

Humboldt Gardens Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Thursday May 25, 2006

5:45 pm – 8:00 pm

CAC members and alternates attending: Paul Anthony, Humboldt Neighborhood Association; Sam Brooks, OAME; Carolyn Brown, Albina Rotary; Jim Bowles, PCC; Adriana Larraga–Garcia, resident; Lynn Thompson, Big Brothers/Big Sisters; Shannon Ward, neighbor; Patricia Welch, Multnomah Library, Killingsworth Branch.

Guests: Michael Willis, Bill Lanning – Michael Willis Architects (MWA); Shelley McIntyre – Parametrix; Carolyn Wilson - Walsh Construction

HAP staff and project consultants:

Vikki Allen, Michael Andrews, Sharetta Butcher, Michael Buonocore, Myriam Demezas, Pamela Kambur, Julie Livingston, John Manson, Chrissy McClausland, Regina Rozier, Lynn Thompson, Tatiana Xenelis

24 attendees; a light dinner of pizza provided by a small business on Lombard.

Welcome and introductions: Michael Andrews introduced the Michael Willis Architects (MWA) team and provided an overview of the night's agenda –

Project Directors Update – Sixty-six families currently live at the Iris Court cluster. June 1st is when the official relocation process will start, so we're ahead of the game. On June 9th there will be a BBQ with HAP staff to commemorate the relocation process. Mike recapped the Board of Commissioners discussion regarding the home ownership plan and the intent to bring the plan back to the June's board meeting for approval.

The HUD Disposition Application was submitted today to start the process for the disposition of the scattered site homes. Housing Authority is seeking HUD's approval to sell the homes/lot. The HUD site visit will take place on August 18th with a formal response to HUD regarding the design of Humboldt.

Jim Bowles interjected to express his concern regarding gentrification of the neighborhood when the homes are sold. Michael Andrews clarified that the HUD disposition application is a formal process that HAP needs to go through to start the process of selling the 21 sites.

Michael Andrews recapped the homeownership program goals: to achieve deep, and long term affordability, to sell homes of sustainable quality, and provide options to fill the minority homeownership gap in Portland

Overview of Community design workshop process to date

Julie Livingston took the floor to thank residents for showing up at the planning and design workshops. There are multiple architects on the project. MWA were

selected through a competitive process. Michael Willis has been leading the design workshops. Julie updated the group that she is optimistic that HAP will be able to secure the city parking lot on the west side of the site – the deal is not closed, but negotiations are positive.

Julie added that the focus of resident outreach includes resident safety and addressing resident's concerns through architectural design. This is a preview of what will be going into HUD in August as part of the revitalization plan.

Mini – Workshop: *what do CAC members think about current site plan and housing design options?*

Michael Willis took the floor to recap the process of the Saturday design workshops and how each workshop builds upon the previous sessions to incorporate ideas and address issues.

- Workshop One included understanding the site limitations regarding access, and interviewing maintenance staff to understand the sites limitations.
- The second Workshop included discussions around safety and security regarding the current site plans from a resident and neighbor perspective.
- The third Workshop narrowed the universe of ideas for the site plan down to two options of inhabiting the site. Revised Option C plan integrates the comments together to take the 2nd plan forward for approval. This Option C incorporates design details, such as canopies over doors, how to encourage “eyes on the street”, and the location of porches. Landscape architects McDonald and Co. introduced landscaping themes for the final site plan, Revised Option C.

Site Plan Options B and C: Option B is an approach that eliminates the barrier between Sumner and Vancouver essentially connecting Haight to Sumner. This idea connects the street back to the grid of surrounding streets. This eliminates the housing authority “mote” design ideas that were employed in the 1940's; these old design standards isolate the public housing community from the larger neighborhood. It also creates social problems based on isolating the site and its inhabitants. Webster connects to Vancouver connecting the townhomes and mixed-use building. Option B also has larger green areas of congregated green spaces rather than smaller green parks. In both options, the landscape architects focused on the gradual flow of green spaces as one moves from public street, to walkways, to private yards.

At the last Saturday session, there were positive comments for both Option B and C.

The design approach was to arrive at a solution that eliminates spaces that prevented “eyes on the neighborhood”.

The mixed-use four story building on Vancouver assimilates the head Start program, services and community meeting space.

The WMA team is now focusing on very specific architectural designs. The current plans show the placement of green spaces and buildings, but not the specific architectural elements that will be incorporated into the design of the multifamily homes and mixed-use building.

Audience Discussion

Jim Boyles commented that PCC has made a 65 million dollar investment in the Humboldt and surrounding community with the Cascade campus: He does not want to lose the families that the school serves to gentrification.

There were comments from audience members to clarify that the relocated families would have the first option to move back to the revitalized site. Michael Willis agreed that this is the approach HAP is taking.

