

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

**Chair: Michael Julian Bond**

*Transcribed by: Mackenzie Madden, Westside Communities Alliance  
\*Denotes author's note*

Call to Order:

Michael Bond: Call regularly scheduled meeting to order.

\*Mayor Kasim Reed and Atlanta City Council President Ceasar Mitchell are present at the table.

\*Marietta Street Artery Association and Castleberry Hill representatives are not at the table.

\*This is not in fact a “regularly scheduled” meeting, it was called less than a week ago.

\*The majority of the “regularly scheduled” meetings scheduled prior to November 5<sup>th</sup> elections were canceled without notification, sometimes about 3 hours prior to the meeting start time.

Michael Bond: *Asks the present committee to introduce themselves and Justin Giboney does not introduce himself.*

Unfinished Business:

Ernestine Garey: Tonight is the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

\*It is actually the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ernestine Garey: We made some amendments, making sure that we fixed everything needed. *Proceeds to read the list of changes made in the Plan. Some of these include: Using the language “Business Initiatives” instead of “Community Resource Center”, adding the Urban Ecology Center concept, instead of “tailgating” using “tailgating controls”.*

Yvonne Jones: Wants the English Avenue Neighborhood Association and Vine City Civic Association plans that were submitted to be included as exhibits to the current plan. She did not submit any individual amendments.

Ivory Young: Is anything in here mitigating noise impacts? Castleberry Hill has mentioned that several times.

Answer from Katrina Taylor-Parks: That falls under Quality of Life and some state rules supercede city rules, but we can add it.

Justin Giboney: Where do we add that?

Ernestine Garey: Section 3.12 Safety and Code Enforcement

Kyle Kessler: How do we measure success?

Ernestine Garey: We will success measures to 5.03

Ernestine Garey: I motion to move the plan forward with added amendments.

Yvonne Jones: Substitute motion to follow the agenda.

Ivory Young: Committee has invested lots of time but I still think we can take public comment into account. It could be instructive as we move forward, just like we have always listened to public comment.

*Majority passes*

Public Comment:

Michael Bond: explains the process of public comment for the first time \*meaning that he will give a 10 second warning.

Chuck Barlow: 1) On page 8, how does the technical assistance finances work? 2) How will community be involved? 3) Who selects the public point person? 4) When will funds be available? 5) What is the estimated costs of the projects that are listed in the exhibits? 6) Where is the website?

Answer: 1) The applicant pays a one-time \$100 fee and the TAD distributes the fund, up to 40 hours at \$50/hr and you can select your advisor from the list of advisors. We are currently evaluating advisors and will have that list ready in December. Applications will be available from Invest Atlanta, first they are vetted by the staff, recommendations go to the TAD committee and Westside Advisory Board, then onto the Invest Atlanta Board of Directors. 4) January 5) No estimated cost of projects yet.

Chef Dr. Kenneth W.: I thank the Mayor, City Council, Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, Invest Atlanta, others. Talks about the Soul Food Museum and how it will be a unifying force in the community and will be a tourist attraction.

Reverend Stallbach:

\*Was yielded 10 minutes of public comment.

The Soul Food Museum will utilize Pre-Trial Intervention, people going into the justice system can get certified through this program and have their cases dropped so they can become productive members of society. People that hire them will get a \$2,500 credit. Soul Food Museum offers nutritional recommendations and training for African Americans who we all know are dealing with poor health such as Diabetes. When people come to this baseball field (\*what?!), they can have a good tour. Hotels have come to Kenneth looking for workers, this is our opportunity to train and provide them. The museum adds employment and adds tax-paying responsible citizens that can be productive. We can give so many people a second chance in life.

Barry Womack: On behalf of the Soul Food Museum, I want to tell a story about how my life changed when I met Ched Wilholdt. *Continues to tell his story of overcoming alcoholism and drug use and being on his way to becoming a minister and an author of children's books.*

Dr. Narati: I worked with Kenneth on the Collard Green Cultural Festival and am speaking out in support of the Soul Food Museum. We have collard green ice cream coming down the line, I'm

sure many of you have heard that. I also do not see the word “agreement” anywhere in here and am confused.

CT Leslie: I am supporting English Avenue. I am confused by the public comments thusfar. I don't think the neighborhood is being represented properly. Nothing here actually benefits the community, and NPU-V in particular. This is a hurried committee with a hurried document. Why are we rushing when we have 3 years before the stadium is even built?

Senator Vincent Fort: I appreciate your earlier levity, Mr. Bond, but this is no joking matter, this is serious business. We need a jobs program, I hope you don't reinvent the wheel. We have a great model from the Olympics that Mayor Shirley Jackson oversaw. We used unions and gave residents apprenticeships. We gave skills for life, not for a season and it was very successful. I got engaged in this process when Morris Brown was brought up. We need to know that citizen input is being taken into consideration. This \$30M will be gone before you know it and the community will remain.

Gil Frank: \*hard to understand some of his comments through his accent.

