



Northwest Community Alliance Meeting

Wednesday March 18th 2014, 7 – 9 pm

Meals on Wheels, Atlanta GA

Announcement: Next meeting will be on May 21st.

Special Guest Presentation:

Keith Sharp from Riverwalk - Groundwork USA started with EPA and National Park Service wanting to increase access to open space and re-use burdened land from an environmental justice standpoint. They invest in projects that catalyze places to improve them for live/work/play. They also invest in people in terms of community development for those that run the projects. NPU-G and NPU-D were selected for a Chattahoochee watershed feasibility study. The grant provides \$125,000 spread out over the first 5 years that the program is in existence and comes with a \$75,000 matching component.

Mike Koblenz's welcome: We will leave this open-ended and let the speakers open it up to whatever topics they want.

Speakers:

Councilman Ivory Lee Young, Jr of District 3

- 26 year resident of Atlanta.
- 22 year resident of Vine City.
- Background in Architecture.
- Was a lead planner for Olympic venues near AUC and GT.
- Designed schools and housing projects.
- Comes out of the NPU L board.
- New boundaries puts Atlantic Station, West Midtown, GT, and the new stadium all in his district.

- There have been major dollars spent in District 3 so far. The \$1.5 million in Courtyard Plaza and the \$1.5 million in Neighborhood Union Health Center

- The drop-out rate has been 40-50% for years now. the incarceration rates are correlated to drop-out rates.

- In terms of dollars:
 - o \$54 million in the TAD.
 - o \$180 million available from Choice Neighborhoods.
 - o \$15 million in human capital funding from the Blank Foundation.
 - o \$4.5 million in streetscape improvements.
 - o \$30 million in capital improvements.
 - o \$55 million from the National Monuments Foundation for Mims Park.
 - o \$150 - \$200 in development on Northside Drive across from the stadium.



- \$110 million in redevelopment from Ivan Allen to Boone on Antioch's property (Bethursday Development).
- "Sticks and bricks dollars won't affect the indigenous population. Job training needs to happen to allow them to become self-sustainable."

Councilman Michael Bond, Post 1 At Large

- Started out in District 3
- Attended Morehouse College and Douglass High

- Believes in mass transit, light rail, community development (initiated Westside Village and made a Westside TAD), public safety (was a previous Department of Corrections officer, wants to prevent people from entering the criminal justice system), Atlanta Public Schools.

- We cannot rest on our laurels from the 1996 Olympics and we must re-create the entrepreneurial spirit of that time. I would like to see English Avenue/Vine City thrive. The thing I love about being in an At Large post is seeing the entire city. I love going into the neighborhoods and meeting new people. "We are served best when we work together."

Yvonne Jones on behalf of State Representative "Able" Mable Thomas

- Went to English Avenue Elementary School, Kennedy Middle School, Washington High School, and Georgia State University
- 56th District includes Ansley Park, Atlantic Station, English Avenue/Vine City and others. It is extensive.
- Serves on the environmental and economic development committees in the House. She was able to see the bonds around the stadium.

Audience Q&A:

Q: Does the Mayor and do City Council members need to live in Atlanta to be elected?

A: Yes

Q: Why do planners at the city level not live in the city or even step foot in the community? For example, when it comes to issues with vacant housing, I'm concerned with who is making decisions. I feel like they don't understand the ordinances, they need to drive through the community with a resident to do a windshield survey so they can understand.

MB: Just like the police and fire departments, you cannot dictate where someone lives

IY: Continuing education requirements should be mandatory. We have talked for years about revamping the zoning ordinance. When we were budget scarce, we didn't do a good job at re-evaluating the planning department.

Q: What is going on with 311, the non-emergency call center?



MB: 311 is still being prepped and is not yet ready to be unveiled. “Don’t let the company in before dinner’s ready.”

Q: You talk about the price of projects in areas but what is a total number for redevelopment in English Avenue/Vine City?

IY: First-base project would be \$1 billion in a phased approach. Byron Amos is working on the future of Kennedy Middle School. If you drive down Boone Blvd and you can’t recognize redevelopment, you won’t recognize a redeveloped community. There are intangibles you won’t see that need to be a priority (job training, re-entry programs, etc.) We are complicit in this drop-out rate, we have head of households relegated to low-wage work because we failed them in a classroom. I owned a daycare for eight years. Families are moving out for better schools. \$1 billion is easy to send and you’ll be able to see change – a third of it needs to be invested in humans.

YJ: So many issues that we need to consider, the environment etc. so \$1 billion is a good number to start.

