

**Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Task Force
Minutes
August 15, 2022
6:30 p.m.**

The Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Task Force held a meeting on Monday, August 15, 2022. Due to the flood, the meeting was held virtually. 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
Christina Dancy
Patricia McQueen
Mayela Zambrano
Linda Peoples-Jones
Christopher Flood

Voting Members Absent:

Craig Hughes

Staff Present:

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

Others attending:

None

Public Comments

None were received via email. Deputy City Manager Smith acknowledged the presence of two attendees but noted that public comments would not be had during the virtual meeting.

Update from Patricia McQueen and Mayela Zambrano – Discussion

Deputy City Manager Smith noted that while the agenda stated there may be a guest, that person was not present for the meeting. Mayela Zambrano confirmed that the potential guest was not able to attend.

Deputy City Manager Smith noted that Christina Dancy had her hand raised. Christina asked for clarification that since this is a zoom meeting, does that mean the public will not be on the zoom and they just have to submit their questions. Smith answered yes, that per the agenda, public comments should have been emailed in by noon the day of the meeting and if she had received any, she would have submitted them to the committee ahead of time. Christina asked if members of the public will be able to attend the meeting, to which Smith replied yes, they just do not show up as panelists. Smith explained that typically with the virtual meetings the public is asked to submit their comments via email before the meeting. She noted that the posted agenda contains a link for the zoom meeting that allows the public to watch the meeting or call in, explaining that unless a task force member asks to have someone moved to panelist to speak, they would not be on the screen with the task force.

Patricia McQueen provided an update on her outreach to people in the community development field. She listed some of the individuals she reached out to or intends to reach

out to and the organizations they are affiliated with. She informed the task force of the feedback she received. Patricia also noted there were several documents she would forward to Deputy City Manager Smith to share with the members of the task force. Patricia then yielded the floor to Mayela Zambrano.

Before moving forward, Brooke Smith noted that Linda Peoples-Jones had her hand up. Linda Peoples-Jones asked about minutes from the last meeting. Smith noted that the minutes were not ready from the last meeting, and they would be prepared for approval for the next meeting. Peoples-Jones then asked what was presented to the individuals that task force members reached out to.

Mayela Zambrano answered that a Google Drive was created where they collaborated to draft an email to send out that would explain what the task force is seeking to accomplish. Zambrano then provided an update on the person she reached out to and discussed the materials shared with her, which she shared with members of the task force. She asked if it was possible to get more assistance from people in the city and who is going to do the work. She also referenced the Florissant plan and their focus on a crime free community and their landlord program. Zambrano also referenced issues that University City residents stated they were the least satisfied with in the city in 2021.

Patricia McQueen noted there was another person she wanted to reach out to and a non-profit whose information she wanted to share, providing information on what type of work they do. Susan Murray commented that she believed Patricia may have spoken with Rosalind Williams and Barbara Heise and provide more information on the type of work they do, including examples. Susan stated that there are a lot of programs that can be brought in.

Deputy City Manager Smith requested to go back to the question about the staffing. She noted that today's staffing levels are not the same as when the Northeast Plan was created. She explained that there is less staffing and that staff members have numerous projects to work on. She discussed the possibility of an internship program. Smith also noted this was why she recommended hiring a consultant because the city currently does not have the staff to commit to this project.

Chair Price commented that he was still on the City Council at the time of the Northeast Plan and was heavily involved. He said explained that there was a lot more staff back then and that today's staffing levels are not anywhere close to that now. He also explained that the population was higher than, meaning a larger tax base.

Deputy City Manager Smith noted that Ariel Gardner has her hand up. Gardner provided an update on the individual she reached out to and matters discussed.

Chair Price called for any other information on this agenda item. Patricia McQueen was acknowledged, and she discussed information she had on creating a community land trust.

Update from Linda Peoples-Jones and Christina Dancy – Discussion

Christina Dancy referenced the Project Plan document that was included in the packet and noted that she and Linda Peoples-Jones used that document to capture what's been discussed by the task force thus far. The hope is that it will be a working document and

serve as a central location for the ideas and data. She said the ask is that everyone take a look at the document over the next month and continue to add ideas to it in order to get a solid draft. She discussed options for doing this.

Linda Peoples-Jones added that this is meant to be a framework to work from and if other wards wanted to duplicate the process, this document could be shared.

Chair Prices asked them to walk through the document, going through each section.