I came here hurt. I came to Vine City in 2008 and this is not the image I have of my community. Millions of dollars have been brought on the community, but I do not see the benefit. There is defaulting on many grants and we don't want to ask for something we cannot swallow. I am glad to see that you will hire a manager. We need to move from retribution to contribution.

Shaheed Dubois: You did tremendous job. I am a Vine City resident. The most recent video does not depict the community I know. Most people I know are very determined with a sense a possibility. However, most seniors are dealing with redlining.

Stephen Causby: *Spoke of how this is not good for the future of the city of Atlanta.*

Mackenzie Madden: I wanted to use my time tonight to fill a gap that isn't being brought up. I'm not here to offer any thoughts on the draft, but rather on process. Especially since at last week's meeting it was screamed across the table that the reason the plan was pre-emptively pushed forward was due to process. I come to all of these meetings and I take extensive notes which I don't see anybody else up here doing. I see people playing on their phones, even taking phone calls instead, I see people leaving to go get food or talk in the hallway. On November 14, Ernestine Garey said the November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting would be used to review Draft 4 of the document. How that could translated into “ready to move forward” I have no idea. Ivory says that the committee is being transparent because there are microphones and cameras, then maybe the absent committee members should actually watch the tapes. But it seems impossible since the committee member that I've approached about the tapes have no idea where they are and so they clearly are not accessible. You say that there is no timeline, you've been saying that since September 18. But then you say that the deadline has been December 2<sup>nd</sup> all along and that people can read the legislation for themselves. Well yes, I can read, but that doesn't excuse blatantly lying to the public as a representative of an elected official. I've also seen Michael Bond purposely skip a vote in the process and ignore the crowd when they

said that he missed one. I just want to ask that our public officials act with a bit more self-respect moving forward and provide that food for thought tonight.

Precious: She represents Merchant's Association on MLK and wants to make sure that when development happens that we are not forgotten. There should be a private meeting with existing owners to further discuss this topic.

Deborah Scott: CBAs are supposed to be legally enforced contracts between communities and developers. That's the national model, it should be inclusive, accountable, and enforceable. It needs a community workforce agreement.

Mother Moore: I represent voices of the community in the video and those not adequately represented on the committee. We should revisit the waterfall provision to be used for all neighborhoods in the document. A priority of funding needs to be targeted to the communities.

Mable Thomas: I take a look at the audience, I come in peace, love, and power. In the flood of 2002, I met Reverend Johnson and we worked hand in hand to get replacement value for people's homes, not fair market value and we worked together for the kids at the holiday parties. Reverend Beckham, I had a strong statement on trust. Yvonne Jones has worked hard and raised kids in the neighborhood. I started Ivory Young's political career when I encouraged him to run for NPU chair. I used to babysit Michael Bond and I have notes from you telling me to keep fighting. Ernestine, we made sure ADA had anything you needed. I've been to Cleta's house parties. I watched Makeda's daughter be born and am her godmother. Kyle, I like your sense of humor. Out of respect for these relationships, can you let the people know that they will not be forgotten. We don't want to have to fight City Hall. This should be a partnership with revenue sharing and a clean-up drive.

Vincent Jones: I want to take the opportunity to bring attention to the community that we probably won't get for another thirty years. What I saw last week was a flawed process. We need to commit to further opportunities for English Avenue/Vince City, this cannot be the end of our opportunities.

Khalifa Lee: I was born and raised in Atlanta and grew up in Vine City. I participated in the opening of Centennial Stadium. I know what happens when stadiums are built, the things going into the Falcons could help community. Look at better models like the one in Green Bay that use revenue-sharing. I see hope, faith, and expectancy at events like this.

Tony Torrence: By you coming here, Mayor, it makes things a little better because we're worried. You can't do this alone. If we put the money aside, all we have is each other. We need to work together. We have value in ourselves. The money has turned this into an evil process. We have other friends with money –billionaires- in this city, let's ask them for some help. I see through the smoke screen of money. People need jobs and GEDs. I know what it takes to do right by each other.

James Coleman: We need to rename some streets. For example, calling it Joseph Crossing or honoring Coretta Scott King somehow.

