

**Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Task Force
Minutes
March 20, 2023
6:30 p.m.**

The Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Task Force held a on Monday, March 20, 2023 at the Heman Park Community Center. The meeting commenced at 6:35 p.m. and adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Voting Members Present:

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

Voting Members Absent:

Ariel Gardner

Staff Present:

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

Others attending:

Cindy Thierry, Real Estate Agent

Minutes – October 17, 2022, December 5, 2022.

Motioned by Susan Murray, seconded by Linda Peoples-Jones and carried by voice vote to approve the minutes from October 17, 2022 and December 5, 2022.

Public Comments

Chair Price called for public comments. Deputy City Manager noted there were no written public comments received.

Patrick Fox, 1309 Purdue

Mr. Fox said he was concerned about the amount of the two proposals received for consultant services. He said he does not feel this helps the residents of the third ward. He said it would be best if 100% proceeds could go to helping the homeowners. He offered his opinion of Beyond Housing. He said he would encourage the task force not to accept either of the two proposals and provided his thoughts on why.

Consultant RFP/RFQ – Recommendation to Council

Chair Price opened the floor for discussion on the proposals received from Yard & Company and Beyond Housing for consultant services. He reminded everyone that the task force is not the final approval on this, just a recommending body.

Deputy City Manager Smith said her understanding was after the task force takes final action, she was tasked with checking references for both candidates and to request one completed plan as a work sample. She explained next steps after the task force acts at this meeting.

Chris Flood said that, considering the public comments, he wanted to say that planning is important, and a consultant is very useful to the process. He said they did not seem that expensive to him and he would like to see a consultant selected, mentioning as options that could address the public comment about the cost.

Susan Murray said she also thought the cost was phenomenal and that she hopes they don't have to spend that much money. She mentioned the discussions about the entire \$3 million going to housing and recommend this be paid out of city funds since the reason a consultant is being hired is because of staff shortages and because Mr. Rose said the consultants will report to him. Susan offered her opinion on both consultants. She said she thought it was possible to work with either group, but she believes the city can do better. She discussed a similar process underway in the City of St. Louis and what was being done there, saying she expected to see something similar in the proposals received. She questioned why there weren't better responses.

Mayela Zambrano said she wanted to ask if it had already been decided how the consultant would be funded. Deputy City Manager answer that it had not be decided at that time and reminded the task force of statements made by the City Manager a while back that if housing were included, he would recommend the funds come from multiple sources. Mayela Zambrano referenced previous plan that had staff members involved and said she does see the point that since the city does not have staff to assist, then they should invest in the consultant as well. She also provided her opinion on the proposals received.

Craig Hughes asked if there were other companies to choose from. Deputy City Manager said only the two proposals were received prior to the bid deadline. She also told the task force how the proposal was advertised. Smith told the task force if they wished to make a recommendation to re-bid, she would take that to the City Manager, but reminded them that this did not mean it would re-bid. Craig asked if they should vote to re-bid the project. Smith said that would be their decision to make. Craig provided his opinion on the proposals received. Chair Price asked if he would be open to re-bidding. Mr. Hughes answered yes.

Chair Price stated that the third ward is not a poverty-stricken community. It is a working-class community. He said he was getting the vibe that this was not understood during the candidate presentations.

Patricia McQueen stated that she went back to old emails from 2016 and looked at a lot of things a retired planner, Rosalind Williams, worked on. She said she met with her a lot over the years about this project and housing. Patricia provided her opinion on the proposals received and her opinions on housing. Patricia also mentioned that from her involvement in other initiatives, she knows that residents have said they are tired of being surveyed. She provided more insight into this. Regarding the consultant, she mentioned that she was concerned about where the money will come from and explained why. She also said that she knows there are housing needs in the 2nd and 3rd Ward, but she does not know what

housing needs there could be for the 1st Ward. She discussed her thoughts on re-bidding the project.

Christina Dancy said she agrees with what has been shared so far and provided additional thoughts on the proposals that were submitted.

Linda Peoples-Jones mentioned that she was not there for the joint meeting and said she does not want all the money to be spent to try to make these improvements and having someone assist us. She said community engagement is important but if there is already some data out there, she would like them to use that as well. She said she would be open to a re-bid process.

Chris Flood said he was also on the fence and provided his opinions on both proposals and the prospective candidates. He also said he was not opposed to re-bidding, but said he did not think the results would be different.

Susan Murray said she wanted to follow-up on some things she heard, and she also read some excerpts from Beyond Housing's proposal. She discussed the need to renovate the housing stock in the third ward and the need for it to be inclusive. She discussed her concerns about low-income housing and the importance of diversity. She referenced Kansas City and their policies for developer incentives.

Christina Dancy provided her opinion on the items Susan mentioned from Beyond Housing's proposal, her thoughts on the work Beyond Housing does, and the difference between low-income housing and affordable housing. She discussed programming that will help the residents in the third ward and providing redirection to Beyond Housing if needed.

