

**Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Task Force
Minutes
July 18, 2022
6:30 p.m.**

The Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Task Force held a meeting on Monday, July 18, 2022. The meeting commenced at 6:32 p.m. and adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Voting Members Present:

Byron Price – Chair
Susan Murray
Ariel Gardner
Craig Hughes
Christina Dancy
Patricia McQueen
Mayela Zambrano
Linda Peoples-Jones

Voting Members Absent:

Christopher Flood

Staff Present:

Brooke A. Smith, Deputy City Manager/Dir. of Economic Development
Gregory Rose, City Manager

Others attending:

None

Minutes

Motioned by Linda Peoples-Jones, seconded by Patricia McQueen and carried by voice vote to approve the minutes with the following corrections:

Linda Peoples-Jones requested a correction to the spelling of her name and noted that on page 3, paragraph 2, it read Christina Murray instead of Christina Dancy or Susan Murray. Deputy City Manger Smith stated that she would review the meeting audio to confirm who made the statement and make the correction.

Patricia McQueen stated that the final paragraph of the minutes said “get recommendations” instead of “give recommendations.” Deputy City Manager Smith confirmed that it should be “give” and that she would make the correction.

Mayela Zambrano noted that her name was spelled incorrectly as well.

Public Comments

Patrick Fox, 1309 Purdue Avenue, U City, Missouri 63130

Mr. Fox stated that he attended the last meeting and wanted to provide some observations and recommendations for the task force as they begin their work. He provided several recommendations which included narrowing the focus to just the 3rd Ward revitalization and consider the lessons learned from that to apply to the entire city, investing the community and not infrastructure, and he cautioned the task force against using the funds for

administrative costs. Mr. Fox also said he has been in University City for 4 years and the housing needs to be improved in the 3rd Ward now and they do not need to spend a year to do it.

Chair Byron Price asked for clarification on what Mr. Fox meant by Housing. Mr. Fox said he meant investing in improving the housing for people would own their property in the 3rd, noting that he did not think investment properties should be eligible for assistance.

Teresa Warren, 1315 Sheridan Drive, University City, MO 63132

Ms. Warren said she lives within walking distance of the Costco development, and she is very excited about it. She said she did not think the improvements in the 3rd ward should just concentrate on the interior and exterior code violations and aesthetics. She said behavior-based modification should also be a priority and provided recommendations and suggestions for the task force to consider.

Chair Byron Price asked for clarification on what “behavior-based” means. Ms. Warren provided examples to explain.

Task Force Resolution, Mission for Task Force, Purpose and Goals – Discussion

Chair Price opened the discussion for this agenda item. Deputy City Manager explained that the resolution creating the task force was included to provide clarity on the role of the task force and to answer some of the questions the task force members had at the last meeting. Smith also noted the City Manager was present to answer any additional questions they members may have about their roles and the goals of the task force.

Chair Price noted that there were concerns about it being the whole city versus the 3rd Ward and opened this for discussion. City Manager Rose responded with provided insight into the Councils intention when they created the task force. Mr. Rose discussed the needs for city-wide housing and the 3rd Ward, noting that the City Council believed that instead of appointing two separate task forces, they believed both goals could be accomplished with one. Mr. Rose provided further insight into the intent of the Mayor and Council when forming the task force.

Mayela Zambrano brought up for discussion the matter of the funding and asked for confirmation that the entirety of the funds would be allocated to the 3rd Ward. Mr. Rose shared the breakdown of the funding sources: \$3 million upfront from the sale of the property for Costco, noting that some of the funding was used for relocation assistance. Chair Priced asked for confirmation that those funds were unencumbered, which Mr. Rose confirmed. \$4.6 million for the pool tax over a 23-year period, about \$200,000 annually. The 3rd Funding source is Parks and Stormwater sales tax, \$2.4 million, or \$104,348 annually. Mr. Rose noted that the Parks and Stormwater is specific and can only be used for infrastructure improvements. Chair Price asked for confirmation that the \$4.6 million has no restrictions, which Mr. Rose confirmed.

