

**Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Task Force
Minutes
April 17, 2023
6:30 p.m.**

The Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Task Force held a on Monday, April 17, 2023 at the Heman Park Community Center. The meeting commenced at 6:38 p.m. and adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Voting Members Present:

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

Voting Members Absent:

Staff Present:

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

Others attending:

Terrill Smith, Lawtonblock Construction

Adopt Agenda

Motioned by Chair Price, seconded by Patricia McQueen and carried by voice vote to adopt the agenda.

Minutes – January 17, 2023

Motioned by Chris Flood, seconded by Craig Hughes and carried by voice vote to approve the minutes for the January 17, 2023 meeting.

Public Comments

There were no written comments received.

There were no public comments from the members of the public that attended the meeting.

Consultant – Status/Update

Deputy City Manager Smith provided an update on the hiring of the consultant. She noted that the City Manager accepted the recommendation and intends to recommend the Council select Yard & Co. as the consultant. She noted that it will be on the City Council agenda for April 24th. She said she was unsure of how the funding will be split. Mayela Zambrano asked for clarification on how it works when the task force makes a recommendation. Deputy City Manager Smith explained the process, noting that if there was a difference in

the recommendations, the City Manager would present both. Chair Price asked Smith to confirm that the City Manager has a certain threshold that he can spend without Council approval. Smith confirmed that this was correct, anything under \$25,000 the City Manager can approve without going to the Council. Discussion was had on the topic. Chair Price asked for confirmation that the consultant will be working for the entire city. He said there are three wards and because the housing program is supposed to be city-wide, then he would propose 33 1/3% comes out of the funds intended for the third ward. Further discussion was had on funding sources for the consultant. Chair Price said he would yield on this matter and no action was taken.

Presentation – Terrill Smith

Deputy City Manager Brooke Smith introduced Terrill Smith, a developer actively doing home renovation work in the third ward. Mr. Smith spoke in detail about the work rehabbing homes in the third ward, noting that he has 19 years of experience in construction. He addressed what he needs and how he hopes to partner with the city to continue doing this work in the city. Discussion was had between the task force members and Mr. Smith on housing issues, including the high number of investors buying up property in the third ward. Mr. Smith said he would like to become the premier residential developer for the third ward.

Rosalind Williams, a University City resident, was allowed to speak at this time. She said she has been waiting five years for the task force and the city to do something about the third ward. She referenced her time as a city employee and actions taken during that time. She said the city has been behind on addressing this and she has no faith in the consultants. She discussed her frustrations with things taking place in the third ward, expressed her concerns with the hiring of the consultant and the amount they are being paid. She provided her opinion on the housing issues in the third ward and how to use the money from the Olive and 170 development.

Chair Price stated that third ward residents will be surveyed, noting that everyone has their own specific agenda, so it will be important to hear what the public will say. He said he will not rush into judgment and will not jump into anything, noting that the Council can choose to move without the task force if they wish to. He reiterated that the task force must hear from third ward residents before making any decisions, noting that there are people that are not even aware that the task force in meeting on these issues at this time.

Presentation – Mary Kennedy, Senior Planner

Deputy City Manager Brooke Smith introduced Senior Planner Mary Kennedy. Mary presented on the comprehensive plan process, the purpose of the plan, and where the city is in the process. Task Force members provided their input to Mary and Mary answered questions as they were asked. Deputy City Manager Smith noted that that intent is to have Mary serve as the liaison with the comprehensive plan team so that everything marries together at the end.

Home Repair Program

Chair Price stated that the task force will be getting more information on home repair programs, noting that it took some time to find information on a home repair program that

the city used to have, a revolving loan fund for those who were unable to afford repairs to their homes. He noted there was a move to start purchasing lots from St. Louis County a while back after finding out that University City maintains lots owned by St. Louis County. He said he would be gathering information on these programs so people can know they did exist. He also mentioned that previous commissions and boards had infrastructure in place whereas this task force is being built from the ground up, noting the importance of being patience while going through these growing pains building the infrastructure for this new task force. He said it is important to take the time to make the right decisions and not rush into anything.

Task Force Member Comments

Deputy City Manager said she wanted to mention in regards to the purchasing of lots from St. Louis County, this was pulled as an agenda item because she had not heard back from the trustee. She said the only process at this time was through the auction, which typically takes three sales before finally obtaining the property based on unpaid taxes. Smith said she wanted to see if it was possible to establish a program with the trustee with the city that would allow the city to purchase properties from St. Louis County outside of auction. She explained how she ran a similar program in her previous city, providing information on how that program worked.

Patricia McQueen asked about questions for the survey and stated that they will need to make sure they are not duplicating questions that have already been asked. She further discussed her thoughts about the survey process, suggesting the need to go door-to-door to get the surveys completed. Deputy City Manager explained that the consultant will be hiring citizens to assist with community outreach. Regarding the survey questions, Smith said that working with the comprehensive plan team will ensure that questions are not being duplicated. Smith mentioned that the consultants, once on board, the consultants will be brought up to speed and there will be a meeting with the full task force before meeting with the survey subcommittee.

Councilmember Bwayne Smotherson was acknowledged as a public citizen, and he commented on the program mentioned by Chair Price. He offered a contact for purchasing property from St. Louis County. Linda Peoples-Jones asked if the city was involved in that, Councilmember Smotherson said yes. Chair Price added that the city could buy lots and get site control. More discussion was had on this.

Next Meeting – May 15, 2023

Adjourn

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.