



Citizens Steering Committee (CSC)

March 18, 2009 Meeting Summary

Pima Community College Downtown Campus, Amethyst Community Room, 1255 N. Stone Avenue; 5:30 PM, Conversation & Refreshments; 6:00 – 8:00 PM, Meeting

CSC Members Present: Charlie Wachtel, Chair; Jason Brown, Vice Chair; Dick DeNezza; Erik Nielsen; Eunice Jacobsen; Bernadette Jilka; Martina O’Brien; Joshua Randell; Ken Scoville; Leon Solomon; Lois Roth; Bob Wright; Vicente Zarate

CSC Members Absent: Darel Magee; Bill Quiroga; Cathy Rex; Gloria Townsend

Staff Present:

UPD OARP Team – Chris Kaselemis, Administrator; Rebecca Ruopp, Project Manager; María Gayosso, Lead Planner; Jennifer Burdick, Planner

Ward 3 Staff – Tamara Prime, Council Aide

Technical Advisory Team – Ron Thompson, Tucson Police Department; Karen Larkin, Parks & Recreation

Meeting Agenda & Discussions	Actions Taken/ Follow-Up Required
<p>1. Welcome and Introductions The CSC members introduced themselves by name and affiliation to the project area. Staff members and audience members introduced themselves.</p> <p>Regular Business</p> <p>2. January 22, 2009 and February 18, 2009, CSC Meeting Summaries – CSC members approved the summaries, with Leon Solomon moving to approve, and Josh Randell seconding the motion. The vote was unanimous.</p> <p>3. CSC Announcements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Executive Inn & Suites – CSC member Erik Nielsen clarified that foreclosure information published in the newspaper the week before regarding Executive Inn & Suites (EIS) was not related to his existing business, but actually tied to the previous owners. It had to be listed the way it was for legal reasons, but Nielsen wanted to assure everyone that his business is actually doing very well, and in the process of converting to a Clarion hotel. ■ City of Tucson Budget & the Proposed Elimination of the Department of Urban Planning & Design (DUPD) – CSC members requested staff provide an update on the City’s budget discussions and the proposed elimination of DUPD. Chris Kaselemis, DUPD Administrator, provided an overview of the situation. The City has to cut its operating budget and is investigating ways to do so. One proposal is to eliminate the department all together, and send 10 employees to the existing Development Services Department, another 10 employees to the existing Community Services Department, and then laying off the remaining 10 employees (effective June 30, 2009). The OARP project staff would be among those going to Community Services. No changes are anticipated with respect to services being provided by the staff. <p>Questions and comments were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>CSC Member:</i> What happens to the OARP plan when the Mayor and Council have approved it? 	<p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 100px;">Approved by a vote of 15-0.</p>



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Staff Response: We don't have any money allocated to this project. However, money often doesn't come until there is a plan in place. What will be important is for people in the OARP area to keep advocating: for the plan and the strategies that will be included in it; for money to help with implementing the plan; for regulatory and code changes that will work in the area; and, for incentives that bring about positive results in the area.

- ◆ *CSC Member:* It seems that there are some low-hanging fruits that can be addressed easily. Crime can be dealt with right away. Lighting can be installed, which helps with dealing with crime.

Staff Response: Lighting is actually one of the most expensive infrastructure improvements. There are grants that can cover a part of the costs, but not all of the costs. Working with the neighborhoods to apply for these grants would be an important follow-up step to this process. Tucson Police Department (TPD) would support the application process. There may be stimulus monies that can help, as well.

- ◆ *CSC Member:* If we are serious about revitalization, then the crime needs to be addressed. Lighting seems like a critical part.

Staff Response: If you, as a committee, decide that lighting is an important improvement in the area, then that can be elevated as a priority in the OARP.

- ◆ *CSC Member:* Ward III was involved in the Weed & Seed application process. There were building designs described that support safety.

Staff Response: There are design guidelines that the City of Tucson endorses that support incorporating safety in the building and landscaping. These can be referenced and encouraged in the OARP.

Ward III Response: The application has been submitted for the 2009 round of Federal Weed & Seed project grants. We have not yet heard about any awards made by the Department of Justice (DOJ), but we do know that they had started review and are awaiting Federal budget allocations. Tucson seems to have a strong application.

Staff Response: Neighborhoods in the OARP area have also been successful in applying for Neighborhood Reinvestment Funds to help with putting in improvements like lighting.

- ◆ *Audience Member:* The Northwest Neighborhood Association is in the process of pricing lighting. One standard light pole costs about \$2,025, but that does not include the costs to dig underground utilities. A solar light, in comparison, costs approximately \$300 and has no underground utility lines costs.

