

## MEETING MINUTES

date: June 9, 2016

time: 4:45-6:00 pm

location: Garfield Park Recreation Center

project no.: DCI #501-16

project name: Route 9 Corridor Master Plan

author: Caitlin O'Hara

attendees (in alphabetical order):

Cecily Bedwell, Design Collective, Inc (DCI)

Marco Boyce, New Castle County

Diana Brown, NCC Department of Community Services

Carrie Casey, Dept. of Community Services, New Castle County

Herb Inden, Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC)

Lee Jarmon, Overview Gardens/ Garfield Park Civic Association

Alex Jeffries, Route 9 Library

Patti Miller, Nemours Health & Prevention Services

Randi Novakoff, Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO)

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

Eric Pugliano, Delaware Transit Corporation DTC

Tim Snow, Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT)

Bill Swiatek, Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO)

Jake Thompson, Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO)

Sherry Dorsey Walker Walker, 6<sup>th</sup> District Council Member

### STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

#### Route 9 Corridor Master Plan

##### ***Introductions:***

Bill Swiatek welcomed attendees. He explained that in an effort to be more transparent, per Lee Jarmon's suggestion, the Advisory and Management Committees have merged into one Steering Committee. This will allow everyone to remain equally informed throughout the Route 9 Corridor planning process. He then asked for introductions.

##### ***Previous Meeting Notes:***

Cecily Bedwell asked for any comments, revisions, or questions regarding the previous Advisory and Management Committee Meeting Notes.

❖ [Lee Jarmon Question: Are the meeting minutes posted on the website?](#)

Bill Swiatek Response: Yes.

- ❖ Bill Swiatek Request: The Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes from April 14th should be revised to show WILMAPCO as funding the master plan. DeIDOT should be removed.

Cecily Bedwell Response: DCI will revise.

### ***Market Analysis Update***

Cecily Bedwell provided an overview of RCLCO's market analysis update, describing the opportunities and incentives for future housing, retail, office, and industrial development.

- ❖ Sherry Dorsey Walker Question: What type of development incentives are you referring to?

Cecily Bedwell Response: RCLCO would be able to provide a more thorough answer. However, a few incentives could include tax break benefits for companies along the corridor, the creation of TIF Districts, or targeting grants for specific projects that are needed within the community.

### ***Blueprint Communities Update***

Bill Swiatek asked if Lee Jarmon had any updates on the Blueprint Communities initiative. There are no current updates. Cecily described the initiative and key objectives as defined by Sandra Smithers during the Advisory Committee meeting on April 14<sup>th</sup>:

- The Blueprint Communities Committee has been asked to determine/ define a project.
- The Blueprint Communities Committee has plans to coordinate efforts with the Steering Committee so that efforts do not overlap and are not duplicated.
- Sandra Smithers will keep the Steering Committee informed of the target project as the process moves forward.

### ***Public Workshop 1***

Cecily Bedwell asked who attended the Route 9 Corridor Public Workshop from the Steering Committee. Approximately 1/3 of the Steering Committee raised their hands. All participants seemed happy with the results and felt the public appeared very receptive. Cecily Bedwell summarized the evening's events:

- Approximately 75 people attended the Public Workshop.
- A presentation was given to describe an overview of the project goals and the evening's objectives. The consultant team expressed the importance for public participation in order to effectively create planning strategies that are reflective of the community's needs and desires.
- Table discussions followed the presentation with a facilitator leading each conversation. The facilitator asked a series of questions to promote a dialogue between participants.
- Members of the community presented a summary of each table's priorities:
  - What is special about the Route 9 Corridor?
    - Community serving amenities

- Neighborhood parks
- Life-long residents
- Family-oriented and close-knit community
- Affordable living
- Close proximity and access to New Castle, Wilmington, various water bodies, and New Jersey and Delaware beaches
- Easily traveled compared to alternative routes (Interstate 95 and Route 13)
- Historic and cultural heritage
- What are the greatest challenges for the Route 9 Corridor?
  - Environmental and health concerns
  - Zoning issues
  - Crime and safety issues
  - Streetscape improvements
  - Lack of quality development
- What new development/facilities (restaurants, retail, services, residential, open space, etc.)/ improvements would benefit the area?
  - New development: Quality retail, healthy food options, a new market, senior housing, child care facilities, medical center, event spaces, and community gardens.
  - Land use and/or zoning changes to reuse underutilized land and positively impact community growth
  - Programs to revitalize vacant properties, storefronts, streetscapes, and park spaces and to support home ownership and health care education.
  - Safety strategies
  - Sustainability programs
- ❖ **Carrie Casey Question: What is considered a “market”?**  
 Cecily Bedwell Response: A farmer’s market; something year-round that would provide fresh produce
- ❖ **Sherry Dorsey Walker Comment: Spoke to incentives/ partnerships that would benefit the rebuild of the community. She mentioned the employment and training program called Delaware WONDER (Work Opportunity Networks to Develop Employment Readiness) led by Division of Social Services (DSS). This program targets career tracks in construction, culinary arts, manufacturing, and broad-based job placement. About 20% of the 150,000 Delawareans who receive food benefits will be eligible. (DCI waiting on confirmation from Sherry)**  
 Lee Jarmon Response: The program is unique and a successful precedent
- ❖ **Carrie Casey Question/Comment: What types of programs are you specifically referencing regarding “supporting home ownership”?** She mentioned that there are many programs that already provide similar incentives, but require more successful marketing strategies.

Lee Jarmon Response: Yes, the community must not be aware of the home ownership programs that currently exist. We need to prioritize the communication of these services.

- ❖ Lee Jarmon Comment: New Castle County recently applied for USDA funding for a farmer’s market at the new library site. It will be a weekly event that will run from June until September. All forms of payment will be accepted, including food stamps. There is also discussion regarding a “bigger” farmer’s market potentially moving into The Restaurant Store.