Ariel Gardner raised the topic of using the funds for a consultant and/or administrative costs, noting that the funds are restricted to the 3rd Ward but the task force will be considering a city-wide housing program. Mr. Rose agreed that if a consultant is used to create the city-wide housing program, there would be some shared costs, but if the

consultant is used for just the revitalization project, then he would recommend the funds tied to that project be used for that.

Patricia McQueen brought up for discussion the confusion surrounding the role of the task force and its focus, noting that she understood the focus to be housing and to consider other matters would be a stretch. She discussed her experiences as an active citizen and provided suggestions for other avenues to consider infrastructure and public safety. She reaffirmed her belief that this should be about housing. Ms. McQueen also discussed the distinction between the homes in the different wards and provided a picture of a house as an example of one that probably should not be eligible for repair. She also discussed leveraging the funds and partnerships, noting that housing is complex, and the task force does not have the capacity.

Chair Price agreed this is an important process but noted that the task force is just getting started and there would be no solutions at this meeting. He also said there needs to be clarification of the various components of housing and behavior modification that needs to take place and the task force will take its time to assess the issues and make sure the strategy has a long-lasting effect.

Susan Murray discussed the importance of the public outreach and collecting data before making any decisions. She referenced an initiative in Kansas City that relates to apartments.

Christina Dancy discussed reframing the housing program for the entire city and just focus on the 3rd Ward, using it as a blueprint for the other wards later. She discussed her concerns with creating a city-wide housing program.

Gregory Rose provided feedback on the questions that were raised. He explained that the task force mission was established by the Mayor and Council and then created by resolution. He noted that any changes would have to go back before Council. Regarding the task force's approach in addressing the tasks assigned, he noted that was for the task force to decide. He noted the expectations for the end result is a report with recommendations on steps to revitalize the 3rd Ward and the components of the housing program(s). He suggested a Needs Assessment for the first tasks and what that should entail. He said the end goal is that whether a house is purchased in the 1st Ward or the 3rd Ward, the same house should be the same price. He acknowledged that it is a challenge and will be complicated, which is why staff was recommended the hiring of a consultant. Regarding the housing program, Mr. Rose noted that every ward has pockets where there are challenges which is why the Council is asking the task force to look at the issue broadly while understanding that the 3rd Ward will have a heavy participation. He also noted that we don't want to see the challenges of the 3rd Ward permeate throughout the other wards.

Mayela Zambrano agreed with Christina Dancy and recommended the group focus on the 3rd Ward and use that as a blueprint for the rest of the city, but he priorities would be on the 3rd Ward items.

Gregory Rose noted that initially the Mayor and Council will be looking for a plan, what the recommendations are. How they are prioritized and established will be up to the body. He noted that ultimately the Mayor and Council will make the decision on what plan the staff will execute.

(Audio was lost briefly due to the battery dying in the recorder. During this time, the task force continues to discuss the feasibility of creating a city-wide housing program, whether or not to place the 3rd Ward Revitalization in front of housing, the Northeast Neighborhood Plan adopted many years ago, and the 2021 Economic Development Plan. Audio resumes at this point.)

Mayela Zambrano discussed public outreach and asked if that is what the task force should start with. She suggested starting there to hear what people have to say.

Hiring of Consultant – Discussion

Chair Price responded that this would take them to item 6 on the agenda, which is discussing the hiring of a consultant, noting that has been the process in the past. He opened the floor for discussion.

Christina Dancy said she initially thought yes but wanted to address the cost of hiring a consultant and whether it has to come out of the TIF dollars.

Mr. Rose responded that his recommendation to the Council would be that if the consultant is needed for the revitalization task, then he would recommend the TIF funds as the funding source. He noted that if the consultant will be used for the housing portion as well, then he would recommend splitting the cost with TIF and another fund.

Christina Dancy asked if there was any University City staff available to assist, to which Mr. Rose responded that the task force has Deputy City Manager Brooke Smith but that she will not have the capacity to create a strategic plan for housing and revitalization. Christina Dancy said her answer is yes to the consultant, but that the task force will need to figure out how to explain to the residents using the TIF funds to pay for the consultant.

