

**Community Benefits Plan Committee Meeting
City Hall – Old Council Chambers
Wednesday, November 20, 2013**

Chair: Michael Julian Bond

Transcribed by: Mackenzie Madden, Westside Communities Alliance

Public Comment:

Carrie Salvary: This cannot move forward because it is a wish list and has no timeline, framework, or evaluation method as well as no prioritization. It does not bind anyone to do anything. It does not promise revitalization.

John Lewis: He read an excerpt from a 1993 letter about neighborhoods (Vine City) fighting for heritage and history. “Why are we so quick to condemn and destroy before we assist?” “Why do we tear down and not build up?”

Michael Dobbins: There is a lack of technical questions addressed – specifically with regards to transportation and stormwater, we need impact studies. We need to take into account the whole total amount of money, not just the \$15M. Why hasn’t the job pipeline mentioned by Penny McPhee been written in?

Resident: We need to fix up vacant housing so you can house the abundant homeless population.

Stephen Causby: As a 10 year English Avenue resident and chairperson of New Life Church, we need a binding agreement. Its obvious that sports stadiums are built in low-income communities. The assistance given is not what is needed. The English Avenue/Vine City challenges are a regional issue.

Janelle: I am putting my faith in the community. I want to improve my older home. Please don’t give up on English Avenue/Vine City.

Hattie Dorsey: We need an agreement, not a plan. This document does not outline how to reach listed things. This is incomplete, do not pass it.

Chef Kenneth W.: America’s Soul Food Museum updates.

Latron Price: Economic business of community, runs a Georgia meat model built on consumption of food.

Linda Adams: Thanks to the body here who has been listening to the concerns of the residents. Please pass the document tonight.

Mohammed: I don't understand much besides the Bible. He told a story about idol-carrying donkey and compared the city's worship of stadium and Blank.

Mable Thomas: We have a revolutionary spirit in English Avenue/Vine City. *She talked about the jobless resident that walked here from English Avenue to give his thoughts and input on the document. She asked people in the room to stand if they were asked to come here on behalf of a community organization. She listed famous leaders that are products of English Avenue.* You cannot vote on a framework. The video circulating calls English Avenue/Vine City "hidden in plain view". How is that possible? Well, look at us. We're here. Do not vote today on a framework that does not speak to the heart of the needs of the people. We want a hand-up, not a hand-out, to help you build a better Atlanta. This group never talks about projects, I don't understand.

Redding: Churches will be responsible for preparing people for what is going on.

Hubert James Jr.: COBRA. It's not about the money, you obviously have it. It's about the will and vision to do good. We can build a stadium AND rebuild a community, especially considering the Home Depot connection. You would assume fixing homes would be a natural step.

Mother Moore: *Asked residents to stand and show their signs for two minutes as her statement of public comment.*

Kwanzaa Fisher: Center for Education and Culture. Considering allotting some funds to this project that could be of interest to investors for space – we could be a hub for youth entrepreneurship in the region.

Community Benefits Plan:

Ernestine Garey: We asked for feedback on the draft. Committee Members have in front of them a binder of resources, plans, and exhibits. It includes descriptions of: Community Improvement Fund, AMBFF dollars, City Council legislation, APD report on Westside.

Reads off headings in current draft.

She sits on Atlanta Land Trust Collaborative.

Michael Bond: Councilwoman Felicia Moore is in the building.

Questions from Committee:

Michael Bond: No demonstrations allowed in Council Chambers, including applause.

Rev. Beckham: Why are we moving from agreement to plan?

Answer: What is the process of getting to a vote on an agreement? We will give you an update on that when it comes.

Rev. Johnson: We remember the storm of 2009 when we lost residents on Rock St due to floodwaters from GWCC – we must address the stormwater.

Answer: See section 3.09A

Rev. Johnson: Tax abatement for seniors, where does that come in?

Answer: Legislative action must be taken by state. Homestead extension exists today but it is in the plan now.

Rev. Johnson: Historic preservation needs to be added to the registry.

Scott Chapman: We have lots of “buckets” but projects need to live on their own merit. Do the applications have merit; we need to check that as a community.

Answer: Evaluative criteria for funding will include prioritization from Survey Monkey and AMBFF will use a similar method.

Suzanne Baer: We talked about Quality of Life issues and were instructed to make sure our buckets were represented in this document and it not being addressed because is not a project, it is a concept.

Answer: Does not come in at this level. Instead, we provide the language and submit it to the Community Development Council (next meeting on Tuesday).

Charletta Wilson-Jacks: TOD, greenspace, mixed-use etc. Whether it is low-hanging fruit or a long-term concept, they are here in this document. Historic preservation can be incorporated into Section A) Landmark identification, that way we can recognize them in our way as opposed to restricting the use that comes along with registry designation.

Ivory Young: Thank you Ms. Salvary for your list. These should be incorporated into the document. 1) A timeline of milestones in the process. 2) With limited available funding, do we establish degrees of priority relative to the amount of funding for categories?

Answer: See Exhibit E, the CIF fact sheet, about \$15M, types of projects (ideal), and evaluative criteria.

Ivory Young: We have people competing for funds – some will be better than others. Some people at the table may feel entitled here, but I don't feel anything but responsible for the people who I represent. Demands should be a response to what is in the plan. We need to measure. There are a lot of unanswered questions. Microphones, cameras, and open meetings show a level of transparency. If we're missing something, speak up – I'm looking for the list of what that is.

Yvonne Jones: I don't take this lightly. I am representing the community. Did you add historic preservation? As a community member, I need to say that we drafted a CBA from the neighborhoods that is not represented here and I motion that we defer a vote.

Michael Bond: Lets finish the question portion and then we will entertain action items.

DeMarcus Peters: Document should be more strategic. Listing “sidewalks” doesn’t mean anything. We need reasonable smaller goals as opposed to broad categories. Doesn’t address the business corridor at MLK. The stadium will sit at MLK, how do we connect it? Are we using suggestions from Michael Dobbins studio?

Cleta Winslow: I compliment everyone that worked on the document. You all should look to organizations with capacity to actually get projects moving. Example: Atlanta Urban league has grants for ex-offenders. These are opportunities to hit the ground running.

Kyle Kessler: This plan has a lot of work to be done. This is a stepping stone, not a plan. This is nowhere close to what committee has been charged with creating. We have yet to have a presentation from police. If I was an architect and gave my client a list that said: doors, windows, walls, I would fail at my job. We are removing a street, adding parking, and destroying community.

Makeda Johnson: 1 item was not in the plan, I need an explanation: protection of historic preservation zoning.

Caesar Mitchell: I commend the staff, elected officials, and community members who have been working on this. This document says “plan”. Are we defining communities as inclusive of Marietta St and downtown? The AMBFF is only focused on Castleberry Hill, English Avenue, Vine City and the Westside TAD has finite boundaries. 5 neighborhoods are listed in Section 2.03. Why is Marietta St. and downtown not specifically included in the document. Yjeu are on this committee but they are not defined.

Answer: It came directly from legislation

Document/Folder – what is this?

Answer: This plan was created here. The definition came from City Council.

If we’re about to send this document, we can’t exclude 2 stakeholders.

Answer: will be remedied at Community Development Council meeting.

Committee is charged with sending a document, what is the work of the committee, why are you just giving it to another body? Looking at 3.03, how much of the \$30M is being allocated to each of these?

Answer: We have an application process, no previous allotted sections. Lists within the sections are prioritized.

Yvonne Jones: Funds allocated for the neighborhoods we need to add: specific measurements, language binding the City to projects, Quality of Life matters like traffic mitigation, and ensure the Community Benefits Plan Committee to continue throughout the build-out process.

Michael Bond: I would like to let everyone know that is 7:40 now and we were set to adjourn at 6:45. Changes from the presentations at the last meeting were incorporated into the document. Body can recommend changes at meeting on Tuesday. We do not want to extend the meeting.

PUBLIC OUTCRY

Michael Bond: We have to acknowledge where we are legally and can only abide by current legislation. Amendments need to be introduced during new business.

Question: How do we amend a plan that has not been voted on?

Michael Bond: I was presented with legislation. The draft was signed by council members and now the CDC has it. This committee can only RECOMMEND filing, holding, and amending.

Yvonne Jones: How can the committee have submitted a document to City Council without telling us?

PUBLIC CHANTING OF SHAME

Michael Bond threatens to clear the room if it does not come to order.

Yvonne Jones: There was no communication to the committee letting them know what happened or the expeditiousness of the situation.

Rev Beckham: We don't trust any of you.

Ivory Young: At what point will there be a formal document? This body is not required to vote, but every month, we vote on issues with zoning in NPU meetings and those recommendations are passed onto Council. I will not vote on anything that I don't think the Committee would agree on.

Cesar Mitchell: I don't know what I just heard. Has the Community Benefits Plan already been introduced to City Council? I was not there and am not part of this committee.

Michael Bond: I will explain for a third time that I was told the document was ready to go.

Cesar Mitchell: *Asked for a show of hands of people who knew the document was moving forward. Nobody raises them.*

Katrina Taylor-Parks: It is the end of the year. The body does not have a vote. This is all about process.

Cesar Mitchell: it is deplorable to say that we're going to trump a process that was said to be for the committee. The word bamboozled comes to mind. I'm trying to put myself in the shoes of an audience member here.

Michael Bond: I take umbridge in anyone saying that my actions disrespected the committee.

DeMarcus Peters: We were under the guise that we were producing a plan. Nobody said it was OK, why wasn't that taking place as a matter of courtesy? Why don't you want a seal of approval from the committee?

Michael Bond: I assumed everything was good to go because of Katrina Taylor-Parks words, I wasn't here.

DeMarcus Peters: I was at a meeting with Taylor-Parks yesterday and she said nothing about this.

Katrina Taylor-Parks: I only talked about the subject matter at hand. We could work better together if you all didn't keep having secret meetings, I come to the committee meetings.

Michael Bond: I apologize. I believe Taylor-Parks, and I know her character.

Cleta Winslow: Our early meetings at Invest Atlanta originally said it needed to be done by the end of the year.

Michael Bond: Meetings are recorded.

Kyle Kessler: You didn't present a dummy paper to Council, you treated the Committee like dummies.

Ivory Young: Denying a committee member a chance to comment on it is a moral wrong. The document was presented as a placeholder. I signed it. Cleta signed it. We understand that we are waiting for amendments. We hold papers all the time. There was no intention to disrespect the will of the group. This is not the final document, the group can offer final recommendations. To Bond's credit, he is trying to aggressively move the work closer to approval. Communities will not be denied the resources. Stop trying to pit us against each other, we are all humans and we make errors.

Katrina Taylor-Parks: If we were trying to bamboozle, we would have tried to pass resolution but it wasn't and it could have on Monday.

Michael Bond: Are there any amendments to the document?

Katrina Taylor-Parks: The Quality of Life language should read: every 30-45 days, the community is given an opportunity to meet with construction teams, the City, and others about the process. The City will hire a liaison to interact with contractors and laborers onsite. Post-construction plan will be put in place as the city oversees continued monitoring for things like noise and traffic.

Suzanne Baer: Who is responsible for that planning?

Answer: The City and Invest Atlanta

DeMarcus Peters: Add “preserve landmarks and sites identified” we know they’re identified.

Yvonne Jones: Catalytic projects – 740 Cameron Alexander, English Avenue School campus.

Answer: We avoided specific projects, they are in the exhibits section and can be included under nodes. It would not be equitable to list a project. Blank listed a project.

Makeda Johnson: Will we have the opportunity to add more? I know that some projects are not on here, so unless we can add everything, it is unfair to do so now.

Rev Johnson: We need a motion to be able to add projects in the future since we didn’t previously know we could do that.

Katrina Taylor-Parks: Can we get a list of projects by Monday morning?

Ivory Young: We are assuming that your project has no hope of being funded unless it is listed here. By getting specific, we are eroding the substance of the plan. It sends the wrong message in terms of delivering to constituents.

Author’s note: While voting a major motion, most of the committee was busy to talking to other people.

Rev Beckham: Will there be additional opportunities to amend?

Answer: Only the Community Development Committee can.

Kyle Kessler: I want to make sure downtown is not left out.

Ivory Young: The group can reconvene itself whenever we choose, but we won’t because we believe in us.

Suzanne Baer: If we ask for it to be held, what happens?

Answer: If it dies, the deadline is December 2nd for this year and it would have to wait until January.

Ivory Young: Can we call a special meeting?

Answer: We could have one Monday before the CDHR meeting on Tuesday.

Felicia Moore: When the amendment passed the council floor, did it say that this body would vote on it?

Answer: No, it said that we would produce a document.

It seemed like at first you couldn't amend it, then the Council can approve or can hold.

Answer: If the committee decided they want to approve, then the Council can approve or hold it.

Essentially, it doesn't matter what the body here does. Why did we stop the process of letting people add to it?

Yvonne Jones: This document needs to stay in the committee. Allow the record to show that we do not approve this document and recommend the committee to hold.

Ivory Young: The confusion earlier shows that we violated the trust, although I agree with this document, I will vote to wait.

Michael Bond: All recommendations from tonight will go to committee.

The next meeting will take place on Monday the 25th at 5:30 pm.

Michael Bond's parting words: "It takes a coward to disrupt."

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