Jim Boyles highlighted that from a historical perspective, in the 1950's – 70's there were higher rates of African-American and other minority home ownership in the neighborhood. Gentrification begins with losing your home and then having to lean on the public housing option.

Michael Willis shared stories of public housing redevelopment that has helped to revitalize the neighborhood. The perception of public housing changes to attract different types of households; families were attracted to the for-sale opportunities.

Sam Brookes commented that in order to link home ownership opportunities with wealth creation there must be the connection to economic development opportunities. This is the full spectrum conversation that needs to take place.

Michael Willis asked for other comments regarding the public access, connected streets, multi-service buildings.

Lynn Thompson commented on the access for cyclists in terms of feeling protected from vehicles.

Pamela Kambur mentioned that there are discussions with neighbors underway from Park Terrace about connection and access to their site – in order to acknowledge the neighbors in the surrounding larger community.

Julie Livingston piped up that the site has generally been difficult because it is landlocked. The team is not in the position to push streets through but HAP plans to put in a pedestrian walkway to connect to Vancouver to meet the City of Portland's pedestrian goals. Michael Andrews mentioned that there was outreach to Park Terrace residents and HAP has been invited to their board meeting in

June to discuss programs/ services connection, pedestrian connections and other design elements with Humboldt Gardens.

Carolyn Brown asked about on street parking options. Michael Willis commented that parking for the houses will be on site via parking pads.

Julie commented that there's a perception that there isn't enough parking onsite, rather residents park on the street to keep an eye on their vehicle – they don't use the parking lot since it is isolated. Revised Option C corrects this problem.

When prompted by Pamela Kambur, Paul Anthony, from Humboldt Neighborhood Association, commented that neighborhood association members are overjoyed about this design option. Specific to the size, or massing, of the mixed-use buildings on Vancouver that had caused concerns at the time of the grant proposal, Paul commented the neighborhood is cautiously optimistic and continuing to participate in the design process.

Julie clarified that when the grant was written, there were two mixed-use buildings. Over time as the design process continues, and in order to create green space while keeping density, the "one" building idea emerged. The main entry to this building will be at Webster for the residential lobby. This entrance location allows integration into the larger community.

Patricia Welch asked about how will the neighborhood maintain the green space and community gardens? Paul Anthony commented that head of maintenance at Iris Court added that there should be one big green space for ease of maintenance. Revised Option C from workshop 3 addresses this issue.

Jim Boyles talked about what services Hacienda CDC integrated into their new community: a credit union, a health clinic, a Head Start building in the infrastructure to help build people's lives. This is a positive approach to help families reconstruct their lives.

Julie commented when the Albina Community Plan was adopted by council it created a small, walkable commercial zone. And thirteen years later there isn't any commercial space and HAP hopes that the Head Start is one way to jump start this commercial revitalization process.

Patricia Welch asked about what services are being offered at New Columbia (NC). Pamela Kambur commented that Big City Produce and PCC learning center is opening as part of the Main Street on Trenton (grand opening on June 6th). Michael emphasized that the difference between NC and Humboldt Garden is that NC is more isolated – there was a different neighborhood dynamic at NC because of the lack of adjacent commercial zones. What we can do at Humboldt

Gardens is to reach out to other partners to see how residents can connect with the services that are already in place in the neighborhood.

Sam Brookes asked if there are discussions with BHCD and the Mayor's office to encourage the availability or to facilitate these connections with the neighborhood and businesses.

An audience member asked about the open green space in Revised Option C and maintenance – Julie Livingston clarified that this space will be owned by HAP and the street will be a public right of way. Revised Option C takes all the little green spaces that could be hard to maintain and hard to monitor and creates one larger green space. HAP will control the maintenance of the park and also have options to correct bad activity.

Patricia Welch asked about the “yellow space” on the design boards and Michael Willis clarified that these are private yards for the multi-family dwellings. This space is currently an alley that leads to a basketball court and is hard to monitor space. The space will be fenced in the Revised Option C.

Julie clarified that the goals that were established for the HOPE VI grant is first and foremost safety and security for residents and second, greenspace and play space. The private yards in the family housing will “control” access to the space because it rings the green space.

Wrap Up and Summary of Next Steps

Michael Willis emphasized that the community design process has evolved over time. Things are different now. This process takes longer, but integrates ideas in a process that the resident's recognize they raised as important. The design workshop on Saturday, June 3rd is the time for final comments as well as the economic elements. This will continue into July. Jim Bowles noted that there is a transportation team working an initiative for additional public transportation changes and increases in safety in the neighborhood. Bill Lanning commented that his team is looking on Sumner Street at ways to reduce speed. So within the MWA site plan there will be traffic-calming devices to reduce traffic and speed and conversations with City of Transportation Bureau are encouraging the city to make the same improvements on the other side of the street.

The meeting adjourned at 7:32