



Citizens Steering Committee (CSC) Meeting Summary

August 27, 2008 Meeting

Pima Community College Downtown Campus, Amethyst Community Room, 1255 N. Stone Avenue
5:30 p.m. Conversation & Refreshments; 6-8 p.m. Meeting

CSC Members Present: Jason Brown, Dick DeNezza, Tad Denton, Bernadette Jilka, Darel Magee, Martina O'Brien, Joshua Randell, Cathy Rex, Ken Scoville, Leon Solomon, Gloria Townsend, Charlie Wachtel, Bob Wright

CSC Members Absent: Hilary Eshelman, Bill Quiroga, Steve Roth

Staff Present:

Ward III Office – Vice Mayor Karin Uhlich, Tamara Prime/Council Aide

UPD OARP Team – Chris Kaselemis, Administrator; Rebecca Ruopp, Project Manager; María Gayosso, Lead Planner; Jennifer Burdick, Planner; Gina Chorover, Planner; Barbara Hayes, Public Information Specialist

City of Tucson Department of Transportation/Real Estate – Tim Murphy

Technical Advisory Team – Pat Quinn, Tucson Fire Department; Ron Thompson, Tucson Police Department; Teresa Williams, Department of Neighborhood Resources

Actions Taken/ Follow-Up Required

Meeting Agenda & Discussions

1. Welcome and Introductions

The CSC members introduced themselves by name and affiliation to the project area. Staff members and audience members introduced themselves.

2. Regular Business

- June 25, 2008, CSC Meeting Summary – CSC members approved the summary, with Leon Solomon moving to approve, and Martina O'Brien seconding the motion.

Approved by vote of 13-0

3. Updates and Announcements

- Ghost Ranch Lodge** – Property owner Mark Breen, CEO of Atlantic Development, and his attorney Scott Gillette provided an update on the status of the redevelopment of the Ghost Ranch Lodge at Miracle Mile/Fairview Ave. As previously reported, the application Breen submitted in March 2008 was rejected because the State of Arizona said the project didn't meet eligibility requirements. Since the decisions, however, the State has received more funding from the Federal government and has reopened the application process. Breen will re-submit their application on October 1, 2008 and anticipates a decision on the second allocation round in mid-November. He encouraged the CSC to write Governor Napolitano and the Arizona Department of Housing to express support for this project and the allocation of grant funding. If the application is awarded, Breen expects to begin cleaning out the interiors of the buildings after the first of the year.

Questions and comments were as follows:

- CSC Member:** What can the CSC do to support the Atlantic Developments' efforts?

Atlantic Development: Letters to Fred Karnas, Director/Arizona



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Housing Department and Governor Napolitano would be helpful. Mark Breen stated that the property has been vacant for five years. During that time, the property has experienced vandalism and a gas main leak. If the project doesn't receive the tax credits, Mark couldn't assure the CSC that the buildings would be around. The buildings aren't insurable except for the short term. Liability won't be easy with the buildings in poor shape.

- *CSC Member:* Is a caretaker on site?

Atlantic Development: Not a full-time caretaker.

- *CSC Member:* What is the condition of the landscape?

Atlantic Development: Every effort has been made to work with the State. The landscape is spectacular. The CSC will be advised if things change. The project is part of the neighborhood.

- *CSC Member:* Compliance with ADA requirements is very important. Are you planning to incorporate this into your redevelopment plans? Those kinds of property improvements could help gain the support for the project redevelopment.

Atlantic Development: There are plans to meet the requirements, absolutely.

OARP Team Member Rebecca Ruopp offered to collect additional questions regarding the Ghost Ranch Lodge from CSC participants to share with the Atlantic Development team.

- **CSC Memberships** – OARP Team Member Rebecca Ruopp stated that she will be recruiting new members for the CSC and she will be proactive about filling the seats. CSC members should share the names of people they think would be willing to apply. Karen Lamberton has regrettably resigned from the CSC.

- **Oracle/Drachman/Main Art Project** – CSC Member Leon Solomon discussed the Tucson Pima Arts Council (TPAC) process regarding public art at Oracle/Main/Drachman. A team of eight people reviewed the work of 30 artists and selected three finalists. A site visit for the three finalists was set for August 28. The three finalists are Dirk Arnold, Joe Tyler, and John Davis. The proposal includes a request for durable projects and also that the artist be familiar with Tucson. Rebecca Ruopp added that the process has been long and thoughtful and that the selection would include gateway features that would be viewed by vehicles and pedestrians. Solomon will keep the CSC advised of the status of the selection process.

- *CSC Member:* Is the northeast corner of Oracle/Drachman still under consideration for location of the art piece?

Project Staff Response: OARP Team Member Rebecca responded that property owner Chip Pique is on the selection committee and he is willing to consider the possibilities but nothing has been determined.