Mayela Zambrano asked if the consultant could be saved for later and suggested setting up online surveys to see if that can get the task force information to save money. She said she is hesitant to hire a consultant right now without knowing the full scope of the work that needs to be done.

Patricia McQueen said the idea of paying for a consultant from the TIF funds will cause hesitancy because they did not think they funds would be used for administration. She suggested asking the university if they would be willing to partner with the task force, maybe graduate students. She didn't think the task force could decide on this without having first reached out to others for more information.

Ariel Garner agreed that it is not time to hire a consultant now, noting it is about to leverage resources in the community before spending the funds on administrative support.

Linda Peoples-Jones agreed with those before her and said that she believes there are a lot of resources at the task force's disposal to utilize first and then give more direction to a consultant.

Susan Murray said she did not think the task force is ready to hire a consultant as she doesn't understand the focus of what a consultant would do and until she does, she doesn't

want to spend any money or sent out any RFPs. She said she believes at some point it may be necessary to hire a consultant. She said she wonders how much of the Northeast Plan from 2002 and if it hasn't then it would be a good place to start instead of having another plan. She discussed the importance of collecting data and asked if there is a planner on staff. Gregory Rose answered yes and that there is an intent to hire another. She discussed the importance of the task force getting to know each other and asked if they should meet every 2 weeks. Linda Peoples-Jones said she did not think this was necessary yet. Susan Murray discussed other matters the task force will need to consider, emphasizing the importance of collecting data.

Craig Hughes agreed with those before him but said he believes the task force should try to entertain the consultant and let them provide structure which the task force does not currently have. He expressed his thoughts on the goals of the task force and services needed in the 3rd Ward.

Chair Price recommended that Patricia McQueen, Ariel Gardner, and Mayela Zambrano with having the necessary conversations with the universities to see if they have the capacity to partner.

Mayela Zambrano noted that the academic community may not be able to fit these types of projects in on last minute's notice.

Christina Dancy recommended the task force start outlining what they think they will need help with and then take to potential partners.

Patricia McQueen explained that she is suggesting that the conversations be had to help guide the task force and determine who to go to for consulting and how much the task force should help to pay and designing the RFP. She expressed her thoughts on this process

Mayela Zambrano brought up the surveys that have already been completed and suggested the task force review them as a starting point in seeing some of the issues that have been brought up in the surveys.

Patricia McQueen asked how many people have seen the draft for the Visioning Plan, which includes some of this information. She discussed this further. Deputy City Manager Smith said she would add it to the dropbox.

Chair Price asked if everyone would agree that Patricia, Mayela, and Ariel would get together and approach the university community and report back to the task force on how they can help or what recommendations received. The task force will then decide after that on what to do.

Linda Peoples-Jones asked if anyone knew of people in the community that could be reached out to. Christina Dancy said she has contacts, but that she would need some type of outline to present to them and get recommendations. Mayela Zambrano also reiterated the importance of sharing a list of issues that need to be addressed.

Chair Price asked if anyone disagreed. No one responded. He reiterated the tasks and noted that they would report back at the next meeting.

Linda Peoples-Jones asked about information she requested. Deputy City Manager Smith said she thought she responded and that she would go back to review the email to address it.

Task Force members asked for other supplies for the next meeting.

Task Force Member Comments

Chair Price asked for any other comments.

Susan Murray noted that Rosalind Williams is a U City resident that can assist. Mr. Rose responded that any consultant recommended to the Council would go through a competitive process.

Ariel Gardner commented on the boundaries of the 3rd Ward and stated that she did not think it would ever happen that the same house in each ward would cost the same. She discussed another project she worked on and how it was astonishing to see how the borders change. She discussed the importance of being realistic and prioritizing the 3rd Ward. Mr. Rose said he only used it as an example that there are other factors that influence the price of a home and if all the resources are spent on housing, the problem will not be solved.

Chair Price called for the adjournment of the meeting.

Adjourn

Linda Peoples-Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Craig Hughes seconded.

Motioned passed by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.