Susan Murray discussed her experience using Low Income Housing Tax Credits and how the low-income housing and affordable housing are often used interchangeably and that it is still important to diversify.

Mayela Zambrano said she agreed with her Susan's point and discussed some of the information from Beyond Housing's proposal, discussing some of the questions she had. She asked if anyone had any experience with Yard & Company's work in the West End. She also said she was concerned if the RFP is re-issued, it will drag the project out.

Christina Dancy said she did have a conversation with the entity working with Yard & Co. in the West End. She provided insight into this discussion.

Linda Peoples-Jones motioned to postpone discussion on this topic in order to receive the presentation that is on the agenda. Motioned seconded by Christina Dancy and carried by voice vote.

SHED Education Series – Presentation by Cindy Thierry

Deputy City Manager Brooke Smith introduced Cindy Thierry and explained that she would be discussing a homeownership workshop initiative in partnership with SHED.

Mimi Taylor-Hendrix introduced herself as the Board President of SHED. She provided background on the initiative with the goal being to increase homeownership in the third ward. She provided data on homeownership versus renters in the third ward and provided

information the seminar on homeownership. She mentioned this idea has been in the works for a while, but due to COVID delays, were recently redeemed. A flyer was distributed, and Mrs. Taylor-Hendrix also discussed a home maintenance initiative for seniors in the third ward. She noted that a one-page survey for the city's comprehensive plan was also mailed out with every application that has gone out. She provided additional information on community outreach. She noted that SHED deals strictly with homeowners and with seniors. She said they would try a lot of different ways to gather input and information on needs in order to make sure SHED has a broad base of information.

Cindy Thierry said she would share more information about the program itself. She gave information on her background as a 29-year resident of University City and how she came to live in University City. Mrs. Thierry said one thing she continuously heard through the years was that people's agents told them not to live in University City or if they did, they would want private schools. Mrs. Thierry said she became a real-estate agent after a career in corporate America and began to promote University City and volunteer in the community. She explained how this homeownership program was created and noted that it was intended to become a series that is done once per quarter. She provided information on how the series will work. She discussed themes that will be in the series, including first-time buyer programs. She gave an example from a recent client buying a house in the third ward and how there is so much information purchasers are unaware of, and the goal of the series is to get this information out into the community. She asked if those present could help with promoting the seminar.

Patricia McQueen referenced the NACA program and asked if this was similar to that or if they knew about that program. Cindy said she did not have information on that program and this would be specific to SHED and University City. Further discussion was had on the need for it in the community. Cindy provided more examples of the programs available for homebuyers and she provided statistics on first-time homebuyers and how purchasing can be just as affordable as renting.

Mayela Zambrano asked about possible locations once the seminar moves to in-person.

Chair Price called to resume the discussion back to the proposals from the prospective candidates for the consultant.

Patricia McQueen said SHED provided great information and that this is what the task force hopes the consultants can help facilitate partnerships with various stakeholders in the community. She mentioned the importance of community outreach, housing, and economic development. She mentioned the development is important in order to generate tax revenue to reinvest in the community. She emphasized the importance of picking a consultant, noting that if the task force continues to go back and forth, the work will need get started. She suggested maybe trying to negotiate a lower fee and Craig Hughes said he recalled it being said the price was negotiable. Patricia clarified that Beyond Housing said their rate was non-negotiable, but Yard & Co. said their rate was non-negotiable.

Chair Price asked to go around have each member state their position on the candidates.

Craig Hughes said he was leaning toward Yard & Co. and he is also open to rebidding.

Susan Murray said her first choice is to re-bid, which she thinks will be faster this go round. She said her second choice is Yard & Co.

Patricia McQueen said she would like to see if there could be a renegotiation with Yard & Co. to remove what is not needed. She said their community outreach is a plus and the fact that they came up with a timeline, have urban planners and urban designers. She said she would go with re-bidding if there was another candidate interested, but she does not see that.

Mayeala Zambrano said another point for Yard is that they will be building a website which she believes is important so the community can see the progress being made. She said her vote is for Yard & Co. She said she would have liked to have more options, but she does not know if there will be more options if it is re-bid.

Christina Dancy said she would select Beyond Housing for a long-term approach and Yard & Co. for what this task force has been charged with. She also said no to redoing the RFP.

Chris Flood said he would vote for Yard & Co. He noted that he would just defer to the third ward residents of the task force because he does not feel that strongly either way.

Linda Peoples-Jones noted that she missed the joint meeting where the candidates presented, but based upon what she is hearing, Yard & Co. sounds like the favorable candidate. She said she would ask about renegotiation the amount and using the data that is already on hand. She also noted she was open to re-bid.

Chair Price said that he came to the meeting with Beyond Housing, but has been swayed to Yard & Co. He said he wants the record to reflect that this is not some poverty-stricken place. He said that needs to be clear because a lot of people he knows would be highly offended. He noted that he has heard a lot about what the needs are, but that there has been no community outreach to hear from the residents, who might identify other goals and objectives. He talked a little more about community outreach.

