

## Howard University Campus Plan Task Force

### MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

2 June 2010

6:30 p.m.

#### Attendees

Sylvia Robinson, Exec. Director, Emergence Community Arts Collective (ECAC)  
Georgia Avenue Development Task Force  
Patrick Nelson, ECAC and Development Corporation of Columbia Heights (DCCH),  
ANC 1B Design Committee  
Richard Myers, President, LeDroit Park Civic Association  
Benton Heimsath, Councilmember Graham's Office  
Thomas Dawes, Development Corporation of Columbia Heights, Georgia Avenue  
Development Task Force  
Tony Norman, Pleasant Plains Civic Association, Chair, ANC 1B Design Committee,  
Georgia Avenue Development Task Force  
Danielle Ricks, LeDroit Park Civic Association  
Ernest Quimby, Howard University Professor Sociology/Anthropology, Georgia  
Avenue Development Task Force  
Brad Grant, Director Howard University School of Architecture, ANC 1B Design  
Committee  
Diane Branch, Howard University Associate Vice President for Real Estate  
Maybelle Taylor Bennett, Director, Howard University Community Association

#### Meeting Highlights

Maybelle Bennett opened the meeting with summary remarks about the following items:

- What distinguishes this campus plan from previous plans:
  - This plan is intended to be an analytical needs-based plan.
  - For the first time, environmental sustainability is identified as a goal.
  - The University's contribution to the economic vitality of the surrounding area is a stated goal.
  - The neighboring community is more fully engaged.
- The draft *Existing Conditions Report* is the first product of the campus plan team, and represents the communication between the consultant and its client, the University. It is still undergoing revisions; however, in order not to postpone the community's review of its contents, the task force is reviewing the draft of the report.
- The Zoning Commission approved an extension of the filing deadline through June, 2011 in recognition of: President Ribeau's establishment of the Presidential Commission on Academic Renewal; his recent appointment of key University officers, including the new

Provost, Chief Operations Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Senior Vice President for Health Affairs; and the community's support.

### **Existing Conditions Report Content Reviewed**

**Executive Summary:** It was explained that this Executive Summary is incomplete and needs to be revised to include a summary of all of the chapters within the report.

**Regional Context:** In the second paragraph on p. 30, the neighborhoods of Pleasant Plains and Park View should be mentioned.

**Neighborhood Context:** In the last paragraph on p. 32, the University's partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Manna and the Peoples Involvement Corporation, should be mentioned regarding the thirty units of rehabilitated and newly-constructed housing that resulted from that partnership within the LeDroit Park neighborhood as well.

Also, on p. 32, last paragraph, last line, "employees" should be correctly spelled.

In this location, on p. 32, it was suggested that a paragraph be added to the report describing the history of the Pleasant Plains neighborhood. This was deemed important because this is the neighborhood into which the University envisions its future expansion. In addition, the Pleasant Plains neighborhood has worked to develop the Georgia Avenue Heritage Trail in concert with Cultural Tourism, D.C. and has a great deal of information from which to draw for such a description. Sylvia Robinson agreed to provide this to the University for inclusion into the report.

A discussion ensued regarding the preference the community has for using the official boundaries of the D.C. Federation of Civic Associations as boundary delineations. Patrick Nelson will provide those boundaries for use in the report's map found on page 33.

In addition, the question was asked as to how University campus plan boundaries are determined. The response was that if a preponderance of the uses within a square are University uses, or a preponderance of land ownership within a square is University-owned, and the University identifies it as being within its boundaries and those boundaries are approved by the Zoning Commission, then the boundaries are deemed campus plan boundaries.

The land across from the Service Center is proposed for inclusion within the campus plan boundaries, while the Howard Town Center is proposed for exclusion from within the boundaries. This latter issue is one that the task force will revisit as more information about: 1) the timing of the Town Center project is understood; and 2) information from the land use counsel regarding further processing requirements for University-owned commercial properties is learned.

**Zoning Districts and Land Use:** The underlying zone districts and the overlay zone districts that cover the central campus were reviewed. Of note, the industrial zone district of the hospital and the Wonder Plaza complex were mentioned. In the context of discussing

what might happen if the hospital were to be relocated, the University would need to amend its campus plan in concert with the surrounding community. Included in such an exercise would be a review that entailed: 1) its academic plan to determine what needs that space might address; 2) the DUKE Plan, given its adjacency directly to the east of that plan's boundaries; and 3) the Great Streets Initiative, which covers that area.

A discussion of the reasons for the widespread diplomatic overlay zone across much of the central campus took place, including the history of the establishment of that overlay district which emerged out of the historic Benin Embassy/State Department Communication Antennae case.

### **Zone Map**

An error in the labeling of McMillan Reservoir as falling into the R-5-B zone district, when it is federal land and is therefore unzoned, was noted.

In addition, Columbia Avenue should be relabeled "Columbia Road," and Bryant Avenue, should be relabeled "Bryant Street" on all of the maps in the report.

### **Allowable FARs**

Maybelle Bennett graphically described what "FAR" means as a measure of building bulk on a site as determined by the ratio of the floor area of a building to the area of land on which it sits.

### **Land Use Map**

Many labeling errors were discovered on the land use map which need to be corrected. Maybelle Bennett agreed to have the team make the corrections.

### **Other Items**

Three task force members identified themselves as being interested in participating in Dr. Eve Higginbotham's strategic planning exercise for the Academic Medical Center (including the hospital, the College of Medicine, the School of Dentistry, the College of Allied Health, Pharmacy and Nursing, and the Louis Stokes Health Sciences Library) on June 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. These members are:

- Tony Norman, Pleasant Plains Civic Association
- Thomas Dawes, Development corporation of Columbia Heights
- A LeDroit Park Civic Association Representative (TBD)

### **Improvements to this Process**

Serve snacks.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.