

## Ladd Phase II Meeting

Tuesday, August 9, 2011  
 Mohart Multi-Purpose Center  
 5:30-7:30pm  
 3 attendees

The following is a summary of the discussion/feedback from the Phase II meeting for the Ladd school site:

### **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 site tour discussion:

- *Even though the school is closed, it is still considered a community gathering spot*
- *Building is in good condition, its size and layout make it versatile, all of which are assets*
- *Illicit activities taking place on site which need to be addressed*
- *Strong support for reuses that benefit the neighborhood: multi-purpose center that provides youth services, life skills/job training, shops, and offices. Also support for senior housing, but concern about other forms of affordable/subsidized housing since the area has a considerable # of vacant homes/lots.*

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

### **REUSE FEEDBACK**

Based on the technical assessment and feedback from the site tour, several types of reuse have been identified as viable options for Ladd, including:

- Mixed Use
  - Combination of Residential + Other Uses
  - Multi-purpose Center (Services + Office + Community Center)
- Multi-family Residential

#### Community feedback for **Multi-purpose Center**:

- The participants indicated that a multi-purpose center that combined technical training with social services would best fit the needs of the community.
- A development that included community service organizations, senior services and/or a community resource center was very desirable. Services open to the community such as a job/vocational training center, life skills, tutoring, education/training, barber/beauty shop, branch office for Medicare/Medicaid resources were also discussed.

#### