar to what was incorporated in the Hickory Ridge Master Plan.

Housing – Mr. Edelson objected to singling out the test scores or FARM rate of any school. Board members agreed. Mr. Edelson will re-write that portion of the draft.

Housing: Mr. Dorton stated that two of the paragraphs had nothing to do with upgraded housing. Noted the big selling points for Oakland Mills is the proximity to downtown (possibly with a public transit bridge and a vehicular bridge) and the Grande Point and Autumn Crest properties being in a prime location. Mr. Dorton will provide Ms. Wisniewski with new wording for this section.

Resident Abby Hendrix stated that we can't correlate high FARM with low test scores and can not prove any correlation. MP2/CP should state facts and not perception. She mentioned that four young families recently purchased homes on her street and because they grew up in or chose to raise their families in Oakland Mills.

Mr. McCormack mentioned what realtors say about Oakland Mills regarding why people don't move here. Another resident was concerned with vacant houses and neighbors who are moving out because of concerns with the community.

Ms. Hendrix noted that we want to improve our community for positive reasons and not because of someone's perceptions.

Mr. Dorton suggested a rewrite of the entire housing portion and said much of what was in the draft should not be in a vision for the village center. We need to separate what the County should do with regard to housing from what our vision of the village should be.

Ms. Thomas suggested that Mr. Dorton, Mr. McCormack, Ms. Wisniewski and anyone else on the Task Force interested should redraft the upscale housing section.

Noted that we should include an appendix with statistics pertaining to housing.

Ms. Thomas said that the schools are crucial to the plan and need a substantive place in the plan.

A resident noted that a positive aspect of our schools is that they are community schools. This is a benefit and that we should continue to maintain and build a sense of community. Mr. Edelson will rewrite the portion on schools/education.

Ms. Hendrix spoke to what is equitable is not always equal and that we need more resources put into our schools.

Mr. Verchinski asked that we strike the "adopted by the OMVB" from the Education goals and objectives page.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. Sandy Cederbaum, Minute Taker