- **UA Blue Chip Program** – The UA Blue Chip program Phase II students have been working on proposals to answer the question the CSC developed for them in January. The case competition will be on Friday, April 24, 2009 at the University of Arizona campus. The preliminary rounds will likely occur before lunch, with the final presentations taking place after lunch. Judges are needed and staff requested that any interested CSC members sign-up using the form provided, indicating their availability and interest in assisting all day, just for the preliminaries or just for the finals.



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4. Updates and Announcements

■ **CSC Memberships** – No changes in membership.

■ **Gateway Business Alliance (GBA)** – CSC member Bob Wright reported that as a result of the regular meeting the GBA held in January, a name was chosen for the new business association – the “Gateway Business Alliance.”

A new structure for the GBA to operate under was also chosen. This structure includes a Leadership Team to set the strategic agenda for the organization, and is comprised of three officers – President, Treasurer, and Secretary – and chairs from four committees. The committees were created to undertake tactical efforts on behalf of the organization, and include: Business Support and Development, Communications, Membership Support and Development, and Social Support.

Bob has taken the seat as Treasurer for the GBA; and CSC member Erik Nielsen has taken the helm as the President. Nielsen described that the GBA will begin assisting with the plans for the Historic Open House & Tour, with Kimberly Underwood (La Siesta Motel) as chair of the Social Support committee. Other committee chairs include:

Doug Wahl (Janzen-Wahl Group) & Joe Higgins (88Trash) –
Business Support & Development

Dick DeNezza (College Place) –
Communications

Robin Lamont (Robin’s Nest Antiques & Collectibles) –
Membership Support & Development

The next steps for the committee will be to define the organization further and work to increase membership.

■ **Grant Road Update** – Anita Fonte, one of the consultants working on the Grant Road Widening project, provided a brief overview of the project status, as well as a request for participation. The project will begin Phase II, and as such, will conduct more interactive meetings and workshops with the public. The Grant Road project team would like to consolidate multiple neighborhoods into each public meeting they set up, and would like to organize a meeting for all the neighborhoods included in the OARP area. The team is currently looking for the best dates and locations; any CSC members with suggestions are asked to let Anita know at the break, or by calling Liz Beamer at 624-4727.

Additionally, PRO Neighborhoods has been asked to help the project team with organizing and conducting walkabouts with neighborhood associations. The idea will be to identify the public realms in each neighborhood and talk about ideas and get photos of valued assets and areas for possible changes.

More information can be found about the project at the web site,
www.grantroad.info.

Questions and comments were as follows:

♦ *CSC Member:* What is PRO Neighborhoods?

Fonte’s Response: PRO Neighborhoods is an organization that is funded by the City of Tucson, Pima County and the United Way and serves to support neighborhoods through leadership development, training, grants



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and technical assistance awards.

- ♦ *CSC Member:* When is the first shovel going to be used?
Fonte's Response: The timeline indicates that 2013 will be when construction gets underway. However, there is some discussion about doing a pilot project before that. But that is very tentative and there are no dates that have been discussed for that.

 There are four main areas that the project team is looking at in the upcoming segment workshops, which include neighborhood access, traffic circulation, noise, buffering, traffic management, landscaping and streetscaping, alternate modes of transportation, and land use.
- ♦ *CSC Member:* Will there be any grade-separated crossings?
Fonte's Response: No.
- ♦ *CSC Member:* The intersection at Oracle and Grant is impossible to cross. Is anything being planned for that?
Fonte's Response: Your concerns would be good ones to bring to the meeting that will happen for your area. There are also many meetings that will be held, and the entire design and planning phase to come, so you can come to any of those to lodge your concerns.
- ♦ *CSC Member:* The project brings to the surface conflicts that exist in this area, where cultural pockets are being invaded and their privacy being eroded. Is this being addressed in any way?
Fonte's Response: This cultural pull and tug is an important conversation to have. These issues don't get addressed until they become part of the public discussion. The walkabouts are designed in part to be a tool for identifying those kinds of conflicts and issues. I encourage you to help us by helping to get a walkabout set up before the meeting for your area.
- ♦ *CSC Member:* What is happening with the businesses that are having to relocate? Is there a liaison or someone that the OARP can be in contact with to help advertise our area to those seeking new locations?
Staff's Response: We are working to have a conversation with the project team and Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT) staff. Who needs to relocate by when has not yet been defined.

CSC Member: We – the OARP CSC – should be lobbying hard to be a part of any information those businesses get.