Mayela asked if it would be posted to a Google Drive. Linda Peoples-Jones asked if Dropbox is the only shared drive to which Smith responded that she could also create a Google Drive.

Deputy City Manager Smith shared her screen to display the Project Plan Document.

Christina Dancy and Linda Peoples-Jones walked everyone through the document and explained the categories and discussed their contents.

Christopher Flood asked if the intent of the document was to define the project and then create a request for proposals from consultants or if it was intended to be the RFP itself. Christina responded that it was not, that the purpose is to keep track of the task force's thoughts. Deputy City Manager Smith explained that the city has an RFP process, that they would put together what the task force is looking for from the consultant and then conduct a formal bid process. Christina explained further that this document is intended to be central location for the task force's thoughts and ideas. Linda Peoples-Jones said it also helps to narrow the focus.

Patricia McQueen noted that the ward for Craig Hughes needs to be added. Chair Price confirmed he is in the 3rd Ward.

Susan Murray said it was excellent and thanked the two task force members for taking the time to draft the document.

Chair Price called for a motion that this document be moved as a working document that the task force will use.

Motioned by Linda People's Jones that the task force use this document as its framework, remember that it is a live document and that changes can take place to it as the task force moves forward. Seconded by Patricia McQueen. Chair Price called for a roll call vote.

Christopher Floor – Yes
Susan Murray – Yes
Ariel Gardner – Yes
Craig Hughes – Absent
Christina Dancy – Yes
Patricia McQueen – Yes
Mayela Zambrano – Yes
Chair Byron Price – Yes

Motion passed.

Chair Price asked if this was the only other agenda item. Deputy City Manager Smith answered yes, noting that there was another agenda item listed, but that she did not realize that the Framework for Task Force item was the document prepared and discussed by Christina Dancy and Linda Peoples-Jones.

Task Force Member Comments

Susan Murray noted that there were great suggestions tonight. She noted that one point that came up that she would like to get further into is the idea of the Community Benefits Agreement. She said when the discussion happened, there was a group of people that wanted a Community Benefits Agreement, and they were assured the contract between the city and the developer is the same thing. Susan agreed it was the same thing and the Council would be the enforcing it, and she hopes that is the case. She said that needs to be added to what the task force looks at. She said one change had already been made to that. Costco had agreed to give priority job interviews to 3rd Ward people before anyone else and that has been changed and Council approved the change so that it is no longer just 3rd Ward but the whole city. She said the task force should keep in mind what is in the CBA and if things have changed, why, noting that there may be good reason why. She said as she noted in the first meeting, she doesn't want this money to be used as the 3rd Ward's share of what's going on in the city. This money is for the 3rd Ward and anything that happens later needs to be divided between all three wards. She said putting first priority (for the jobs) to all three wards dilutes what goes to the 3rd Ward.

Chair Price commented that this committee has no legislative authority and cannot legislate to the City Council. He noted that would be way outside of the scope. He said he knows what the benefit agreements are, but for this body, it has nothing to do with what they have been commissioned to do by the Council who changed whatever the benefit agreement is. He noted they have the authority to dilute the task force and that it is nothing they would get involved with. He asked Deputy City Manager to comment from the city's standpoint to which she responded that it would not be her place to comment. He also noted that there has not been public outreach to even know what the public would want and that it is premature to go down that road while trying to develop where the task force is going.

Linda Peoples-Jones commenting that when the task force is communicating via email, they should not hit reply all as it would constitute a meeting electronically which could be for a sunshine request. Deputy City Manager Smith said that is true and she explained that when sending emails, they should be sent to Smith and the Chair, but that they should not reply all. She said for the emails where that has already occurred, because the city clerk was included on those emails, so that she has a record of everything that goes out to the group, which should cover the task force as far as the Sunshine Law is concerned. She cautioned the group to do their best not to reply all but noted that the emails to date were not technically conducting business, but rather it was just sharing information.

Mayela Zambrano asked about the timeline and the procedure to hire a consultant and the process. Deputy City Manager said she was not sure how long the bid process is for the city but that she would find out. Smith then explained how the process would work.

Chair Price asked how the template created by Christina and Linda help if the task force gets a consultant. Christina said it would be a starting point in terms of what is needed from

the consultant and then also be a starting point for the consultant as they begin their work, eventually driving the document moving forward. Linda agreed.