- **Speedway Blvd./Main Ave. Intersection** – Tim Murphy from the City of Tucson Transportation Department indicated that in 2007, Mayor and Council approved improvements to Main Avenue at the intersection with Speedway Boulevard. The improvements include a dual left turn lane for southbound



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Meeting Agenda & Discussions

traffic and for a bus pull-out on the northeast corner. The pawn shop was acquired by the City of Tucson and will be vacant after September. Currently, the City is completing asbestos information.

Acquisition of more right-of-way to accommodate the bus pull-out on the northeast corner is necessary and the City is negotiating an exchange of property with a landowner alongside Main Ave. The exchange would involve some of the land alongside Main Ave. for some of the property acquired from the Soto's Pawn Shop acquisition. The exchange agreement will go before the Mayor and Council for approval on September 3.

Comments/Questions regarding property acquisition were as follows:

- *CSC Member:* How will the CSC be involved or informed of the progress on this exchange agreement?

Murphy's Response: The exchange agreement will involve a rezoning. The CSC will be kept apprised of public meetings and information about the project in general will be forwarded to project staff.

- *CSC Member:* You mentioned 'Main LLC' – what is that?

Murphy's Response: That is the property owner and the company is owned by Danny Duke and represented by Norman Hoegger.

- *CSC Member:* What documentation is being done on the pawn shop which was established in 1945?

Murphy's Response: The architecture firm Poster/Frost was asked to review the structure and provide a determination about its historic status. Poster/Frost determined that the structure lacks sufficient integrity to qualify for consideration as a historic building.

- *CSC Member:* What the City of Tucson does best is build streets, not to protect and observe landmarks. We need to be aware of landmarks and keep/encourage integrity of the structures.

Project Staff Response: Demion Clinco, the consultant hired for this project to do a Historic Context Assessment of the project area, will be at the September meeting to discuss the results of his study.

- *CSC Member:* The City will use the right-of-way it acquires to put in the bus pull-out. What will happen to the portion that is given to Main LLC in exchange for the right-of-way?

Norman Hoegger, representative for Main LLC: There are no immediate plans to develop.

CSC Chair Charlie Wachtel indicated that Danny Duke and Norman Hoegger could be invited back to a future meeting to answer that question further.

- **Summary of Market Discussions with Developers and Brokers (July 2008) –** OARP Team member Jenn Burdick provided information about two meetings held in July with developers, brokers and financiers to discuss the Market Analysis Report recommendations. A summary of comments/suggestions



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received at these meetings was provided to the CSC members. The Market Analysis, as well as maps of vacant and commercial properties, are available on the OARP website.

- **9/25/08 Business Mixer** – An event is planned for businesses within the project area. It will be held at College Place from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Presentation set for 5:30-6:30. Speakers include Britton Dornquast, program manager for the RTA MainStreet Program and an instrumental business owner in forming the Campbell Avenue Merchants Association; and, Lisette DeMars, membership coordinator from the Tucson chapter of Local First Arizona.

The rest of the event will include time to network while enjoying food donated by OARP area restaurants, and information sharing about resources for businesses and public projects planned for the area.

The CSC was encouraged to distribute flyers provided to them in packets and Jenn Burdick mentioned that there are over 500 businesses in the OARP. The following were comments and suggestions:

- Invite elected officials and candidates for office
- Post the flyer at/in the Tucson Weekly
- When the CSC members and project staff are talking with businesses, try to get a contact name/information from the businesses
- Invite La Fuente
- CSC Member Dick DeNezza committed to displaying flyers at Einstein Bagels

4. OARP’s Revised Principles and Initiation of Revitalization Goals and Strategies Discussion

OARP Team Member María Gayosso indicated that the Principles were revised based on the 6/25/08 CSC meeting and subsequent input received by CSC members via e-mail and fax. A copy of the revised Principles was e-mailed and mailed to CSC members on 8/18/08 for their review. Gayosso reminded CSC members that the Principles are part of a working document that may be further refined as the project proceeds and additional information and input is obtained.

CSC Chairman Charlie Wachtel asked for a motion to accept the Principles as a working document. Gloria Townsend made the motion to accept. Dick DeNezza seconded.

5. Call to the Audience

The following were comments received from CSC members and the audience during the Call to the Audience:

- *Audience Member:* Improve connectivity to other revitalization projects via the Oracle & Stone gateways.
- *Audience Member:* Provide interest for people coming from the Interstate. Use historic streetlights, and/or neon lights and signs.
- *Audience Member:* Continue to use historic signs (such as a cowboy on horse).
- *Audience Member:* Highlight corridors with lampposts – more reflective of older

- CSC Members will go to businesses to invite them to the event using information provided to them in packets.
- OARP Team will talk to restaurants to about donating food for the event.
- OARP Team will develop and use a mailing list and media list to promote the September Business Networking Event.

Approved by vote of 13-0



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Tucson, like 4th Avenue.

