

Oakland Task Force
Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC
January 13, 2009

In Attendance:

Antonelli, Linda	Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC
Bettinger, Joe	Hieber's Pharmacy
Blenk, David	OPDC
Boykowycz, Kathy	Community
Byrne, Lauren	Mayors Office
Clark, Renny	Pitt
Clewett, Doug	CHS
Eichenbaum, Pam	OCC
Fisher, Elly	OPDC
Kambitsis, Jason	City Planning
Layman, Jenn	CMU
Leibow, Ron	Pitt
McGuire, Deborah	Phipps
Mergner, Fred	PAT
Nahm, Liz	OTMA
Petropoulos, Georgia	OBID
Phillips, Sandy	People's Oakland
Rainey, Mavis	OTMA
Robinson, Allison	UPMC
Robinson, Brooks	RIDC
Sciannameo, Louise	Carlow
Soska, Tracy	Pitt
Vinski, David	Playhouse
Wawrzeniak, Kelly	OPDC
Wilds, John	Pitt

OTF Priorities for 2009

Tracy Soska opened the session with an overview of some of the issues identified at the University Senate Community Relations Committee Fall Plenary.

1. Lack of public elementary schools in Oakland and the effect this was having on attracting permanent residents to the area.
2. Public Safety is still of concern to many Oakland residents, students, and employees. They feel that crime remains underreported and under enforced despite data that shows Oakland is safer than its reputation suggests.
3. Transportation and parking is still an issue with visitors not being able to locate public parking lots. Also, members discussed the possibility of involving trams, shuttle service and fringe parking.

4. Housing remains an issue with the quality of housing stock available. Representatives also expressed a desire for a balance of student/non permanent housing versus permanent resident housing. Also, the code enforcement issue remains of highest importance to residents, students and employees alike.

Also discussed was Councilman Peduto's vision of a 2020 Master Plan for Oakland and how would the OTF approach this. Jason Kambitsis indicated that the City is beginning the process of a community plan for each of the City's neighborhoods. Nothing has been developed that is concrete due to a lack of budget.

Kathy Boykowycz discussed the ongoing (for many years) lack of adequate housing stock and what the institutions can do to encourage employees to move to Oakland and become permanent residents.

David Blenk outlined what current projects OPDC is undertaking to stabilize the Oakland Communities:

1. OPDC undertakes the renovation and resale of 4-6 houses per year. Currently, they have four houses ready to sell and are marketing to buyers.
2. Due to the closing of Breachmenders, OPDC bought (and closed on 12/19) an apartment building on Robinson Street that is currently under renovation. Funds have already been set aside for this project.
3. OPDC has been working very hard on the issue of Code Enforcement to clean up Oakland and, hopefully, this will encourage more people to relocate to Oakland and become permanent residents.
4. Kelly Wawrzeniak is working with Tracy Soska (as part of the COPC discussions) on how to market housing to employees of the major Oakland institutions.

Fred Mergner presented the idea of "resident streets" that keep commuters off of neighborhood streets and on main corridors (i.e., Forbes/Fifth). Shadyside has such a program and maybe Oakland should look at this as a way to make neighborhoods more attractive.

OCC is interested in including street scapes and façade improvements and Pam will continue to work with OPDC on this issue as well as participating with OPDC and Pitt on a program that has been instituted at IUP. The City of Indiana has come up with an overlay district which allows (within the City of Indiana) the designation of a parcel/block of land to be used by developers to tear down substandard housing and rebuild "vertical" housing on certain streets and blocks. This serves to improve the look of a neighborhood as well as locate students in an area which will have less impact on permanent residents. A trip to Indiana is being planned to include: John Wilds, David Blenk, Pam Eichenbaum, Elly Fisher and Jason Kambitsis. A presentation will be given at a future Task Force meeting.

Renny Clark raised the question of whether the OTF would be interested in taking on a 2020 vision plan for Oakland. Much conversation took place on:

1. Keep it out of the political arena and strictly as a community initiative.
2. What we should be doing now involving planning so that Oakland might be ready for some of the stimulus money that the Commonwealth will be receiving.
3. The point was raised that we already had much of the work done with the list of projects included in the 2003 "Future of Oakland" report (available on the OTF website: www.oaklandtaskforce.org/publications). We should prioritize and pick one.
4. Whatever is decided, a planning process is necessary for community input.
5. What does the Oakland area want and how do we come up with the money to implement some of the projects.
6. Some agencies (such as Bike Pittsburgh) are not at the table and need to be to have a full picture of a project.
7. Several items/projects are not even on the list, i.e., Eliza Bridge, Bates Street Corridor, CMU's pedestrian improvement plan as well as the Oakland Square stabilization issue.