Christopher Flood commented on the consultant and the source of the funds. He asked if there were any more thoughts about that because his understanding was that this could be 10s of thousands of dollars, not an insignificant amount of money. He noted there seemed to be pretty strong opposition to using the TIF funds for this in the last meeting but in this meeting there is a strong consensus for hiring a consultant. Deputy City Manager Smith noted that the City Manager expressed that if a consultant is hired, he would recommend the TIF proceeds be used for that. She noted that if the consultant was hired for both the housing and the 3rd Ward Revitalization, then he would recommend multiple funding sources. She noted that she did not know what those other funding sources would be. Christopher Flood asked if the body agreed with that approach. Patricia McQueen noted that they did not talk about that and while the body could recommend, the City Council would make a final decision. Christina Dancy noted that at the last meeting, the task force was on the fence but after talking at this meeting and the work that will be required, a consultant is needed and even if the task force does not agree with it, it seems it will be paid out of the TIF proceeds. Mayela Zambrano stated that at the last meeting the task force was opposed to it because there was not enough data to hire a consultant just yet, but as data was gathered, they've realized they need more help. She mentioned an internship program as a way to cut cost but said she does not see how the task force can build this by itself. She also mentioned that it was unfortunate to use the TIF money for a consultant, she would not want a consultant to do both tasks together because she believes things will get mixed up and that the main focus is the 3rd Ward and if works the blueprint for the rest of the city, then that is fine.

Patricia McQueen said that the task force will need to have a definition of affordable housing and what that means. She said they will have to fight the stigma that U City has whenever affordable housing is brought up, noting that it is not just section 8 or materials built sub standardly. She said there are many reports that state more affordable housing is needed, and U city is more than just a middle class, upper middle-class community. She also discussed the importance of different programs that focus on behavior.

Deputy City Manager Smith noted that an attendee had their hand up, reiterating that public comments should have been mailed in and that there is no public comment section at the end of the agenda. She informed Chair Price that it would be up to him to allow the person to speak. After brief discussion with Smith, Chair Price agreed to allow the member of the public to speak.

Chair Price commented that what Patricia stated should be put into the template. He also said that he is not going to read all the articles and other documents that are being shared and that everyone needs to be realistic about spending the money to get someone to help the task force. Chris Flood agreed, noting the consultant will be able to help organize the task force. Chris said it is important not to put a price on the scope of the project, thinking past just the TIF proceeds. He said it also important to think about the deliverable from the consultant, a vision plan endorsed by the community and so it needs a lot of engagement with the community. He said it also needs concrete implementation ideas, thoughts, or strategies on a high level. He said it is important to have a consultant that understands the local environment this is going to happen in, giving examples of what this should look

like. He also said in order to get broad engagement, he thinks a consultant should be hired that takes community engagement really seriously, describing what that would look like.

Deputy City Manager Smith said she would move Mr. Fox over and said that it is only fair to allow the other attendee to make a public comment, asking that person to raise their hand if they wished to comment. The other attendee did not raise their hand to speak.

Patrick Fox

Mr. Fox thanked the task force for allowing him to speak. He wanted to reiterate that as a 3rd Ward resident, the expectation is not that the task force correct past mistakes of under-resourcing the 3rd Ward. He said this is something that frustrates people in the 3rd Ward, but he does not think it is the best use of this one in a lifetime opportunity of funding. He said if the task force chooses to do that, it gives the city a pass for what it did. He referenced the city's ARPA funding, and that the city could allocate some of these funds to help pay for the consultant. He said he would wonder if there was an appetite to receive a request of that nature rather than being filtered through Mr. Rose. He said he does not think it is appropriate for him to take the task force's recommendation and temper them. He said that he believes it is a more direct communication for the task force to recommend things to him and propose solutions that may be unorthodox, but these are once in a lifetime funding opportunities, and the city should have a little skin in the game to bring things up to where they are supposed to be. He also shared that while he understands the need to adapt the meeting, there should be an opportunity to actively engage speakers. He said he believes prepare comments ahead of the meeting is a cop out and is not actively engaging people. It gives people the opportunity for the public to speak and share things, but there is no guarantee the task force members would read it before the meeting. He believes it is a best practice to allow time for people to speak during the virtual meetings. He thanked the task force for allowing him to speak and the work they are doing.

Chair Price said to make sure that the information shared by Linda Peoples-Jones and Christina Dancy is shared, emphasizing the importance of thinking about this info over the next month.

Adjourn

Motioned by Linda Peoples-Jones, seconded by Chis Flood to adjourn. Carried by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.