Diana Brown Response: There was also discussion about a farmer’s market at Bowlerama or Garfield Park Recreation Center. Diana will confirm.

- What streetscape/ roadway improvements would support people walking, biking, and/or using public transportation? What are your concerns regarding traffic, circulation, and connectivity?
  - Public Transportation: larger buses to increase capacity, real-time tracking, more bus shelters, and the introduction of shuttles for smaller routes
  - Streetscape: sidewalk improvements, crosswalks, lighting, bike facilities, ADA accessibility components, and safer turn lanes
  - Trucks: electrification sites to reduce idling and dedicated truck routes to alleviate traffic along restricted streets
- ❖ Marco Boyce Question: Is the design team going to study secondary street connections to relieve traffic along Route 9 and better serve the adjacent neighborhoods?

Cecily Bedwell Response: Yes, we will be studying the secondary street framework and noting where connectivity can be improved and solutions can be provided.
- ❖ Bill Swiatek Comment: As part of this analysis, the design team will also study alternative truck routes to protect neighborhood streets from truck traffic.

Marco Boyce Response: Trucks have guidance software that is programmed to avoid neighborhood streets. The data seems inaccurate and is sending trucks down the wrong streets.

Bill Swiatek Comment: We have heard that truck drivers do not use the software. They use their phones which do not identify non-accessible streets.
- ❖ Carrie Casey Question: What are truck stop electrification sites and how will they reduce idling? We receive a lot of requests for home repair due to the truck traffic accessing the Wilmington Port and Diamond Materials.

Bill Swiatek Response: A recent study identified specific locations along Terminal Avenue where trucks can idle. Electrification sites can be located at the “designated rest stops” to reduce diesel emissions and protect nearby residents. We need to prevent trucks from idling in the street.

### **Summer Outreach Strategies**

Bill Swiatek summarized the summer outreach strategies over the next 6 weeks. WILMAPCO has organized opportunities to engage the community at various events and on the road in an effort to collect feedback.

- Events/strategies include: Unity Day, farmer's markets, festivals, mobile engagement stations, online surveys, and outreach opportunities with the PAL Center, Boy's and Girl's Club, senior centers, and faith leaders.
  - ❖ [Sherry Dorsey Walker Comment: Ron from the Dupont Environmental Education Center is interested in hosting younger members of the community to promote nature and outdoor exploration.](#)  
Bill Swiatek Response: He will reach out to Ron to discuss further.
  - ❖ [Lee Jarmon Comment/Question: I hope we can engage more teenagers throughout the summer outreach strategies. Can we use the summer feeding program at the pool as an opportunity to engage younger community members?](#)  
Bill Swiatek Comment: I think that is a great idea. We can create a mobile engagement station at the pool. Bill will reach out to Latoya for further information/ confirmation. Carrie Casey will also contact Sandra Smithers.
  - ❖ [Randi Novakoff Question: Should we host the September workshop at Mc Cullough School?](#)  
Bill – we will follow up
  - ❖ [Lee Jarmon Question: What about engaging the community churches?](#)
  - ❖ Bill Swiatek Response: We have contacted over 26 churches and received a response from 2 reverends. We organized a meeting and had the opportunity to speak with Reverend Hanna from Community Presbyterian on Rogers Road. Reverend Hanna has agreed to help organize a larger meeting with the other reverend who were not in attendance.  
Sherry Dorsey Walker Response: I will lend a hand with the outreach and contact Reverend Oliver (IMAC) who will communicate the importance of church participation with other pastors
  - ❖ [Lee Jarmon Question: Have we contacted the businesses along the Route 9 Corridor? Is there an opportunity to improve the appearance of the businesses? Are we sharing a plan with them?](#)  
Bill Swiatek Response: We sent a letter to every business and spoke with key business leaders. There is no plan yet, however we are looking for their feedback to influence the key strategies and planning efforts that will be written into the final document. This document will be posted to WILMAPCO's website and shared with the public.  
Carrie Casey Response: We will continue to canvas the businesses and make sure they come to the September Workshop.

### ***Unity Day***

Bill Swiatek reviewed the public input received from Unity Day and how community feedback will continue to be compiled with future outreach efforts. The following information is a summary of the challenges, strengths, and opportunities heard by members of the community:

- What are the greatest challenges for the Route 9 Corridor?
  - Crime is the largest challenge
  - Lack of stores and jobs
  - Safety
- What is special about the Route 9 Corridor?
  - Community, friends + family
  - New businesses
  - Various events + activities
- What improvements do you suggest for the Route 9 Corridor?
  - Public safety
  - Activities for children

### ***Interactive Map***

Bill Swiatek unveiled an interactive map that WILMPCO has created to track the location of participants and target neighborhoods along the corridor where representation is lacking.

- The interactive map currently shows a lack of community input from southern portions of the Route 9 Corridor

### ***Other Business Tasks***

Cecily Bedwell reviewed next steps for the design process. The upcoming workshop in September will provide an opportunity to present conceptual design material to the public in an effort to receive public feedback prior to producing a draft of the report document. Following the September Workshop, the design team will identify priorities for the Route 9 Corridor and outline best strategies in the final document.

❖ **Randi Novakoff Comment:** If we host the September Workshop at Mc Cullough School we need to contact the administration as soon as possible.

❖ **Bill Swiatek Question:** Is the Steering Committee interested in hosting the September Workshop at Mc Cullough School?

Lee Jarmon Response: We need to keep the September Workshop at Rose Hill Community Center. A majority of the Steering Committee agreed.

Bill Swiatek asked for any further comments. No additional comments were noted.

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

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