

Linden Gateway Small Area Study

Task Force Meeting Minutes

Location: Center for Great Neighborhoods

Thursday November 29th, 2007

6:00-7:35 P.M

ATTENDANCE:

Rick Ludlum – Linden Grove Cemetery Board

Vada Smith – Westside Action Association

Helena Roden – Owner of Crosstown Pub

Pete Nerone – Peaselburg neighborhood resident

Betty Schumacher – Friends of Peaselburg Neighborhood Association

David Foley – Southside Baptist Church

Chuck Eilerman – Kenton County Planning Commission

Rachel Hastings – Center for Great Neighborhoods

Adam Rockel – Center for Great Neighborhoods

Alex Weldon – Kenton County Planning Commission

Jay Fossett – Manager -City of Covington

Bill Moeller – Assistant Manager – City of Covington

Lloyd Bernstein – Consultant for St. Elizabeth

Rhonda Whitaker – Duke Energy

Bob Hall – Duke Energy

Sharmili Sampath – Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission

Edward Dietrich – Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission

Those absent included:

Jack Toerner – American Sound and Electronics

Maureen Rabe – Blau Mechanical

Regina Haley – Westside Neighborhood Resident

Doug Chambers – St. Elizabeth Medical Center

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M by chairwoman Roden.

2. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Task force members introduced themselves to the guests. Ms. Rhonda Whitaker and Mr. Bob Hall from Duke Energy introduced themselves followed by city manager Jay Fossett and assistant city manager Bill Moeller and Mr. Lloyd Bernstein representing St. Elizabeth Medical Center.



3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 27TH MEETING

Ms. Schumacher made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 27th, 2007 meeting and Mr. Nerone seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

4. PRESENTATION FROM DUKE ENERGY

Ms. Whitaker and Mr. Hall from Duke Energy displayed drawings of the Watkins Street substation being planned for east section of the Hellman Lumber property located at Main and 13th Streets. Ms. Whitaker said that substations reduce the voltage coming into the station to a level usable by homes and businesses. She said that the growth in the area had stretched the existing system to its limits and an additional station is needed to ensure continued electricity for areas north of 19th Street in the future. Ms. Whitaker said that Duke Energy has been working with the City of Covington for over a year to find a site for the station and are a year behind in terms of site selection. She said that Duke Energy realizes that substations are not wanted in most areas and tries to work hard with the community when locating one. She said that while utility companies are exempt from zoning and do not have to go through any approval process, it is important for Duke Energy to work with the community and the City.

Ms. Whitaker said that ideally the station would be located north of 9th Street between the interstate and Madison Avenue. After rejecting over 35 sites Duke settled on the site at Main and 13th Streets. She said that the process was well beyond the scope of the site selection process used for any substation. Ms. Whitaker added that the location chosen allowed transmission coming into the proposed station from the interstate by using existing transmission lines running along Watkins and 13th Streets. She added that the poles along these two lines will be replaced with taller poles and 1-2 extra poles may be added to carry the additional weight. She said that there is some conduit underground which will allow some of the feeder lines running out of the substation to be located underground. Ms. Whitaker said that the substation should be operational around July of 2008.

Mr. Fossett said that while the city was concerned about the need for power they were also concerned about the neighborhood and the aesthetics of the site. Ms. Whitaker said that their engineers were able to make some space on the site to fit in some landscaping and said that they are also looking into the type of fencing. She said they are aware that the area being studied is a gateway to the City and is going to be a prime area for development and are looking into the options. She added that they had also talked to some of the residents around the area that might be impacted by the substation.

Mr. Nerone said that the residents had anticipated that the utilities along 12th Street would go underground and there might be substantial power lines running



back into the St. Elizabeth site and if those along the new access road were going to be underground. Mr. Fossett responded that the utilities along 12th Street would go underground. He said that the City was looking at putting in more attractive and historic lighting along 12th Street that would fit into the character of the neighborhood. Mr. Nerone asked if there would be a necessity for new lines along Main Street and the new access road. Mr. Hall said that a lot of the infrastructure already exists but he said he has not heard of any plans showing new pole lines. Mr. Bernstein said that the power to the proposed site is going to come from the south end of the site along Jefferson Avenue area and not along Main Street or the new access road.

Mr. Hall said that Duke Energy presently has a substation at 19th and Augustine Streets that currently serves the general area. He said that the new Watkins Street station would reduce the general overload on the existing substation at 19th and Augustine Streets. He said that while the new substation is not being built specifically for the St. Elizabeth facility, with the addition of the new facility and other projects this new station is needed to take care of the rest of the city.

Mr. Nerone asked about other high voltage lines that will come into the substation and if they will be underground. Mr. Hall said that the main line distribution along 12th Street will be underground. Ms. Whitaker clarified that a lot of those high voltage lines presently run along the interstate on Hewson Street. She added that the distribution lines that currently run along Watkins and 13th will be rebuilt with higher poles to accommodate the transmission.

