

Oakland Task Force
October 14, 2008
Western PA School for Blind Children

In Attendance:

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| Besong, Jeff | Carlow |
| Blenk, David | OPDC |
| Clark, Renny | Pitt |
| Eichenbaum, Pam | OCC |
| Ellenberg, Curt | Western PA School for Blind Children |
| Fisher, Elly | OPDC |
| Johnson, Benita | US Census |
| Kambitsis, Jason | City Planning |
| Layman, Jennifer | CMU |
| Mergner, Fred | PAT |
| Petropoulos, Georgia | OBID |
| Phillips, Sandy | People's Oakland |
| Pritts, Jillian | WPASBC |
| Rainey, Mavis | OTMA |
| Reeves, Todd | WPASBC |
| Sciannameo, Louise | Carlow |
| Supowitz, Paul | Pitt |
| Vinski, David | Playhouse |
| Wilds, John | Pitt |

David Blenk gave the membership an update on the "Oakland Neighborhood Partnership" which OPDC is coordinating (as the funding conduit) in cooperation with CHSC, OTMA, OBID, OCC, and People's Oakland. The program is a state tax credit program whereby UPMC, PNC Bank, and Dollar Bank are providing funds to the community development effort in Oakland in exchange for tax credits offsetting tax liability owed to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The funding linkage grew out of the relationship that OPDC formed with UPMC as a result of taking management oversight of the former Breachmenders School to Career Program. The community linkage between the six organizations came as a result of conversations to hone the Oakland neighborhood message into a single cohesive strategy. The Executive Directors of the six Oakland community organizations are meeting regularly and have submitted one proposal for the state tax credits. The proposal is working its way through the State process in Harrisburg with an award letter anticipated shortly. Once approved, the program will provide \$482,000 per year for six years. Each of the participating community groups and the business sponsors have specific target projects that must be met annually to continue participating. In addition to core and program funding, this effort provides the resources to bring each organization to a higher service capacity level. For example, OTMA will be able to increase local match to leverage new federal

resources and OCC will be able to move to full time staffing. David Blenk will provide Tami with his complete power point to post on the website.

Benita Johnson from the US Census Bureau gave the group an overview of the 2010 US Census planning. Benita stressed that she needs the support of groups such as the OTF to assist her inasmuch as Oakland offers a unique set of circumstances given the large population of foreign residents, students, elderly, corporate, community and institutional populations. Benita outlined the need for both field and office staff (call toll free: 1-866-861-2010 to schedule a basic skills test), space to conduct staff training, provide space for a questionnaire assistance desk or volunteer as a speaker to deliver the 2010 message. Benita can be reached at: Benita.M.Johnson@census.gov or 267-650-5871. Tami has a small number of the Census packets Benita distributed. If you would like a copy, please contact Tami Hirth at: 412-624-7708 or hirth@pitt.edu.

Georgia updated the Task Force on the current activities and plans of the Environment Committee. At the last meeting, the members decided that Education & Outreach and an Earth Day Event would be the primary focus of the committee next year. It was agreed to by the representatives of Carlow, Carnegie Mellon and Pitt that each would contact their respective student government leaders and urge the three student bodies to work together to put on an Oakland wide Earth Day event.

Pam and Georgia gave an update on garbage cans/ recycling containers for the neighborhood. The Mayor's Office is currently doing an assessment of the Oakland Community and will have a list of possible locations for these receptacles within weeks. Georgia and Pam will review the list and push for as many locations as possible.

Pam gave an update on the sign committee's first meeting. They are currently reviewing possible locations, size, image and tone as well as reviewing what other major cities are doing.

GETTING INTO AND AROUND IN OAKLAND

Portal Bridge Project:

Mavis Rainey reported that the landscaping is nearly completed next to the new slip ramp. Both the deck frame and deck are in and mainline paving should be started on October 25th. By mid-November the lane striping and painting should be completed with the bridge opening by the end of November. PennDOT officials from Harrisburg have indicated that this has been a non-eventful project and it is still being used as a standard for other communities.

Hometown Streets:

Fifth Avenue installations are completed with the new striping and paving being completed last week. Work is currently on-going at Forbes and McKee and will last approximately the next 3 weeks. Forbes and Semple should be completed by the end of

October. At that time, construction must halt with the remaining 3 intersections being completed in the Spring of 09. Outside of the HTS project, OTMA is currently researching a new signage program for the contra flow bus lane. Mavis circulated pictures of what is being considered, more to follow.

OTMA gave an update on the relocation of the bus stop to mid-block in front of 3500 Fifth Avenue. Mavis indicated the potential for serious pedestrian hazards. She and the Port Authority have discussed this issue with the City and have sent supporting documentation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OCC – Have submitted the materials to the City of Pittsburgh Mayor’s Office for the permanent closure of Lawn and Ophelia Streets. A walk through with the Mayor is planned for late October.

OTMA – Distributed literature which will be passed out at the next Oakland Pedestrian Day. A jaywalking blitz is also being planned to re-educate pedestrians.

PITT – The University Senate will host a plenary session on October 23. This semester’s topic will be “Quality of Life in Oakland.” Please be sure to take the time to check out the Cathedral of Learning during the Pittsburgh 250 celebration. A special lighting display will run through November 2, 2008.

OPDC – Gave a report on the success of the 2008 Day of Caring. OPDC was able to complete 2 major projects; the Oakland Greenway and the painting and cleaning of 141 Robinson Street. Also, thank you to Pitt students who participated in the “Pitt Makes a Difference Day” on October 18. Three more houses will be completed in the next six weeks. Also, Elmhurst has passed the Historic Review Commission.

PLAYHOUSE – Can Can is currently playing, please contact David Vinski if you would like tickets.

WPASBC – Todd Reeves welcomed the group and given the issues around the greening of Oakland and transportation, the School is considering flextime, telecommuting and adding more bike racks.

PAT – Ridership is up 8.93% system wide. The Oakland busses are currently accounting for 20% of ridership system wide. Because of the dramatic increase, the 71A route will add an additional 20 trips. The wait between buses will go from every 15 minutes to approximately every 10 minutes. PAT will begin the resurfacing of the bus lane by sections on the weekend.

CMU – A traffic light is being added at Bates and Morewood to accommodate pedestrian traffic at that intersection. A new community website is being developed the new address will be: www.cmu.edu/community. More details will follow.

CARLOW – Carlow is also participating in the Pittsburgh 250 festival of lights. Carlow is also celebrating their 80th anniversary.

OBID – The next Oakland Roundtable will focus on public safety. Please attend. OBID's board meeting will be held on October 28 at the PAA. Senator Costa, Representative Costa and Mayor Luke Ravenstahl will attend.