■ **2nd Annual Historic Preservation Open House & Tour** – Staff and planning committee members discussed the planning process, which was kicked off on Friday, March 13th with a noon-time lunch meeting. The next planning meeting is scheduled for March 27, at Noon, at College Place. Anyone interested in helping is invited to attend.

■ **Ghost Ranch Lodge** – Julie Culver, an employee at COPE Behavioral Services and the project representative assigned to this project, provided an overview of the Ghost Ranch Lodge redevelopment project's status and expected next steps. Redevelopment is broken into two phases.

The Phase I project, which will be about 60 units of elderly housing, has received low-income housing tax credits from the State of Arizona. The construction of this



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project will focus on the parts of the property with the historic structures, including 30 units going into the Joessler designed buildings, where the original characteristics will be maintained. Approximately 30 new units will be added where non-contributing structures will be torn down. The courtyard will be refurbished and a new swimming pool will be installed.

Phase I is expected to be complete by 2010. The developer, Atlantic Development, is hiring local people to do the work, who currently earn 30% or less of the average median income (AMI). The company is a national company and has built projects in over 24 communities.

Questions and comments were as follows:

- ♦ *CSC Member:* Protection of the cactus garden is very important. Is that being considered?
Culver's Response: The demolition plans do not include the cactus garden. It will be maintained and protected through the demolition phase. The employment section of COPE is called RISE. This group is performing the work and will continue to take care of the property and garden.
- ♦ *CSC Member:* Who do we contact with concerns? We've tried in the past to contact the developer, but did not have any luck
Culver's Response: COPE is partnering with the developer and will be the local area liaison. You can call Pat Benchik, the CEO of COPE, directly at 792-3293 or me at 624-3310.
- ♦ *CSC Member:* Where will the new swimming pool be located?
Culver's Response: The existing swimming pool is in the Phase I project area. The new swimming pool will be located in the Phase II project area, in the north area.
- ♦ *CSC Member:* Will the tiles that are being taken off currently be put back on?
Culver's Response: Yes. The people working on removing the tiles are carefully stacking them and they are taking great care not to break any. Very few have been broken.
- ♦ *CSC Member:* Are you recycling the materials that will result from the demolition of the non-contributing buildings?
Culver's Response: Yes.
- ♦ *CSC Member:* Are the buildings accessible?
Culver's Response: Yes – there are 9 units that will be set aside for people with disabilities. Additionally, a schematic has been developed to help create appropriate access for the historic buildings.
- ♦ *CSC Member:* Is there a plan for how visitors in wheelchairs will be able to get around?
Culver's Response: The property is completely level right now and will remain so. There is discussion of installing ramps for the historic buildings and the other building units.
- ♦ *CSC Member:* I recommend that someone travel the entire site in a manual wheelchair to make sure that everything is built correctly. Even just 1" cracks can create real issues for those who have to use a manual wheelchair.



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Staff's Response: The City's Historic Preservation Office and the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office are part of the review process and have approved the ramp approach being discussed. They will continue to be involved.

- ♦ *CSC Member:* Are any of the employees that are working on the project site from the OARP neighborhoods?

Culver's Response: There are about 7-12 employees that have been hired to work on the demolition and they all live in the Tucson area, but I do not know if they actually live in the OARP neighborhoods.

- ♦ *Audience Member:* We tried to get in touch with the developer even before the arson fires occurred on the property in November. The developers promised they would be accessible, but they have not returned our calls. We had no sense of what was going on with the project and how the arson impacted it. The landscaping has suffered – we've noticed that a number of trees look like they have died. It's a shame.

Culver's Response: The project was on hold awaiting the funding decision for the low-income housing tax credits. There was vandalism to the water meter that meant water was not irrigating the way it was supposed to. The swimming pool water had to be used at one point to water the landscaping. Trees died as a result. They will be replaced, however. Having us the local liaison should prevent issues like this from happening in the future.

- ♦ *CSC Member:* What if we want to deal directly with the developers?

Culver's Response: I am willing to intervene if you are not getting the kind of response you want from the developer. They have had a great track record on other projects. Feel welcome to call me.

(Break)

5. **Economic Development: Key Issues & Opportunities** – OARP Project Manager Rebecca Ruopp provided an overview, starting with a working definition of what the term 'economic development' means. Existing conditions and demographic statistics for the OARP area were discussed, and ideas were presented that were gathered from the visioning workshops conducted in Spring 2008 that specifically target economic development. The general findings and strategic recommendations provided in the area Market Analysis Report were also reviewed.
6. **Economic Development Goals: Discussion** – A series of goals were reviewed and discussed that were developed as part of the March 12, 2009 Brown Bag discussion.
7. **Call to the Audience** – There were no comments or questions.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.