Mr. Eilerman asked about the specifics of the substation itself and asked if since the substation is located in a residential and historic area, and since the cemetery presently has aluminum fencing if the substation fencing would be the same. Ms. Whitaker said that there are national standards that Duke has to adhere to in terms of fencing. Mr. Hall said that they are working on trying to come up with something that would mitigate the look of a chain link fence.

Mr. Hall said that the substation will extend from Watkins to 13th Street. He said there will be six feet of space between the station fencing and Watkins Street and nine feet between the station and 13th Street that would be landscaped. Mr. Hall said that due to federal regulations a standard chain-link fence will surround the station and the gates will have barbed wire along the top for security. Ms. Whitaker said that Duke Energy is looking into providing a decorative fence outside the standard chain-link fence along both streets and the southern half of the west side.

Ms. Whitaker said that there are two access points in and out of the substation to get equipment and vehicles in and out. Mr. Hall added that the substation is going to be fairly quiet and not as noisy as some of the older station. He said that a good example would be a substation on Thomas More Parkway on Legends way that is



set back behind some doctors' offices that went in last year. Ms. Roden asked if they had exterior elevations of the substation. Mr. Hall said that there are no buildings on the site other than the switchgear structure that will block the transformer from the street side.

Ms. Weldon asked if based on engineering, a brick wall with a partial chain link fence could not be constructed around the substation. She suggested that it is important to see what is around the substation and due to the historic character of the neighborhood Duke Energy may consider putting in a fence that fits in more with the character of the neighborhood especially along the 13th Street side. Mr. Hall added that the decorative fence can not be solid due to heat and access concerns. Ms. Whitaker said that Duke Energy is looking into various fencing options.

Ms. Hastings asked about the heights of the poles with the substation. Mr. Hall responded that the station will consist of approximately 56 feet tall poles, 36 feet tall take off structure and 25 feet tall transformer. Ms. Hastings asked how much traffic the substation was likely to experience. Mr. Hall said that for the most part there will be no noticeable traffic except for routine checking and maintenance few times a year.

Ms. Roden asked if the proposed station would interfere with electronic equipment run by businesses in the area and if there should be any health concerns. Mr. Hall said that typically there is no great interference with electrical equipment such as wireless communications or televisions. Ms. Whitaker responded that the subject of electrical magnetic fields (EMF) has been studied extensively and is not a concern. She said that the Duke Energy web site www.dukeenergy.com has a lot of information on this topic which also includes independence sources.

Mr. Hall said that the lighting plan for the substation has not been put together yet but the station will have one or two cobra head light fixtures. He said that it might be 25-26 feet tall pole which will not disperse light beyond the site.

5. PRESENTATION FROM ST. ELIZABETH MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. Bernstein presented an overview of the proposed St Elizabeth project, the design of the building and its relationship to the community. He said that the site is 10.7 acres and added that the building will be three stories and approximately 120,000 square feet. Mr. Bernstein said that the clinic will occupy the first floor, 60,000 square feet, and will include an emergency room, physicians and medical offices. Mr. Bernstein said that Health Point will have facilities in the building as well.



Mr. Bernstein pointed to the area along 12th Street that will be a linear park and then showed the location of the new access road that will provide access to the new facility. He said that the location of emergency services area is along the interstate side of the site to the west, with direct access from the new road. Mr. Bernstein stressed that the building is located and designed with an eye towards providing a gateway to the city. The building will be located on the west side of the site towards the south end with parking located north, east and south of the building.

Mr. Bernstein said that construction of the building should start in January 2008 and completed in the second quarter of 2009. He said that the design and engineering work is close to being completed at this point. The site is considered reasonably level site with little dirt needed to be brought in or taken out. He said that there will be a need for some leveling and extensive foundation work. He said that geotechnical work had been completed for the site some time ago. He added that the construction is going to be approximately an 18 week process. Mr. Bernstein said that the access was completed so soon because it will be used during construction rather than coming back through the Peaselburg neighborhood. The road is essentially completed except for the top layer of pavement which will be laid after construction is completed.

Mr. Bernstein said that St Elizabeth has purchased the northern half of the block between Euclid and Jefferson Streets and north of 16th Street for parking. He said that discussions are on going regarding fencing, landscaping, and buffering around this area. Euclid Street will be vacated along St. Elizabeth's property. Access from the south will be gated and for emergency use only. He said that the intent with this facility was to provide a one-stop shop for all kinds of medical services in one facility.

The west side façade, facing the interstate, will have brick on the first floor, and steel panels and windows on the two upper floors. Mr. Eilerman asked how the elevation of the building on the neighborhood side would fit in with the character of the neighborhood. Mr. Bernstein responded that the east side will have more brick and will be more responsive to the character of the adjoining residential neighborhood and will not have the same kind of feeling as on the interstate side. He said that regarding fencing, the south end of the property being the most important, will have some fencing and buffering from the adjoining neighborhood but has not been designed yet. The existing fence along the interstate site will remain while a natural ravine forms a natural buffer between the facility and the neighborhood.

