

## Pinkerton and Graceland – Phase II Meeting

Tuesday, October 4, 2011  
Southeast Community Center  
5:30-7:30pm

15 attendees: 6 present at the site tour, 7 neighborhood residents

The following is a summary of the discussion/feedback from the Phase II meeting for the Graceland + Pinkerton school sites:

### **RECAP OF SITE TOUR FEEDBACK**

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

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

- *When the school was open, there was a good relationship between the neighborhood and school/teachers (community breakfasts/volunteers in school)*
- *Concern that if the building is vacant, it would hurt the neighborhood – home owners start to sell*
- *Strong support for WEB Dubois use of the building (positive activities/good track record)*
- *Question as to whether the building is underutilized (opportunity for additional tenants)*
- *A variety of reuses were identified as beneficial to the neighborhood: shared use of the facility/multiple tenants; education (youth/adults); community/social services; office/retail/business incubator – something to take advantage of commercial kitchen*

Participants confirmed that this was a good summary of the site tour feedback.

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

- *The area needs to rebuild its image – rebranding – create a new identity*
- *There is a lack of a community gathering place in the area (coffee shop; breakfast spot; place for neighborhood meetings)*
- *There is a concern that the longer the building sits vacant, it is more susceptible to deterioration (closed in 2005)*
- *A variety of reuses were identified, including: education/training facility; neighborhood resource/services center; business incubator; childcare; 24 hour access to technology resources*
- *Overall, a multi-use facility that could be used by multiple organizations was identified as very attractive*
- *Any reuse should serve the needs of the community*

Participants confirmed that this was a good summary of the site tour feedback. A participant wanted to add that a neighborhood shopping center was also discussed as a possible reuse.

**REUSE FEEDBACK**

The following provides a summary of the community feedback received in discussing reuse options for Pinkerton and Graceland.

**Community feedback on Educational Use:**

- Many participants strongly supported educational use and this was identified as having priority over all other reuses.
- Some participants said it doesn't matter what type of school, as long as it is used for education. Several felt the buildings should retain their original purpose. One participant noted that the schools are in the middle of neighborhoods and that the location supports educational reuse over other uses.
- Some participants voiced the desire for the sites to be community schools, open to the community for use (i.e. gathering places for community activities and events).
- A participant said that the best thing for the neighborhood is to have traditional public schools. He noted that the district should only lease the buildings for a limited time, until they can come back as KCMSD schools.
- Some participants noted that there is strong community support for charter schools at both sites.
- A resident participant expressed a desire for the charter discussion take place in front of the neighborhood association.
- A participant proposed a facility oriented toward building trades as a possibility for adult education. Another participant noted the proposed facility at 50<sup>th</sup> and Prospect which will act as a contractor incubator. It was expressed that a building trades education center could complement this proposed facility.
- Several participants agreed that they would like to see Graceland assist the neighborhood. It was noted that people need job training and they need an easy place to access such training.
- A participant proposed mixing different educational uses. This was generally supported, however safety of children was cited as a primary concern and that this concern should be addressed in any type of educational mix proposals.

**Community feedback on Community-Oriented Use (including non-profit offices/community services):**

- Several participants expressed support for community services. Participants said that community use should benefit children and the surrounding neighborhoods.
- A resident participant noted that she preferred community services over commercial development.
- A participant said that any proposal for community use should address safety, maintenance, and reasonable standards of care.
- Several participants felt that a single, stand-alone service provider would not be able to fully utilize the buildings and that community service proposals should include multiple users.
- The Center School District was cited by a participant as an example of mixing educational uses with community services. It was noted that parents can drop off kids and stay to receive services. Another participant said Manual Tech also offers a mixture of community-oriented use and education.
- One concern expressed was that a community-oriented use should not serve as a loitering place; rather people should receive services and leave.
- Regarding community use at Graceland, a participant noted that the type of services offered and need for a facility would depend upon Blue Hills Health Services. It would be desirable for the services to not overlap, but rather complement one another.

### Community feedback on **Commercial Use:**

- The majority of participants were against commercial and retail reuse.
- A participant said that the neighborhood needs a place for children to go to school. She expressed that there are already areas for retail close by and that there is ample opportunity for retail in other places.
- Another participant added she would not like to see big commercial.
- Others added that commercial use would not be lasting. A participant said that businesses would have to increase prices to offset the undesirable commercial locations, resulting in the absence of long-term viability.
- A participant said that schools didn't have enough parking for commercial uses.
- Another participant said that commercial raised numerous security issues.
- A participant was in favor of commercial use. He said that anything could be put into a neighborhood shopping center and it could pay for other uses in the building. In addition, he said the area needs shopping within walking distance and jobs. He felt that the playgrounds could be converted to accommodate the needed parking.
- If there was a commercial proposal, the group wanted to exclude adult entertainment, guns, tobacco, and alcohol.

### Community feedback on **Residential Use + Residential and Other Use Combination:**

- Several participants noted they were pro-residential. They said that residential reuse of the schools could help to rebuild the neighborhood.
- A participant expressed the need for transitional housing. He said there is a new homeless situation. People are losing their jobs and families need temporary housing. He suggested temporary housing that allows residents to learn a trade at the same time, then transition to a home of their own.
- Another participant disagreed and stated that there are already vacant houses surrounding the schools and that these vacancies could indicate there is no need for housing in the area.
- Others stated that there is a shortage of money to pay for housing which is the real issue, not the vacancies.

### **DEMOLITION FEEDBACK**

The following questions were asked of the participants:

- Scenario 1) What if a viable proposal comes in that is consistent with community feedback, but would require demolition of the building? What are your thoughts about demolition in this case?
  - Several participants agreed that it would depend upon the proposal.
  - A participant noted that it is important to get the highest or best use for the site.
  - Another participant added that if you have a proposal to bring in something beneficial to the community, then possibly demolition would be acceptable.
- Scenario 2) What if several years go by, and the building still hasn't been reused. In the case of Graceland, it has already been vacant for 6 years. What should the district do? What are your thoughts about demolition in this scenario?
  - A participant expressed that in this scenario, the district should not demo the building and continue to look for new uses.

**SOLICITATION PROCESS/EVALUATION CRITERIA FEEDBACK**Community feedback on **Preference for Lease or Sale:**

- Participants were split as to preference for lease or sale.
- A participant said that the schools should be leased, so they could be brought back later as a KCMSD school.
- Another participant expressed concern over who would be responsible for a leased site. Questions were raised about maintenance and upkeep. In addition, it was noted a lease situation would impact needed improvements to the building and site.
- Other participants said the schools should be sold. They added that the neighborhood desires stability of a long-term reuse.
- Several participants expressed the need for a right of refusal option to be included in the sale of the buildings. They said that if the buildings are sold again, the district should have the opportunity to buy it back.

Community feedback on **Solicitation Process:**

- The participants supported the RFI method for both school sites.

Community feedback on **Evaluation of Proposals:**

- A participant said there should be a two step process. The proposals should be ranked, then enter into negotiations. He added that the district should weed out undesired groups.
- Another participant said it is critical to meet with the neighborhood associations. Others said it should be presented to the entire neighborhood.
- A participant expressed that neighborhoods should be able to talk to the school board before decisions are made.
- Participants were split as to when they wished to be involved in the process. Some said that all proposals should be brought to the neighborhood first, to include the community. However, other participants disagreed and thought the district should vet proposals first; allowing neighborhoods to have still have access to information, and then bring it before a neighborhood.
- A participant raised concern regarding if the neighborhood associations are truly representative of the preferences of the residents.
- When asked if any others should be included in this process, a participant said possibly city councilmen should be included in the conversation.