Chair Price called for a motion.

Linda Peoples-Jones asked if Yard will do the data collection. Mayela said yes and Deputy City Manager Smith said that would be the expectation for anyone. Mayela said that it was part of the 36-month plan submitted by Yard & Co. Christina Dancy said that they would also hire the residents to engage the people in the community, so the community will drive the conversations. Further discussion was had on the options for community outreach. Christina Dancy cited WeCollab as an example of what was done in the West End.

Linda Peoples-Jones asked if the framework document has gone out of the window. Mayela noted that Yard and Co said they would meet with the task force bi-weekly and she said that the document would be a good starting point to provide the vision for the task force. Christina Dancy said she asked Beyond Housing what the role of the task force would be and the answer was they would be like an advisory board, but not really engaged in what Beyond Housing would be doing.

Chair Priced called for a motion second time.

Motioned by Patricia McQueen to approach Yard & Co. and see if the contract can be amended to fit what the task force needs and then move forward to recommend approval to the City Manager. Seconded by Susan Murray.

Chris Flood asked if the expectation was for this group to negotiate with Yard & Co. Patricia McQueen said no. Chris said if this task force is making a recommendation to the City Manager, what are the recommended changes. Patricia McQueen said dollar figures. Linda Peoples-Jones said the funding sources also need to be determined. Susan Murray stated that the proposals did not really address a housing plan. She said they just addressed what they would do in the third ward. Christina Dancy said that is why she is still struggling with Beyond Housing and said they might be a better fit if we are talking about the entire city, but if it just the third ward, Yard will be beneficial for the task force and be more specific to the needs of the third ward. Susan Murray asked if the housing plan was more of a policy, Christina Dancy said her understanding is that it is programming and that whatever programming the task force recommends should be able to be leveraged by the entire city. Chair Price confirmed this, saying it is what the task force creates that comes from the third ward, so it has nothing to do with the needs of the first and second wards' needs. Christina Dancy discussed her conversation with representatives with the West End, noting their process with Yard has taken five years, starting with community engagement. Susan Murray asked wasn't it a larger area, Christina said yes. Patricia McQueen said it should also be taken into consideration that the West End is different in that the city has staff already that can assist, while the West End did not, noting that this is a municipal government, and they are not.

Chair Price asked for the motion to be repeated.

Patricia McQueen motioned to recommend negotiating with Yard to meet our needs, specifically to say third ward, to work on what comes out of the community engagement, noting that they will also look at housing and economic development. She amended the motion to recommend moving forward with Yard and negotiating with the to meet the task force's needs. Linda Peoples-Jones confirmed that Patricia was referring to the dollar amount when she said negotiating. Patricia said yes. Chris Flood said he was not sure what this means, asking if they just want to ask for the same stuff for less money? Susan Murray said they have in their proposal \$8,000 to train community leaders, stating that she thinks they are thinking of a different type of place, and she believes there are people in the third ward that can step into those roles. Christina Dancy said she thought they were going to pay people in the community to do the outreach. Linda Peoples-Jones asked to go back to the statement made by Chris Flood. Discussion was had on what the next steps in the process should be and the funding sources for the consultant. Deputy City Manager Smith said that there is no guarantee that the City Manager will negotiate. She noted that an RFP was put out with a scope of work and this was the response that was received, stating that the City Manager would likely make his recommendation based on that. She also noted that she had discussed the proposals with City Manager Rose and noted that he did not mention anything about the cost or renegotiating, so she cannot be sure that this would be something he would undertake on his own. Smith said if the task force would like to make that suggestion, then they will need to make a motion to do that. Smith said she agrees with Chris that if this is the recommendation, then the task force would have to discuss what they would like to see taken out of the scope of work. She explained how it should work if there should be a renegotiation to lower the amount. Further discussion was had on this

topic. Chris Flood suggesting recommending a “not to exceed” amount to recommend to the Council. Discussion was had on this topic.

Mayela Zambrano suggested including in the motion that no more than 60% of the funds should come from the monies set aside for the third ward.

Patricia McQueen rescinded her motion.

Motioned by Chris Flood to recommend that Yard & Co. be selected to serve as the consultant and that no more than 60% of the funds to pay for the contract comes from the Olive and 170 TIF proceeds. Seconded by Craig Hughes.

Chair Price called for a roll call vote.

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

Motioned passed.

Task Force Member Comments

Mayela Zambrano asked if there was any idea of when the city will decide on the consultant. Deputy City Manager Smith said that it should go to the City Council in April. She explained next steps in the process. Smith also stated that, once on board, she intends to connect the selected consultant with the comprehensive plan consultants. Further discussion was had on this topic.

Chair Price asked if everyone wants to meet in person moving forward. Everyone answered yes.

Next Meeting – April 17, 2023

Adjourn

Motioned by Linda Peoples-Jones, seconded by Christina Dancy to adjourn. Carried by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.