



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

BRONZEVILLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

LASHAWNDRA VERNON, CHAIR

Deshea Agee, Vice-Chair

*Theresa Garrison, Anthony Smith, Baboonie Tatum, Rayhainio
Boynes, and Vanessa Claypool*

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Monday, September 20, 2021

9:00 AM

Virtual Meeting

This will be a virtual meeting conducted via GoToMeeting. Should you wish to join this meeting from your phone, tablet, or computer you may go to <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/683170037>. You can also dial in using your phone United States: +1 (312) 757-3121 and Access Code: 683-170-037.

1. **Call to order.**

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m.

2. **Roll call.**

Present 5 - Agee, Garrison, Vernon, Boynes and Smith

Excused 1 - Tatum

3. **Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes from August 2, 2021.**

The meeting minutes from August 2, 2021 were approved without objection.

4. **Review of Bronzeville RFPs, listings, projects, programs, initiatives, events, grants, activities, plans or updates.**

a. *DCD Commercial Corridor grants*

This item was not discussed as there was no presentation.

b. *DCD Real Estate projects*

i. *Bronzeville Estates scattered sites project (Maures Development Group)*

Appearing:

*Amy Turim, DCD Real Estate
Matt Haessly, DCD Real Estate
Melissa Allen, Maures Development Group*

Ms. Turim said that the project was a low income tax credit one with residential (single family, duplexes, town homes) and commercial with a community center.

Ms. Allen gave an overview as follows:

Project partners included Scott Crawford (Que El Amin) and the City. There would be bulk purchases of foreclosed, dilapidated, and vacant lots/homes in Bronzeville. Total project cost was approximately \$8.5 million. There would be 30 total units at 30%, 50%, 60% AMI and 5 market rate units. Bedroom units would be 2, 3, and 4. Targeted closing date was for January/February 2022. Completion would be staggered throughout 2022. Team Management would be the property manager. Rehab projects consisted of addresses on N. 5th St. (2633, 2317, 2323, 2335), 2421 N. 6th St., 629 W. Clarke, 2427 N. Teutonia Ave., 1950 N. MLK Dr., and 540 W. North Ave. New construction projects consisted of addresses on N. 5th St. (2369, 2326-2334, 2528), addresses on N. 6th St. (2354, 2433, 2523), and possibly 1940 N. MLK (under RFP review). Similar scattered sites have been done for Lindsay NSP and Milwaukee Prosperity (75 units) and in Harambee.

Project elements would include green features, passive home design with model block, art elements and features in all units (possibly an emblem for branding), visitable units, 1st floor bedrooms for elderly family members, and Emerging Business Participation target of 40%. Project financing would include debt, investor equity (LIHTC), AHP, to be determined City funds, deferred developer fee, and green grant. Partners would include the American Black Holocaust Museum (ABHM) and Northcott. There were future conversations with the BID and Halyard Park.

The community service center would be at 540 W. North Ave. ABHM would be the anticipated operator. Other partnerships may be considered. There would be programs to underscore mission and strategic partnerships. Programs would range from art and culture, health and wellness, job/skill training, and employment counseling. Space would be utilized for workshops by small business entrepreneurs and at least 10 hours per week. The property management firm would help coordinate and maintain the facilities.

The project timeline entailed LIHTC announcement (May 2021), site confirmations (June-Sept. 2021), architectural design (July-Nov. 2021), bidding (Nov.-Dec. 2021), closing (Feb. 2022), groundbreaking event (March 2022), and construction/leasing (Feb.-Dec. 2022).

Members inquired about right-to-own options, art housing possibilities, environmental concerns with polluted sites, and promotion of the houses (including during Bronzeville Week).

Ms. Allen replied. The houses are for lease only for 15 years as required by the low income tax program, but there would be plans to sell after 15 years. There are no live, work options for artists. At a minimum the facilities would have an art feature. Clean drinking water and lead abatement were focuses. Water pipes would all be replaced, water lateral would be replaced as needed, water filters would be installed, new windows installed, and new walls installed. One to two properties would be started

each week. Pre-leasing would not be an issue. A prospect list would be compiled. Signs would be placed in front yards. Construction would possibly be an issue. The marketing of houses as a part of Bronzeville Week would be welcomed and supported.

Mr. Haessly added that environmental analysis was done as well as soil tests.

Vice-chair Agee moved approval, seconded by member Smith, of the Bronzeville Estates scattered sites project. There was no objection.

ii. MLK Library redevelopment project (General Capital Group and Emem Group)

Appearing:

Matt Haessly, DCD Real Estate

Michael Emem, Emem Group

Mr. Haessly said that for consideration was the right to negotiate with Emem Group and that the developer was awarded tax credits.

Mr. Emem gave an overview as follows:

The proposed project had evolved over the years. The project was comprised of three buildings: the MLK Library, a new construction located at the northern corner of MLK Dr. and Chambers Ave., and an adaptive reuse of the existing Garfield theater. The MLK Library would be developed into a 17,000 square foot library at the corner with apartment units above the library. The new construction building would add additional apartments located at the north corner of MLK Dr. and Chambers Ave. All of the tenant and resident parking will be inside all the buildings. The final details of all three of the buildings were being worked on with the City.

The new library building would have 41 apartment units above the first floor. There would be 45 total parking stalls dedicated to the library in the back. Green roofs and infrastructure were being explored for the library. There would be a small rooftop terrace coming out of the community room on the second floor. Main entrance would be at the corner for safety reasons. There would be 1,000 square feet of outdoor, public plaza, and multi-purpose space for the library's dedicated use. The apartments entrance would be separate at the northern end of the building along MLK Dr. The apartment would be completely separate from the library. There would be multiple points of egress.

The 93 unit apartment building would be an affordable housing project. The development team was awarded a 4% tax credits and being planned are 38 1-bedroom units, 21 2-bedroom units, and 33 3-bedroom units. Rents would range from 30% to 80% area median income. There would be 3 walk-up units along the streets. The project was in the design development phase with thematic drawings completed. The drawings would evolved throughout the fall. Final construction plans would be completed by the end of year. Ground breaking was anticipated for Spring 2022. Final project completion was anticipated by Summer 2023.

There was numerous thought on how to repurpose the Garfield Theater without demolishing it. A compromise was done to rehabilitate the lower 2-story frontage on MLK Dr. while demolishing and replacing the theater mass behind the frontage and replacing it with 43 apartment units and on-site parking. The storefront would be converted to 9 walk up live,work units. All of the masonry and decorative terracotta at

the frontage would be restored. There would be 2,000 square feet of potential indoor event/gathering, community, and storefront space. There would be individual entrances with hung balconies.

Chair Vernon said that a theater should be put back into the community.

Members inquired about the live-work unit bedrooms and the condition of the theater.

Mr. Emem replied. The live-work units would have 3-bedrooms, front and back doors, rear parking, and rear private spaces. The theater has not been used as a theater for over 30 years. The theater had been used as a church worship space and more recently a daycare. The theater was in poor shape with water and other damage, and restoring it would not have been financially feasible. Also considered was the lack of on-site parking. The decision was made to demolish considering all factors but restoring the frontage.

Vice-chair Agee recused himself as he was part of the development group.

Member Boynes moved approval, seconded by member Garrison, of the MLK Library redevelopment project. Vice-chair Agee abstaining. There was no objection.

c. City Plan Commission change of zoning applications

i. 2319 N. Vel R. Phillips Ave.

Appearing:

Bachan Singh

Kulbir Sra

Kristin Connelly, DCD Planning Division

Monica Wauck-Smith, DCD Planning Division

Ms. Sra and Singh gave an overview. Ms. Sra is the daughter and Mr. Singh was the owner and father of the gas station (408 W. North Ave.). They own the residential vacant grass lot to the north (2319 N. Vel R. Phillips Ave.). The station currently has 3 pumps with 2 on the south end under a canopy (North Ave.) and 1 on the east end under a canopy (Vel R. Phillips). They planned to move the east pump to the northern portion of the gas station where a new pump would be added there as well. The east canopy would be removed. A new canopy would be installed at the north portion for the two pumps (existing east pump that would be moved there and the new pump). In total there would be 4 pumps after completion. They sought to change the zoning of the adjacent northern grass lot from RT-4 to LB-2 to permit the addition of an entrance/exit way on Vel R. Phillips Ave. into the gas station. The total project would combine the gas station and grass lots, expand the gas station business, and maneuver land for the business.

Members inquired about adding employment from the community to the gas station, adding landscaping, and additional review processes, project timeline, and additional renderings of the project.

Ms. Sra and Mr. Singh replied. There were 2 employees presently and a 3rd one would be after the project was completed. There would be new landscaping around the signage on the southern end.

Ms. Connelly commented. In addition to review by the advisory committee, the change of zoning application required review via public hearings by the City Plan Commission (10/18/21) and Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee (11/16/21). Additional requirements may be required from the Board of Zoning Appeals. Her office dealt with change of zoning applications, has not received much information yet, was working to gather further information from the applicant, and did not have any staff analysis as of yet.

Ms. Wauck Smith added that the Transit Oriented Development Study and comprehensive planning efforts strived for walkability and not for auto-oriented uses and that the project may need to be evaluated in this respect.

Member Boynes moved approval of the change of zoning application at 2319 N. Vel R. Phillips Ave.

Members inquired further about the aspects of the project that they were to make a recommendation on for the change of zoning application, were uncertain about what aspects (gasoline pump/tanks, canopy, entrance/exit way) they were approving, and asked for more visual/architectural renderings of the project.

Member Boynes withdrew his motion.

The item was held later in the meeting for reconsideration after public comments were made.

After public comments, the committee reconsidered this item.

Members inquired about concerns made by those who gave public comments and about reviewing rezoning applications only after they have been reviewed first by the City Plan Commission so that more concrete analysis would be presented to the advisory committee to review.

Ms. Sra and Mr. Singh replied. They wanted to seek approval from the advisory committee first before they would proceed with the rezoning process with the City Plan Commission and other bodies. A cell phone business was in the works to occupy the space on North Ave. They wanted a recommendation as soon as possible before making a decision to buy a new gas tank, which would take 4 months to receive after ordering.

Members asked clerk staff for clarification on the aspects of the rezoning project that the committee was reviewing.

Mr. Lee replied that it appeared the gas station was implementing two separate but interrelated projects. The first project entailed only the existing gas station footprint in moving the east pump to the northern portion of the gas station where a new pump would be added there as well. The east canopy would be removed. A new canopy would be installed at the north portion for the two pumps (existing east pump that would be moved there and the new pump). In total there would be 4 pumps after completion. The second part seemed to be the rezoning project for the adjacent northern grass lot to add a new access way into the existing gas station footprint.

Members said that some members supported the new entrance/exit way to improve service to customers and traffic safety, but members were not comfortable enough to

move forward with a recommendation without seeing more clarifying information, visual renderings, and further clarification.

Mr. Boyes moved to hold review of the rezoning application at 2319 N. Vel R. Phillips Ave. for further information and architectural drawings to be submitted to the committee. There was no objection.

d. Wisconsin DOT projects

Appearing:

Beth Foy, Dept. of Transportation

Brian Bliesner, Dept. of Transportation

Mr. Bliesner gave an overview as follows:

WisDOT's goal was to manage its assets to get as much useful life and to rehabilitate until replacement was needed.

i. I-43 project from Brown St.-Capitol Drive

The I-43 Project was full rehabilitation of the existing freeway infrastructure including the pavement and repairing of bridges at Brown, Wright, Center, Locust and Burleigh. Other various maintenance work would be done, including sidewalk repairs and painting of the steel underneath bridges. There would be safety and operational improvements. Examples would include auxiliary lanes for only ramping on or off and for easier merging and high friction surface treatment on the pavement to improve friction and performance against water and ice. The preliminary noise study recommended noise walls for 4 main areas: Locust to Keefe (east side), Capitol off-ramp (east side), Chamber to Keefe (west side), and Brown to Walnut (west side). Adjacent owners and renters within these locations would have the ability to vote for the walls.

The project schedule entailed finalizing the environmental study, doing public outreach, and doing the noise barrier public process for 2021. Plans would be finalized in early 2022 with potential construction in late 2022 to mid-2024.

ii. I-94 East-West project, from 70th to 16th Street

This corridor study project also included Hwy 175 from Wisconsin Ave. to south of the American Family Field stadium. The project was within the City of Milwaukee and adjacent to West Allis/West Milwaukee. The project would not be a rehabilitation but rather, a complete redesign and reconstruction of the freeway. The environmental impact statement was in process, and different alternatives were being evaluated. The rebuilding, the alternative chosen would be to eliminate left hand entrance/exit ramps and redesign the freeway to modern safety standards. 6-lane and 8-lane alternatives were under consideration with the latter adding one lane in both directions. The double decker option at the cemetery was no longer being pursued, and the graves there would not be moved. The goal was to stay within the existing right away. Regarding construction mitigation, transit opportunities would be explored. Workforce development activities would be explored to assist disadvantage businesses. Contrary to the perspective that the freeway was for white suburbanites to come into the City, traffic volume data showed a 50/50 split in both directions for the morning and afternoon peak hours. Many local people use the freeway. The project would help City

residents have safer, more reliable roadways and get them to use the freeway.

For 2021, WisDot was in its alternative analysis phase with the goal to come up with a recommended plan. Data (traffic, safety, census) was being gathered and analyzed, alternative designs being developed and studied, and input being gathered from stakeholders. Anticipated for December is a formal public meeting. 2022 would consist of continuing study and analysis, identifying preferred alternative, continued community input, and a public hearing in the summer. 2023 to 2025 would consist of the Federal Highway Administration reviewing the recommended plan and the approval of a final design plan. Construction would occur 2024 to 2027.

Chair Vernon said that historic creative communities should be preserved, racism was a public health crisis, highway expansion projects have destroyed communities such as Bronzeville and harmed disadvantaged residents, the proposed projects already have been federally committed.

Chair Vernon questioned a creative mitigation plan to include safety for people, creative installations, and hiring/representation of the community (to work) on the projects.

Mr. Bliesner replied. Standard noise walls would be installed if supported by the impacted owners/residents. There were State limitations to enhance the noise walls further. There would be opportunity for those walls to be enhanced artistically by local groups, which had been done in the past. There are typical contract requirements. They would be working to recruit and bring awareness to the contracting opportunities. They were exploring the human resource requirements of the City, which they've been asked by the City. There was perception that City human resource requirements would not be permitted for federal highway projects. There was opportunity for possibly pilot projects to permit locally based requirements under the new presidential administration, which were being further explored.

Member Garrison concurred that highways have come through and destroyed many homes and livelihoods of people of color.

e. Bronzeville Week recap

Vice-chair Agee said that Bronzeville Week was great, had a mix of activities, was supported by the community, 2022 would be the 11th year of the event, and the event was being planned for August 6-13, 2022.

Member Garrison said that the marketplace was great for Bronzeville Week, the lack of church involvement was disappointing, that Garfield Days were no longer commencing due to the retirement of the organizers.

Chair Vernon said that there was no festival and stage and was hopeful for better success next year.

5. Public comments.

Chair Vernon inquired about how to proceed with public comments.

Mr. Lee said that the committee had wanted to designate an agenda item for all public commenting so as to not interfere with internal discussions by the committee and that

Chair Vernon has discretion to preside over public commenting.

Paul Bahusky appeared and testified. The gas station at 408 W. North Ave. should open up a business in the building on W. North Ave. belonging to the gas station prior to expanding the gas station itself, and it should address its interior conditions prior to expansion. Expanding gas stations was not part of the Bronzeville plan. The existing entrance/exit way on the south end of Vel R. Phillips Ave. at the gas station is a traffic safety issue, and installing a second entrance/exit way on the northeast side could be done without expanding the gas station footprint. Regarding freeway expansions, DOT does not factor in students and parkgoers in their formula to install noise walls. Noise levels would go up at parks and schools with the freeway expansions. He has been advocating for changes to the formula and to install noise walls. Noise walls should be installed the entire length of the Bronzeville District.

It was noted that Marty Wall made comments in the chat with concerns about the freeway expansion.

6. Next steps.

a. Prioritizing presenters

Members reviewed the list of proposed presenter and agenda topics and noted the priorities of Thrive On, Medical College of Wisconsin, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Royal Capital, Office of African Affairs, and antidisplacement/gentrification plan update.

Members said to have Thrive On and an update on the City's antidisplacement/gentrification plan at the November meeting.

b. Agenda items for the next meeting

2319 N. Vel R. Phillips Ave. rezoning application at a special meeting.

Thrive On and the City's antidisplacement/gentrification plan at the November meeting.

c. Next meeting (November 15, 2021 at 9 am)

Also, a special meeting for Monday, September 27, 2021 at 9 a.m. to review the 2319 N. Vel R. Phillips Ave. rezoning application.

7. Announcements.

Chair Vernon announced that she had received training for creative disaster preparedness and was available to assist anyone wanting arts and creative crisis planning.

8. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

*Chris Lee, Staff Assistant
Council Records Section*

City Clerk's Office