Q: People with higher incomes are community into the city, have we thought of an income tax on those people that are using our services during the day?

MB: Need a state legislative agenda item.

IY: The hotel-motel tax comes from outside the city, where that is spent is written into the legislature. You can make arguments for all kinds of taxes and places that money. Hands are tied right now.

Q: Can you bring us up to speed on the MLK re-alignment?

MB: They will install a left turn signal. I have been stopped multiple times by the cops trying to turn left. I have not been tickets, but I know friends that have. I’ve seen accidents. There is a meeting in the Mayor’s office on Friday at 11 am regarding this.

IY: Councilman Dickens passed a resolution to restore MLK to what it was.

Q: Is Central UMC a part of the realignment?

IY: You can only do so much on a Right of Way with a certain width. Biggest impact happens on game day. The platform length and width was designed as a commuter station, not to handle big event congestion. If we design a stadium with a direct link to the transit system it will prevent stoppage. We won’t use Northside to get anywhere during an event day, it wouldn’t make sense. We need to use assets and capitalize on them. We need to create a better stadium with a better ingress/egress. There wouldn’t be a community benefits conversation without a stadium. These aren’t new issues. Blank is aware of the need for human capital. There needs to be a case for more business investment that illustrates a Return on Investment and the Council can make a case for further investment. If we transform the lives of people in addition to improving the physical area, it will make an actual difference to the indigenous populations. The reconnect is happening from part of Mitchell to MLK. The concepts for multi-modal at the Richard B. Russell Building is like watching the Hobbit. It’s not going to happen. Bridging the railroad won’t be a big deal. Blank only owns about 10% of the land. An Oakland Raider owns the other 80% and Oliver Lee’s heirs the other 10%. Every year, they make a case for closing Bethune Elementary



and we veto it. The proposed mixed-use development would spell the demise of Bethune. Without a school in the immediate community, we can't have revitalization.

Q: What is happening with Dobbin's plans?

IY: Hopefully, he will be there on Friday at the Mayor's meeting.

***Note:** Jeb Dobbins confirmed that Mike Dobbins will not be at the meeting because he only received the invitation a week in advance and was already booked.

YJ: A \$17 million parking was "slipped in" to Senate Bill 393 for the expansion of the Georgia World Congress Center Red Deck.

Q: What role should the colleges/universities play in development? What are the problems/hold-ups with houses needing to be demolished? Have you seen the entire plan for the stadium site? What is the long-term vision?

MB: AUC has been very insular about their plans. There was an overlap in their plans for which institutes wanted to go after which parcels for acquisition regarding development and growth and they weren't talking to each other. A master plan for the stadium that includes neighboring communities doesn't exist. There should be a Westside plan charette to put everything on the table. Can't force people to share plans but it would put people at ease. While Dobbins' studio students have great creativity, there is a need to see what is scientifically possible.

Q: Considering that the public dollars are going in, why can't we see the plan?

MB: They are private and only concerned with what they have purview over.

IY: We need to be concerned with indigenous populations. In about 10 acres of English Avenue, you could do 200 units of multi-family housing. 40% of it is vacant/abandoned and owned by investors waiting to hear "buy". Use the Land Bank Authority to control price points. The more the city can control price point, the more we can protect indigenous populations, particularly for seniors. It needs to stop being talked about, and concretely in the Community Benefits Plan.

Q: With relinquishing property, were decisions made without seeing a long-term vision/plan?

IY: The current plan is Tatnall/Mitchell becoming a 2 way that reconnects with Centennial Olympic Park as does MLK and it gets two-way traffic from Spring Street.

Q: Would a traffic study be feasible?

IY: It will be available on Friday at Mayor's meeting. You can request it through Open Records.

MB: I thought: "There's no way in hell they'll acquire my church to build a stadium". Several local/state/federal government is planted within downtown and churches are dotted throughout despite offers to buy them. The church (Friendship Baptist) decided to sell themselves. They negotiated with Arthur Blank and the Mayor to end their church at that location. Despite public outrage, it isn't a city matter.



Q: I looked at the JC Development website and it seems out of date. They are claiming they will have development coming with the Falcons stadium, is it true?

IY: The plan was estimated at \$148 million on the land that they own. The bank that owned the note was foreclosed on. They are still at the table. Arthur Blank has been disengaged from the development discussion. But good projects will be funded outside of the \$15 million.

C: We got results from a study about the AUC that doesn't include the new stadium on the corridor to Cleveland Ave, where Georgia Tech is not focusing its efforts. This goes to show that the AUC is involved, we've been focused on this for a long time.

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