*Motion to move plan forward.*

Ivory Young: Native Atlantans desire to see the community restored. I and others live in Vine City by choice. We love our community. We advocate, we fight. Nothing was more atrocious than when we watched as it took lightning to build the Dome and GWCC – talk about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Their fear of the government can be validated by recent history, they have lots of skin in the game. Many use vacant houses as weapons of mass destruction, painting a picture of a leper colony. Where we are right now and those of us that have been elected have spent \$103M in the community and those projects were completed, but where is the transformation? It would shock you to know the backgrounds and track records of some of us. Nobody has been denied access to \$30M, which could be spent in minutes. Community based developers are in the room (Bob Jones, of Bethursday Development is a testament to how successful a project can be with the help of a city - \$2.5M) Invest Atlanta gave \$2M was to build Gateway apartments. Most people think of pretty pictures and project definitions. Nobody is fighting back. The world will not end today, but we will make progress. We're talking about community development. There is \$54M available for capital improvements. We have to do something different. Let's keep checks and balances. It works because it requires proposals with capacity, not just a strong voice. Senior citizens got homes renovated in my neighborhood without paying a dime because of Invest Atlanta. I trust Ernestine and Invest Atlanta in this process. I believe in them being accountable of our dollars because it worked. Vine City has a health care center that takes patients who don't have health insurance, thank to money from Invest Atlanta. This ain't about politics, doors will remain open. I've got people dying, we need to be educated. Bring you're a game if you want to do a project. I'm supportive of this – the execution of the contracts will provide some of the healing that needs to happen. \$30M won't help, but we're here for the long-term and if you are too – roll your sleeves up and get to work. Its been said we don't have anyone to agree with. When the neighborhoods met for weeks and stood up to together and put a document together, that's never happened before. We need to build on that momentum. This is work.

Mayor Reed: This has been spread out between 1989 and 2013 with 4 award winners. I agree with your feelings about it not being about \$30M. We're working on Choice Neighborhoods – that's \$150M. We plan to spend tens of millions of dollars on infrastructure in Castleberry Hill/English Avenue/Vine City. We have a structure where you all can compete and the best ideas can be funded and I'm excited about it. Not using the peanut butter method of spread anymore. This is a 4 year spread. We won \$47M from TIGER and have secured more than \$200M from the Obama Administration in the last 4 years. Don't believe me, look at what we've done. We found a replacement for Publix. We're just getting started – we plan to spend that \$200M in English Avenue/Vine City. Its important that Blank is a partner in the \$200M spent within the city limits. There have been 20 meetings from this committee regarding this plan. Where is the "rush" coming from? You cant forget the millions we gave to Friendship and Mt Vernon and the money we've invested in parks. It's not just words, it's real money. I have a

record of delivering significant financial resources. We will get through this. We have a construction schedule. The legislation said we had to come to a community and we did. Negotiations with the churches took longer than expected. I chair the board that oversees the choices of your projects. I want you to have the money to do amazing things.

Yvonne Jones: Tonight as a committee, I am disappointed in Katrina Taylor-Parks as a representative and her derogatory remarks. It was agreed in error to move this document. If you move to make a change in plans that you let us know. Where the work is going from here is not where we thought it was. The BeltLine group that met flew people in to talk about Community Benefits Agreements. We were not afforded the same opportunity. We elected you to lead us, but now we're in a ditch. We're disenfranchised. This is not what we thought it would be.

Mayor Reed: In the heat of conversations, tempers get enflamed. I apologize on behalf of Katrina Taylor-Parks and Ernestine Garey. I know she is a woman of heart and for the people. I believe in them both, we don't have to quit working at this. I'm willing to still meet if you're willing to still meet.

Cesar Mitchell: A partner in my New York office law firm is working with Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation on a separate matter, I need to clarify that. I echo the Mayor's thought on tempers flaring and people saying things they wouldn't usually say, myself included. I did not say anything I do not stand behind. I was adamantly opposed to beginning something that didn't start right. The way it unfolded did not allow for an agreement. We created a box and stepped into it and got work done. I'm very disappointed. Not for lack of hard work and time. We hoped this would be a kumbaya coming together moment over this initial investment that will touch the city and surrounding communities. This process makes me ashamed for our cities. There are only 3,000 residents in English Avenue/Vine City, that should have nothing to do with a decision to move forward. Nobody should be called pimp players or charlatans. This is our opportunity to come together. It will take continued coming together. We're divided right now. Help me to understand the current motion.

Michael Bond: We are moving these current recommendations to Council so they can replace the one they have.

Cesar Mitchell: My outburst wasn't completely unwarranted. I know people want to move forward and I think the vote should only happen by community members, not city employees.

Michael Bond: I need to rule that motion out of order, we are all here to participate.

Cesar Mitchell: The work you do is beneficial and impactful, but the document was originally intended to be designed by and for the community, not elected officials or city employees.

Michael Bond: I rule that out of order. I am a resident. I watch what happens in the neighborhood.

Cesar Mitchell: I think your capacity here is as an elected official, you will have a vote later down the line, rendering this work superfluous and redundant. I want a document in Council that is pure and endorsed by members of the community. I understand you want to rule it out of order. How is it too dangerous or revolutionary? We can self-select to opt out of voting. You're calling this a technicality.

Michael Bond: We amended it to allow it to be inclusive. We were also elected by the community members. We're here to be accountable citizens and look out for the people who put us here. The only way to move forward is to actively participate. Members can use their voting rights. I have a bad temper too. I publicly apologize for anything accosting or sharp. It says something that people are getting along tonight.

VOTE

Michael Bond: The plan moves forward with a 9, 3, 1 vote.

\*The 1 abstention was Cesar Mitchell based on his earlier comment.

Michael Bond: This concludes business. Thanks everyone that has been involved.