

Howard University Campus Plan Task Force

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

11 August 2010

Attendees

Richard Myers, President LeDroit Park Civic Association
Thomas Dawes, Development Corporation of Columbia Heights
Anita Rice, LeDroit Park Civic Association
Patrick Nelson, Development Corporation of Columbia Heights,
Emergence Community Arts Collective
Sylvia Robinson, Emergence Community Arts Collective, Pleasant Plains Civic Association
A.K. Adams, GADGET Center
Lawrence Guyot, LeDroit Park Civic Association
Tony Norman, Pleasant Plains Civic Association
Danielle Ricks, LeDroit Park Civic Association
Maybelle Taylor Bennett, Director, Howard University Community Association

Meeting Highlights

This meeting began with a description of the Physical Campus Setting and Historical Development sections of the *Existing Conditions Report*. These sections tell two stories:

1. The Physical Campus Setting section describes the growth of Howard University within the natural environment and how it developed from farmland to an urban university.
2. The Historical Development section describes the evolution of the institution within the built environment.

PHYSICAL CAMPUS SETTING	HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT
Objectives regarding natural landscape	Objectives regarding the built environment
Protect open spaces. How? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quads formerly larger percentage of campus (now is less than 5%)	Preservation of historic resources: How? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interim Historical Preservation Policy• Campus Historical District design• Assign historical preservation specialist to oversee treatment and protection of historical resource• Look at financial opportunities through tax credits

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Howard University’s legal responsibilities under National Historic Preservation Act • Get a grant to develop Historic Preservation Plan
<p>Enhance landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting by graduating classes has stopped. There are a few mature canopies of trees (only 5%) 	<p>Review of historic resources (e.g. buildings over 50 years old) that interface with the community at the northern end of the campus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Howard Manor (almost vacant) • Former bank building (G.A.D.G.E.T. & HU Athletics offices) • Effingham Apartments (fully vacant) <p>Campus plan task force members support potential redevelopment with neighborhood input and guidance.</p>
<p>LeDroit Park and Bloomingdale neighborhoods are plagued with regular flooding when heavy rains come. Recommendations above would aid in storm water management and the mitigation of area run-off events.</p> <p>Increase non-impervious surface area.</p>	<p>Review of historic resources (e.g. buildings over 50 years old) that interface with the community at the southern end of the campus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bond bread building • Bus garage <p>Pleasant Plains neighbors on the campus plan task force support the Howard Town Center development and want to stay updated on its progress and have input in its development.</p>
<p>This section needs to add information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Howard University Environmental Sustainability Council • the contract with Honeywell to implement cost saving measures in campus buildings and measure the University’s carbon footprint • the Microgrid Project designed to generate energy by capturing and using the wasted heat expelled from the turbines in the power plant 	

Physical Campus Setting

Sylvia Robinson asked if Howard would allow neighbors to plant a garden on the plot of land Howard owns at Barry Place and Sherman Avenue in front of the mural. Only grass is growing on that plot now and it has to be mowed. Maybelle Bennett mentioned that there is precedent for doing that and cited the Hobart Gardens example in the 500 block of Hobart, where the

University granted the Pleasant Plains Civic Association a license to use Howard-owned land for gardening purposes until the University decided to sell the lots.

Tony Norman suggested that the University could better landscape the hillside beneath Blackburn building as it drops down toward Fourth Street.

Other suggestions from the group included:

- the installation of green roofs
- the installation of planters on Blackburn's patio
- the creation of scenic plantings, including a meditative or Zen garden (Tony Norman)

Maybelle Bennett questioned why Howard University was not shown on the map on p. 105 which depicts the Rock Creek drainage basin, in the discussion of the University's watershed context. She also asked why there was no mention of the Tiber Creek that runs through the University community and its adjacent neighborhoods. The group decided that some mention of the Tiber Creek was relevant to the discussion of this part of the *Existing Conditions Report*.

Mr. Guyot remembered hearing stories about boats being parked at Florida and Georgia Avenues.

The group collectively shared stories about the water that occasionally floods the basements of area homes, causing residents to install sump pumps. Residents along U Street, 4th Street and throughout the Bloomingdale neighborhood also have to take the same precaution to prevent the flooding of their homes. The Howard Hotel has sump pumps, as does the garage behind the hospital at 5th and Oakdale Place.

Mr. Dawes asked if there were a way to connect Howard University to communities around it more effectively, and at the same time to better demarcate Howard University's boundaries. He mentioned that coming up Georgia Avenue or 4th Street, if you don't look carefully, you won't know that you are passing the University. The landscaping and signage should provide an announcement to all who pass by that says, "You have arrived at Howard University, welcome." There is no Visitor's Center and no welcoming culture intended to make visitors feel that they are wanted here. To help visitors navigate the campus, the names of buildings should be on all of the sides of the buildings that are visible to passersby, as they are on the buildings of the University of Maryland in downtown Baltimore.

Something similar should happen in the neighborhoods. Signs should acknowledge when you enter and leave LeDroit Park, for example, as suggested by Anita Rice. Task force members liked the idea of using banners to mark the perimeters of the University and the neighborhoods.

Campus Plan Community Participation

Lawrence Guyot wanted to know how the information discussed at the campus plan task force meetings was to be disseminated throughout the larger community. Maybelle Bennett mentioned the ways that had been envisioned to date, including:

- task force members are encouraged to take back the information we discuss to their ANCs, civic associations community groups and neighbors;
- a website will be established on which maps, minutes of the meetings, powerpoint presentations and other hand-outs can be shared and feedback can be received;
- Community Advisory Committee meetings are ongoing;
- task force members populate other community venues and groups where they are able to share information, i.e. the Georgia Avenue Development Task Force, and ANC 1B's Design Committee; and
- prior to being formally filed, presentations of the draft plan will be made to all ANCs and civic associations with standing on the Howard campus plan for their feedback and comment.

Lawrence Guyot said that WHUT and WHUR are underutilized, and recommended that a panel discussion about the plan should take place to provide more information to the public. Anita Rice recommended that before the draft is circulated, we should employ all avenues available for sharing information with the community. Mr. Guyot said that if we are as transparent as we can be, we can then justify setting a cut-off date for receiving input, because community input will never have been solicited this broadly or this openly before.

Maybelle Bennett explained that three other segments of the *Existing Conditions Report* will need to be reviewed later in the fall when they become available: Space Utilization; Utilities; and Blackburn Student Union.

The next scheduled campus plan task force meeting conflicts with the Georgia Avenue Development Task Force meeting to be held on August 25, 2010. Since those task force members also serve on the Howard campus plan task force, the campus plan task force meeting will be cancelled on that date and Maybelle Bennett will attend the Georgia Avenue Task Force meeting. Also, the Georgia Avenue Task Force is scheduled to make a presentation to the campus plan task force on September 8th.

On September 22nd the campus plan task force will discuss how to expand community involvement in campus plan discussions. Ms. Bennett will contact Peter McLaughlin regarding the development of the website and Ms. Ricks will be in communication about how she might assist in its development.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.