

MEETING MINUTES

date: April 14, 2016

time: 4:50-6:00 pm

location: Garfield Park Recreation Center

project no.: DCI #501-16

project name: Route 9 Corridor Master Plan

author: Caitlin O'Hara

attendees:

Cecily Bedwell, Design Collective, Inc (DCI)

Sheila Berkel, Rosehill Community Center

Dusty Blakey, Colonial School District

Diana Brown, NCC Department of Community Services

Andrew Emanuele (FHWA)

Lee Jarmon, Overview Gardens/Garfield Park Civic Association

Carol Kachadoorian Toole Design Group (TDG)

Rev. McDuffy, Eden Park Gardens Civic Association

Rob McLucas, NCC Police Department

Patti Miller, Nemours Health & Prevention Services

Caitlin O'Hara, Design Collective, Inc (DCI)

James Parker, Oakmont Civic Association

Kyron Robinson, ProRank Business Solutions

George Samuels, Rose Hill Gardens Civic Association

Jaywahn Saunders, Simonds Gardens Civic Association

Sandra Smithers, New Castle Prevention Coalition, Dunleith Civic Association

Bill Swiatek, Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO)

Wade West, ProRank Business Solutions

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING (ACM)

Route 9 Corridor Master Plan

Introductions:

Bill Swiatek welcomed the participants and asked for introductions.

Schedule Update:

Cecily Bedwell reviewed the consultant team and task (scope) responsibilities. She gave an overview of the tasks, including the formation of the Management Committee and preparation of the existing conditions analysis maps in Task 1; the Market Analysis in Task 2, and the

preparations for the visioning session at Workshop 1 in Task 3. She then noted the shift in date of Workshop 1 and gave an overview of the remaining schedule.

Market Analysis Update - RCLCO

Cecily Bedwell noted that, due to a family emergency, Lee Sobel was unable to attend. Cecily reviewed RCLCO's summary of the Market Analysis findings.

Questions/ Comments (for RCLCO's review):

- Question: How will the project affect business owners along the corridor?
 - Cecily Bedwell Response: The aim is to improve the environment for local businesses, concentrating focused attention on and incentives for the area to improve conditions (for example: streetscape improvements, gateway and wayfinding signage, etc.).
 - Additional response sent by RCLCO via email on 2016-04-22:
RCLCO would add two additional effects for business owners.
 1. Confidence in the jurisdiction is very important for business owners. If they know that there is a plan to help them implement their businesses through improvements in streetscapes, wayfinding etc., they will know that they are operating in a business environment that is supportive of their investment. In this way, the project is a signifier of this commitment and is a non-trivial action item signaling renewed and continuing support. The demand for their services is the most important, but that bump of investment from the local jurisdictions can be the difference in their economic models between success and failure.
 2. The geographic locations of these improvements signal where the best areas to locate their businesses and continued investment will be. For business owners, this signals where possible agglomerations of investment should be implemented. These agglomerations are important because dollars spent in close proximity to each other are more effective in spurring momentum in an area.
- Sandra Smithers Question: Hard to envision a 23-million dollar structure along Route 9 as it is today [referring to the new Innovation Library]. Is there a way to encourage adjacent properties to improve their facades and renovate their structures?
 - Cecily Bedwell Response: This is a great idea and something we should possibly include in our recommendations, as façade improvement grants for existing businesses.
- Comment: Interested in access to Healthcare (doctors, dentists, vision — other than the one walk-in clinic) and how this fits into RCLCO's findings.
 - Response sent by RCLCO via email on 2016-04-22:
 1. The only direct way in which access to healthcare fits into our findings is in relation to the senior housing opportunity. Seniors like to locate in close proximity to health services, so any potential senior housing could spur development of small healthcare uses like doctors' and dentists' offices. More broadly, the amount of these health services shows that there is limited demand currently because there are no constraints on these development typologies, so this should be an economic development priority for the city or county in terms of offering incentives or tax breaks to make these services profitable.

Transportation Analysis Update – Toole Design Group:

Carol Kachadoorian reviewed Toole Design Group's summary of the transportation existing conditions and objectives.

Questions:

- Question: Where is funding coming from for this project?
 - Bill Swiatek Response: The study was requested by New Castle County. WILMAPCO is funding the master plan.
- Question: Do you have a plan to use local workforce or resources to help with the implementation effort?
 - Bill Swiatek/Cecily Bedwell Response: That is a very good question and something we need to consider as we move forward with this effort and our recommendations.
- Patti Miller Question: Historically, did Route 9 have existing development or development goals that promoted or justified the width of its current design?
 - Carol Kachadoorian Response: No, we do not know the past reasoning for the design of Route 9. However, it is not unusual to forecast traffic models and scale roads to accommodate a projected growth and an increase in motorist use. This projected growth and increased volume of traffic may never have been realized.
 - Cecily Bedwell Response: Additionally, nationally, there has been a decline in motorist use/Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) recently.
[\[VMT per capita peaked in 2007. – Multiple sources: <http://www.peaktraffic.org/vmt.html>;](http://www.peaktraffic.org/vmt.html)
<http://www.ssti.us/2014/02/vmt-drops-ninth-year-dots-taking-notice/>;
<http://www.advisorperspectives.com/dshort/updates/DOE-Miles-Traveled.php>]
 - Response: However, VMT has been on the rise in New Castle County and is projected to continue rising here through 2040.
- Lee Jarmon Question: When was the last traffic calculation done?
 - Cecily Bedwell Response: To note, we do not have a Traffic Analysis as part of our scope, however, we believe the last data was from 2013 per the Task 1 maps ([we can confirm this information](#)).
- Question: What is the highest traffic volume along Route 9?
 - Carol Kachadoorian Response: Per the data available, 16,000 trips per day on average were calculated.

Planning Analysis Update – Design Collective, Inc.:

Cecily Bedwell reviewed a summary of the potential planning principles for the corridor.

Questions:

- Lee Jarmon Question: Is there anyone from the community on the Management Committee? There are at least 12 civic presidents along the corridor and there needs to be representation and transparency. What does the Advisory Committee think? As leaders we have a right to participate at the highest level and we need to be able to answer the community's questions accurately.
 - Bill Swiatek Response: Acknowledged the formal request for a response. Bill noted that the message will be relayed to the WILMAPCO Executive Director. Bill also noted that all meetings are open-door and that Meeting Notes are posted online.
[\[Following the meeting, Bill sent a response via email on 2016-04-22 stating, "After talking things over with several of you, including Mr. Jarmon, we think the best course is to simply join together the management and advisory committees. The management and advisory committees will be dissolved, and we will meet together as one large group moving forward. The new joint committee will be known as the "steering committee.""\]](#)
- Sandra Smithers Comment: Representation from the school district needs to be included as well. The perception is important, because you are dealing with a community that has been taken advantage of for years. There is naturally skepticism.

- Bill Swiatek Response: The Christiana School District was invited to the initial ACM meeting but could not attend. Mr Blakey was able to make it today.

Committee Updates

Bill Swiatek summarized the committee updates. Advisory Committee Additions include:

- DNREC
- Delaware River and Bay Authority

Key Stakeholder Meetings:

- Bill Swiatek discussed WILMAPCO's and DCI's meetings with County and State elected officials. Both conversations were positive. They have encouraged stakeholders to remain optimistic while addressing key issues and setting realistic goals and visions with the community. Expectations should be managed (do not overpromise).
- Bill Swiatek reached out to all of the church leaders. A formal meeting has been set for April 28th.

Blueprint Communities Update

Sandra Smithers summarized the goals of the initiative.

- The committee has been asked to determine/ define a project.
 - We want it to be sustainable and uplifting. It needs to generate revenue and provide jobs.
- The committee will be working with Franklin Credit Union.
- The committee has plans on coordinating efforts with the community to not overlap other initiatives.
- The overall process will last approximately 8 months.
- Sandra agreed to provide a update on this work at future meetings of the AC.

Bill Swiatek will continue to collaborate with the Blueprint Communities Committee.

Public Workshop #1 Overview:

Cecily Bedwell summarized location, schedule, approach, and outreach strategies.

Bill Swiatek requested comments regarding the Public Workshop layout/ schedule. The following suggestions were received:

- There was a recommendation to have two workshops occur prior to finalizing design decisions. The feedback from the first workshop would encourage more community members to attend a second workshop. A majority of attendees agreed.
- The public engagement process for the Library site included 3 separate events during the Fall. They were hosted on Monday and Tuesday nights and were very successful.
- The timeline (6:15-8:45pm) for the public workshop seems too long to convince families to come. Confirm that the times are accurately shown on the flyer before distribution.
 - Bill noted that the time on the flyer, 6:15pm — 8:30pm, is correct.
- It was suggested that an additional, separate workshop should be hosted at one of the schools to engage students to participate.

- WILMAPCO and the consultant team will discuss the feasibility and opportunity both internally and with the school district.
- The Boys and Girls Club has “walkers” that might be a good resource for the distribution of flyers and engaging young people.

Bill Swiatek asked everyone in attendance to fill-in the number of flyers needed for distribution.

- Recommendation to meet with civic associations and do neighborhood walk-throughs to distribute flyers.
- Suggestion for 1-page surveys (especially for senior input)

Summer Outreach Strategies

Bill Swiatek reviewed various outreach strategies and requested input from community representative attendees on event dates.

- June 4th is New Castle Unity Day

End of minutes.

The above is the author’s interpretation of the items discussed. Any corrections or discrepancies should be brought to the author’s attention within seven days, or the minutes will stand as written.

cc: Attendees
File