- *CSC Member:* Bernadette Jilka announced that she is providing community outreach as she and her neighbors actively pursue becoming a neighborhood association. Coronado Heights had a meeting on August 19 and Jennifer Burdick attended to provide information on the OARP. Bernadette would like the OARP project area to include Coronado Heights.
 - Rebecca Ruopp responded that this would be a good idea when the neighborhood association is formed.
- *CSC Member:* Please include the Stone businesses in the mailings regarding the September 25 mixer.
- *Audience Member:* Rick Wicinski, President of the Amphi Neighborhood Association, was introduced by CSC member Bernadette Jilka. He updated the CSC about a grant application Amphi Neighborhood, along with Keeling, El Cortez, Balboa Heights and Coronado Heights, are submitting through TPD to the Department of Justice. Wicinski clarified that this application is for a Weed & Seed grant: the “Weed” portion of the grant supports law enforcement and the “Seed” portion helps to bring in human services to aid in revitalization of neighborhood.
 - CSC Member Leon Solomon asked that the Meth Alliance program be added to a future agenda.
 - CSC Member Martina O’Brien asked for a timeframe on the Weed and Seed grant and Wicinski responded that he should receive an update in November regarding the selection. Background: \$1M funding is spread over five years and the Department of Justice selects 20 sights per year.
- *Project Staff Member:* OARP staff member Rebecca Ruopp mentioned that the University of Arizona approached her regarding a student leadership program and that the OARP is a good match. The program will give 4th year students in art/film and other disciplines a chance to work toward a project with the OARP as the basis. An example a project they might undertake is a compilation of stories and history of the Oracle Area. Rebecca will keep the CSC advised regarding status.
- *CSC Member:* The New Life Community Church has food distributions on Saturdays. Those in need should make contact with the church, which is located on Geronimo/Yavapai.
- *CSC Member:* Can the name of Main Avenue be changed back to Oracle Road?
Project Staff Response: be included in the next CSC meeting agenda. OARP Staff member Rebecca Ruopp indicated that UPD will investigate the process for street name change, and will discuss it with Council Member Uhlich.

OARP team will research process to change street names.

6. Next CSC Meeting (Wednesday, August 27, 2008) – Preliminary Agenda Items

- *Regular Business*
- *Revitalization Goals & Strategies – Second Draft*
- *Historic Resource Assessment*



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- *Update on the Grant Road Widening Project*

Additional comments regarding future agenda items were:

- Plans for light rail
- Possible Brown Bag Meeting Topics:
 - Public Relations: How to Enhance the Image of the Area
 - Transit & Bus Stops

Formal Meeting adjourned.

7. CSC Working Session – Discussion of Revitalization Goals and Strategies

OARP Team Member Rebecca Ruopp provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the approach to the goals and strategies to use in the Oracle Area Revitalization Plan.

Discussion of short term and long term possibilities:

- Mabel St. flooding.
- The City of Tucson should look at buildings and their orientation to water flow.
- The storm sewers can't provide adequate capacity. The City of Tucson does not have the money to fix the storm sewers.

Discussion regarding mobility and transit facilities.

- The bus stops should reflect two styles – one is commercial and the other is the City of Tucson model. OARP Team Member Rebecca Ruopp responded that someone representing a business attended a Visioning Session and offered to help construct bus stops.
- Sun Tran needs to improve service on Oracle. CSC Member Dick DeNezza said that College Place had to get its own bus to get their students to the UofA.
- The weekend SunTran route on Grant needs better evening service. Suggested that it would be helpful to invite or provide information regarding bus stop design. The bus stops are difficult to see at night. Ward III Council Aide Tamara Prime said her office is expecting an inventory of covered/uncovered bus stops. She will bring this information to the CSC. (Potential Brown Bag Topic)
- Visibility of the riders and of the oncoming buses is important. Some SunTran riders stand in the middle of the road to wait for the bus, which is very dangerous. Some bus drivers indicate that it is difficult to see people waiting at some stops. Improving visibility would aid both parties.

Discussion regarding Parking Goals:

- CSC Member Martina O'Brien was concerned about the heat footprint. Must be mindful of affecting the microclimate with parking lots.
- OARP Team Member Rebecca Ruopp asked that CSC members wishing to provide ideas on parking goals are invited to send her an email.

Additional Comments:

- CSC Member Dick DeNezza mentioned that a big issue is image and perception of the area. (This was suggested as a potential Brown Bag Meeting topic.)

Working Session Adjourned at 8 p.m.

- OARP Team will arrange two future Brown Bags: one on public relations; the other on transit.
- OARP Team will prioritize the issues (i.e. flood control). OARP team can provide data collection for when the City of Tucson does have funding available.
- Ward III Council Aide Tamara Prime will bring information about the bus stop inventory to the CSC.
- OARP Team will set up a Brown Bag with Tom Fisher/Tucson Department of Transportation (discuss safety issues).