

**Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Task Force
Minutes
May 20, 2024
6:30 p.m.**

The Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Task Force held in person at the Heman Park Community Center on Monday, May 20, 2024. The meeting commenced at 6:38 p.m. and adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Voting Members Present:

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

Voting Members Absent:

Craig Hughes

Staff Present:

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

Others attending:

Representatives from Yard & Co. and Collabo.

Minutes

Motioned by Linda Peoples-Jones, seconded by Christopher Flood and carried by voice vote to approve the minutes from November 20, 2023.

Public Comments

Kevin Taylor, 7022 Canton Avenue

Mr. Taylor commented and asked a series of questions about the funding for the revitalization, the source of the funds, and the consultant's progress.

SHED – Presentation: From Rental to Homeownership

Task Force member Christopher Flood noted for the record that he does serve on the board for SHED.

Mimi Taylor-Hendrix, Board President for SHED, discussed what she wanted to state her understanding of what SHED would like to see happen for funding and development in the third ward. She noted that they have reviewed draft recommendations by Yard & Co. and discussed recommendations that SHED had based on the recommendations by Yard.

Michael Ried, Executive Director for SHED, discussed SHED's purpose and progress over the last few years. He announced four new homeownership programs that SHED was introducing to support the third ward. He discussed these programs and their purpose as

well as SHEDs overall purpose and impact in the third ward. He highlighted four new homeowner assistance programs that SHED intends to implement.

Mr. Ried answered questions and received feedback from task force members. Mimi Taylor-Hendrix also discussed leveraging the funding from the TIF allotment to draw in investors for community redevelopment to assist with funding SHED's proposed programs. Both noted that the programs created by SHED has had success in other areas; they named cities that the task force members could check out to see how these programs work.

Task Force Member Comments

Deputy City Manager Brooke Smith noted that she would discuss updates from Yard & Co. after the task force members made their comments.

Chair Byron Price stated that this task force has no legislative authority and to go down there is a waste of time, noting that they cannot change the laws and ordinances. He said that the source of the funds for this initiative was established by ordinance. He said this is not something he would take up and that those who do can reach out to their Councilmembers.

Chris Flood said the restrictions on funding are inherent to the source itself and unless it is some alternate source of funding, his understanding is that the TIF funds for this project carries the restrictions of the taxes the funds are derived from.

Patricia McQueen said that she did some reading to find out what is the difference between Commission and Task Force. She said there are protocols for Commissions, but there are none for a task force because they are temporary. She acknowledged that final decisions lie with the City Council, but the task force is meant to be an advisory body. She said they are doing the heavy work and the Council really wants to hear what they come up with. She said they can say whatever they want. She said the task force can propose that the Council exam certain things. She discussed how the Comprehensive Plan was presented and who presented. She said what she is hearing is that the Chair of this task force does not want to present or follow that pattern. She said that is not asking the task force to be engaged or put their full energy into it because they are being told it will not be presented. She said an individual does not have the same effect as information being presented by the chair of this task force on behalf of the body. Patricia said she does not understand why there needs to be another event with public feedback. She said the residents are expecting the task force to speak, saying the residents have spoken at previous events. She discussed her frustration serving on the task force and said she doesn't know where the task force is going or why they are here.

Chair Byron Price said everyone has a right to stay or go and if an individual doesn't want to stay, they don't have to. He also noted that this is a task force, not a commission. He said they were given a task to get information and make some recommendations. He said all the other information coming in about how it was created and who wrote the law, he said no one on the task force was brought in to litigate. He said a consultant was hired and they are in the process of doing what they are supposed to do. He said he has recommendations he hasn't made because he is waiting until the process is complete. Then everyone can put their recommendations on the table to be finalized and forwarded to the Council for a vote.

Further discussion was had between Chair Price and Patricia McQueen

Deputy City Manager Brooke Smith provided updates from Yard & Co. She answered questions as they were asked. Deputy City Manager Smith also announced that one Mayela Zambrano resigned her position because she was moving.

Chris Flood announced that he would also be resigning because he was relocating as well. He also noted that he would like to see the draft plan before it was presented to the public. Deputy City Manager Smith asked if the body would prefer that the whole task force meets instead of just the survey and engagement subcommittee. She said that the task force can meet virtually next week or delay the June 8th event until the task force is able to meet and review the draft plan. Christina Dancy noted that there was construction going on near Rabe Park and asked if it would be complete before the event.

Christina Dancy asked what the process will be outside of Yard & Co. as the task force moves forward. Discussion was had on the process after recommendations are submitted to the City Council.

Susan Murray asked if the plan could be received with at least a week to review and make comments/request edits before the public event.

Discussion was had about this as well as the timeliness of the information received from Yard & Co., the possibility of status meetings with Yard & Co. moving forward, and the community engagement that was being conducted by the community ambassadors.

Chris Flood said that he has made a lot of assumptions about what the task force is doing or how it works and he always assumed the body would have some role after the plan was created and adopted, that it would be a steward of the plan. He said maybe he was wrong about that. He discussed his thoughts on what the plan will be and questioned whether it would give clear direction of what to do. He said he thought the plan would be more general and someone needs to think about implementation. Discussion was had.

Deputy City Manager Smith discussed next steps for reviewing the draft plan, stating that she would find out from Yard & Co. when they will have a physical DRAFT plan for the task force to review before the public event.

Motioned by Christina Dancy, seconded by Susan Murray, and carried by voice vote to postpone the June 8th event until after June 17th to allow the task force the opportunity to review the draft plan before it goes to the public.

Mimi Taylor-Hendrix also addressed the comment about a possible conflict of interest because a member of SHED's board sits on the task force. Deputy City Manager Brooke Smith also noted that Chris Flood sits on the task force as a citizen, not as a representative from SHED. She said there are no organizational members, that everyone was appointed as a citizen. Kevin Taylor commented on this from the audience.

Linda Peoples-Jones asked if the task force members could recommend individuals to fill in the vacant seats on the task force. Deputy City Manager Smith confirmed that those recommendations could be made to the Mayor or Councilmembers and she noted there was an application that anyone can fill out if they are interested.

Next Meeting - June 17, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Adjourn

Motioned by Byron Price, seconded by Linda Peoples-Jones to adjourn. Carried by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.