Renny assigned all Task Force members to fill out and submit to Tami (hirth@pitt.edu; 412-624-7707 (fax)) by FEBRUARY 2, 2009 the list of projects included in the 2007 update. He stressed that nothing is off the table. Include everything.

Announcements:

Tracy Soska will be sending out an announcement about the new Learn and Serve grants that will be available in 2009. Submissions are due by March 26.

Mavis and Liz passed out post cards for the 09 Winter Walk Challenge. Please go to: <http://www.otma-pgh.org/WWC08/Login.asp> to register. Mavis also encouraged everyone attending to go to the Port Authority of Allegheny County's website to review the preliminary "Connect 09" report. Many suggestions have been made for Route changes that will affect Oakland. <http://tdp.portauthority.org/paac/>

Hometown Streets intersections on Forbes Avenue will begin around April 6, 2009 and run through August 6, 2009. The contractor as asked if we would be agreeable to longer work days, 7:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. instead of the standard 9:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. The project is currently \$40-50k under budget.

Linda Antonelli reported that Magee has one of the highest OB volumes in the country. Unfortunately, with the worsening economy Magee has had to make staff reductions and expects to see an impact on elective procedures.

Deborah McGuire reported that Phipps just finished a strategic planning process and has held meetings with the PPC regarding Panther Hollow.

Jenn Laymen provided information on the impact of the recent economy on CMU. There is currently a hiring freeze and CMU has already indicated that there will be no salary increases in 09. Also, in December, CMU hosted the city department heads and paired them with faculty and staff who have expertise in their area, hopefully, this will lead to more interaction with the City government.

OBID will hold a board meeting this evening. Georgia indicated that after this meeting, she will be able to report on some of the changes OBID will be undertaking this year. They include: Paperless operations, a new look for the Oakland Roundtable series as well as preparations for a superbowl win.

Doug Clewett of CHS introduced himself to the group and discussed the more recent restructuring of their organization.

David Blenk updated the group on several of OPDC's initiatives: The NPO funding/tax credits are in place. OPDC made it in under the wire, the state has now discontinued this program. OPDC has four houses as well as rental units available. The Uptown corridor groups have found funding to pay for a study of the area over next few months. David will give updates.

Louise Sciannameo reported that Carlow is weathering the economic climate well. Carlow is a tuition driven institution and applications are running at 28%.

Brooks Robinson reported that RIDC has a new President, Dr. Donald Smith formerly of Pitt and CMU and is also going through a strategic planning process.

Sandy Phillips outlined the changes that will occur in the mental health community with the upcoming closing of Mayview State Hospital and the challenges that organizations such as Peoples Oakland will face.

David Vinski outlined the 2 upcoming plays set to open: Hotel Baltimore as well as A Moon to Dance By (starring Jane Alexander). Anyone interested should call him.

Kelly Wawrzeniak provided information on the new "property owners" six part series that OPDC will be hosting this year. The first will be a presentation by Daniel Friedson of Pitt's School of Law on the legal ramifications of home ownership. March's event will be a presentation by BBI on their new legislation.

Elly Fisher reported that the seven graduates of the School to Career Program have all been accepted to four year institutions.

Pam Eichenbaum informed the group that OCC will continue to partner with OPDC on most of their upcoming projects: 1. Pedestrian mobility, neighborhood watch signs as well as residential trash cans.

Jason Kambitsis invited the group to attend the LED Billboard meeting to be held at 200 Ross Street at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday. The City of Pittsburgh has around 1,000 billboards so this meeting will be very interesting.

Lauren Byrne reported that the garbage cans have been delivered. There were 50 with 20 coming to Oakland. The Mayor's office will continue to work with Oakland residents on placement of the recycling can program this spring.

**PLEASE NOTE THE 2009 MEETING SCHEDULE.
CONTACT TAMI WITH ANY PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS**

2009 Schedule Oakland Task Force

January 13 — Magee Womens Hospital of UPMC

February 10 — University of Pittsburgh

March 10 — UPMC Health System

April 14 — Carnegie Mellon University

May 12 — Community Organizations

June 9 — Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy

July 14 — Pittsburgh Playhouse

August—No Meeting

September 8 — Carnegie Library

October 13 — Western PA School for Blind Children

November 10 — Carnegie Museum

December 8 — Carlow University