Mr. Bernstein responded to a question and said that there is no plan for a helipad; if one is wanted in the future it will probably be located in the northern parking lot area.



Mr. Ludlum asked if the ravine on the eastern side of the property was owned by St.Elizabeth. Mr. Bernstein responded that St Elizabeth owns most of the land around Monterey Street. Mr. Nerone asked about the triangular piece of land that would be left over between 13th Street and the new access road after the road is complete. Mr. Ludlum said that could be used to create a nice gateway feature for the cemetery as well as the new facility. Mr. Bernstein said that St.Elizabeth recognizes that as a very important landscape area and it seemed to make sense to approach this collaboratively. Mr. Fossett said that the City will maintain the road after it is built and look for some wayfinding opportunities.

Ms. Weldon said that it is important to emphasize the importance of having a strong pedestrian connection between the medical facility and Linden Grove Cemetery. Mr. Bernstein said that St. Elizabeth feels as strongly about it and like the idea of providing a pedestrian pathway between the two areas.

6. VISION AND GOALS

Ms. Sampath mentioned that the task force members had discussed the vision and goals that were presented at the public meeting through email. She said that the vision and goals are usually very broad and the recommendations to fulfill these goals are much more detailed.

Mr. Eilerman made a motion to approve the vision and goals and Mr. Ludlum seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

7. PRESENTATION OF INTERIM REPORT

Ms. Sampath presented the comments gathered at the first public meeting. She said that at the meeting stations were set up on different topics pertaining to the study area. Linden Grove Cemetery had its own station with three design concepts.

Ms. Sampath said that meeting attendees were generally pleased with the 12th Street widening and the St Elizabeth project. These projects will bring needed economic development into the area. There is some concern about the increase in traffic speed widening the street and removing a stop light will bring. It was pointed out that these changes will work against the goal of having small businesses, retail, and mixed-use along the street. Ms. Sampath said that the small area study will look at the implementation of the 12th Street Plan more specifically with regards to zoning. The study will make recommendations for zone changes if deemed necessary. Traffic concerns were also expressed around the St. Elizabeth project, but everyone saw the value of the clinic and the possibility of medical related establishments close to the facility.



In terms of preservation Ms. Sampath said that there was some concern about establishing a historic district and the cost to property owners but ideas were expressed to look at establishing an historic overlay zone south and east of cemetery. She said that attendees said that Linden Grove Cemetery is a big asset to the community and work should be done to improve it and make it a place people will want to use. Mr. Ludlum asked if the Friends of Linden Grove Cemetery could make a brief presentation at the next meeting about its plans for the future. He said that Linden Grove Cemetery is going to apply for a Recreational trails grant from the Governor's local development department (GOLD) to build walking paths within the cemetery. Task force members agreed to have a presentation from the Board at the next meeting.

Ms. Sampath said that most area residents worked outside of the study. There were lots of comments regarding the need for open space, and parks. She said that this lack of open space has been raised as a concern ever since the study began. Several different solutions have been suggested, such as using vacant lots, and tear down structures in bad shape.

Ms. Sampath mentioned that while some people want the 15th Street Bridge rebuilt for vehicular traffic; others want to leave it as pedestrian only bridge. Mr. Nerone said that the city's transportation committee is looking at opening it back up with some sort of over head restriction to keep trucks from using it. He said over head restrictions on roads are expensive but an alternative could be to restrict the width of the lanes going over the bridge. He mentioned that the bridge is wood with asphalt layered on top and was not built to carry heavy vehicles. Ms. Sampath said that the traffic system will be examined as part of the study with special attention to placement of stop signs, traffic lights, and one-way streets.

In terms of housing, Ms. Sampath said that there is a big concern about the number of rental properties and the lack of up keep on these properties in the study area. She said that NKAPC staff will research innovative non-traditional programs that other cities have implemented to improve homeownership and property maintenance. Ms. Sampath said that the need for a place for kids to hang out such as a game club, community center, or gym was expressed. Also, a place for adults to gather, such as a coffee shop, or restaurant, was a common suggestion. Preserving the Bavarian Brewery building was seen as important; some suggestions were a Trader Joe's, Gateway Tech College, a health facility or gym was suggested as possible uses.

Ms. Sampath said that in terms of crime, the north east section of the study area was identified as a concern; this was linked to the large number of rentals. The need to protect pedestrian safety along Holman was also mentioned. She said that hillside slippage on Monroe Street was also raised.



Ms. Sampath mentioned that all the public comments are in the Interim Report. She said while the study may not be able to address all of them these are important concerns that residents expressed at the public meeting.

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve the interim report and Mr. Foley seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

8. FUTURE MEETING DATES

Ms. Sampath mentioned that the next meeting will be held on January 24th and will start a more in-dept discussion of recommendations. The task force will then meet every month until the completion of the project.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40

