

## Bryant Phase II Meeting

Thursday, September 15, 2011  
 All Souls Unitarian Universalist  
 5:30-7:30pm  
 75 attendees

### **Recap of Site Tour**

During the site tour, the district received some great feedback about community needs and reuses that could address community needs.

Key things that the district has noted from the site tour discussion:

- *Concern that if the building remains vacant for too much longer it will hurt the neighborhood*
- *Parking/traffic has to be addressed as part of any proposal (parking is already an issue with St. Teresa's)*
- *Community needs included: recreational space/activities, places to educate local kids, opportunities to age in place/support aging population, work close to home*
- *Variety of reuses discussed including: community center, residential, office space, boutique hotel, artist space, nonprofit use – each came back to a central theme of what reuses will be a good fit for the location of the building, too much density or reuses that create a lot of auto traffic/might impact the value of adjacent properties would be a concern*

Participants confirmed that this was a good summary of the site tour feedback and added that noise and light pollution caused by a potential reuse were also things that would need to be addressed

### **REUSE FEEDBACK**

Based on the technical assessment and feedback from the site tour, several types of reuse have been identified as viable options for Bryant. The following provides a summary of the community feedback in discussing reuse options:

#### Community feedback on **Residential Use:**

- In general, participants were supportive of a residential reuse of the site, although they did identify preferences and some areas of concern that should be addressed/outlined in proposals, including: provision of adequate parking; noise; provision of sufficient green space
- Participants desire to retain the historic value of the building. Redevelopment of the existing building was strongly preferred over teardown/new construction. Although some participants indicated that a teardown and conversion to new single family homes would be very desirable.
- Many participants were open to construction of additional housing on the site in combination with redevelopment of the school building (much of the grounds are already blacktop) so long as green space is preserved, the new buildings are

complimentary to the existing school building and surrounding neighborhood/consistency with neighborhood fabric, intensity of use, height are addressed in proposals

- Participants indicated that senior housing would be an attractive reuse for the site as many residents may desire to downsize as they get older yet still stay in the neighborhood
- Participants felt that residential units should be condo (home ownership) versus rentals. The following outlines concerns about rental units that were expressed during the meeting and which should be addressed by any group submitting a proposal that includes a rental conversion:
  - Phase II meeting participants echoed concern heard at the site tour involving the high turnover associated with rentals and less pride without ownership
  - Some participants inquired as to whether 27 +/- units would be sufficient to support a rental scenario, and if more buildings would be need to be constructed in order for the project to pencil out, resulting in diminished green space
  - Maintenance of land and rental units was a serious concern
  - Concern for providing sufficient buffer between rental units and the adjacent single family homes
  - Parking – desire for the project to accommodate all parking needs off-street; likewise there was a desire to avoid “junky carports”
  - Unit quality/size to determine if project will be complimentary to the neighborhood
- Participants were not in favor of an affordable housing development, as it may impact the values of adjacent properties

Community feedback on **Mixed Use (Residential + Other – Office, Community Center, Etc):**

- Many participants expressed concerns as to whether retail/office/commercial use was the most appropriate reuse of the site due to the residential nature of the area; however, some participants indicated that an office/business incubator/corner coffee shop would be desirable. Participants generally indicated a willingness to see what proposals developers presented before nixing commercial use of the site
- Commercial access for any commercial activity should be limited to Wornall Rd
- Participants did indicate that development proposals should outline how they would address: light, noise, traffic, parking for any commercial use, major events (rental of facility out to other groups); management of commercial/non-residential uses
- There was significant discussion around the use of the facility as a community center/recreational facility. Many participants expressed a strong desire to have a facility that local families could use for low intensity recreation space, classroom space, kitchen use, etc. A neighborhood association board member presented a desire for the neighborhood associations to actively pursue development of the site independently or in partnership with a developer (the CID concept was introduced as possible avenue to contribute financially, although it was felt that there wasn’t sufficient support for this in the neighborhood). Many other participants, however, voiced concerns that a community center/recreational facility/club would draw too many people to the site and create unwanted light, noise and traffic nuisances.
- Several participants voiced specific concerns about the possibility of Rockhill Tennis Club acquiring the site as private clubs often have to rent out facilities to other groups in order to be financial viable. Swim/tennis meets and parties that create were mentioned

as events that would present some concern to local neighbors, as they would have associated traffic/noise/lights for outdoor activities. In addition, some participants had concerns about the private nature of Rockhill Tennis Club and indicated a private club would not be acceptable (note: possession of a liquor license was mentioned as an issue by one participant), where as others felt that was a positive as it would be smaller and upscale.

- Any proposals of a mixed use/commercial/community use should work to address the issues/concerns outlined by the meeting participants

#### **Community Feedback on Educational Reuse:**

- Educational reuse was described by the community as “best idea, good idea, very desirable” and identified a need for strong public schools
- Many participants agreed that an elementary school would be more desirable than a high school
- A participant proposed the idea of moving Border Star to Bryant as the Border Star site presented more options for reuse than Bryant due to the commercial nature of its location. As this proposal had been raised previously to the district, district staff advised the group that the district was conducting some due diligence, including cost to renovate Bryant, and determining if there are deed restrictions at the Border Star site. These two issues would have to be addressed, before any consideration could be given to this proposal. In addition, Border Star staff/parents would need to be consulted. It should be noted that none of the participants currently had a student attending Border Star; one school parent present was very opposed to this idea
- It was noted that an educational reuse could also serve as a community center and/or as a communiversity site

#### **DEMOLITION**

Community feedback on **Demolition**:

- Participants desire to retain the historic value of the building. There was general consensus that redevelopment of the existing building was strongly preferred over teardown/new construction. Although a few participants indicated that a teardown and conversion to new single family homes may be very desirable

#### **SOLICITATION PROCESS**

The district has a few options available to it when it disposes of surplus property:

- Choose to sell or lease
- Use one of three methods to sell/lease (as required by state statute):
  - Market a property through a broker
  - Formal bidding process (award to highest bidder)
  - Negotiate directly with a community group/governmental agency

During the meeting, participants were asked to provide their feedback on the solicitation process. The following summarizes their feedback/comments.

- Residents indicated that they preferred for the district to issue an RFI for the site versus listing the site with a broker and that they desired for the RFI to be “out on the street” for sufficient duration that all parties interested would have an opportunity to prepare their proposals
- Many participants preferred the district to vet the proposals for financial viability before soliciting formal neighborhood feedback; however, there was also a desire to be able to provide feedback to developers early so that they could adequately address neighborhood concerns
  - Proposals should address concerns of the neighborhood
  - Participants requested a public meeting for members of the four adjacent neighborhood association members to attend. There was concern about how community members would be identified as some neighbors felt the neighborhood association boards had not been open/forthcoming in past discussions with prospective proposals
  - District staff indicated that they would provide sufficient notice of the meeting(s). Notice would be given to the neighborhood association boards as well as all in attendance of the site tour/Phase II meetings/others expressing interest in Bryant