

Cherry Hill Community Coalition

Minutes – Nov. 15, 2007

Open Meeting – Topic: Community Awareness Meeting

[Adopted TBD]

Community Members/Stakeholders Present:

- List retained by Evelyn Simmons-McCoy

Guests:

- Councilman Ed Reisinger, 10th District
- Mr. Michael Pokorny – BDC presenter
- Ms. Jessica Keller – DOT presenter

Tonight's Business: The meeting was led/facilitated by Evelyn Simmons-McCoy.

1. Two topics were on the agenda:
 - a) Presentation by Baltimore City Department of Transportation: **Inner Harbor West Traffic Impact Study**
 - b) Presentation by Baltimore Development Corporation: **TIF implementation in the Turner Development Project**
2. Community comments on the Baltimore City DOT presentation included:
 - a) Several attendees commented that the study assumptions appeared to be flawed with respect to the proposed development's impact on Cherry Hill traffic and roads.
 - b) The community was informed that the portion of the TIF agreement concerning "Major Capacity Improvements" was technically completed and there were no plans to include the items that were of chief concern to the Cherry Hill community. The presenter stated that Cherry Hill's concerns fall below the threshold for consideration as "Major Capacity Improvements" and that the community should seek other alternatives for these improvements and suggested that the upcoming Middle Branch Transportation Study is one such opportunity to get these improvements funded and implemented. .
 - c) Councilman Reisinger suggested that Cherry Hill should actively participate in the upcoming Middle Branch Transportation study to ensure desired Cherry Hill transportation improvements are accommodated.
 - d) Several items required more detailed answers from the DOT presenter to include:
 - a. A definitive answer on whether the Inner Harbor West Transportation Study includes a recommendation/intent to connect Kloman Street and Cherry Hill Road at Waterview Avenue.
 - b. Timely community notice of start-up of the Middle Branch Transportation Study.
 - c. Confirm whether the Major Capacity Improvements include a new access point from I-895 onto Hanover Street
 - d. Confirm whether aspects of the Study were based on/considered any of the following assumption:

- i. Most vehicular drivers will avoid roads that contain surface level railroad crossing as a first option in daily commute routes.
 - ii. Currently most locals avoid I-295 as a first option in their commute because it is routinely backed-up during peak rush hours.
3. Community Comments on the BDC- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) presentation included:
 - a) Mr. Countess asked Mr. Pokorny to explain the process and timeline for completion and overall status of the Turner TIF.
 - b) Mr. Pokorny offered the following:
 - a. The Turner Project has requested TIF funds totally \$106M (\$90M basic infrastructure and \$16M for Major Capacity Improvements)
 - b. Negotiations regarding the Major Capacity Improvements portion of the TIF were technically completed.
 - c. Negotiations on the First Source hiring agreement were pending with the Office of Employment Development (MOED).
 - d. Negotiations regarding the Affordable Housing Agreement were pending with the Office of Employment Development (MOED).
 - e. Any community member should feel free to provide input and comments to the City on the TIF.
 - f. Westport did submit a community support letter that contained a contingency condition in its support of the Turner TIF which did not materialize and the City did not follow-up or facilitate the successful execution of that contingency condition on behalf of the Westport community because the Community opted to negotiate directly with Turner. *[Note: Similar failed attempts to obtain community benefits has been noted as a lesson learned in other community benefit agreement initiatives across the nation]*
 - g. Suggested that desired community benefits for Cherry Hill be coordinated via local political/elected officials to ensure buy-in and support, starting with the Cherry Hill City Councilman.
 - h. Explained that a 4% cap on the City's net worth as valued by its bond rating is available annually for TIFs and that over 75% of that amount has already been committed for 7 other development projects. All or a portion of the remaining 25% is available for the Turner project, but a clear majority of the community must support it. *[Note: It was not clear whether the community support means only Westport residents or does that include the surrounding community too - both Westport and Cherry Hill]*
4. Wrap-up: No wrap-up or follow-up discussion was conducted.
5. Next Meeting: None.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim A. Trueheart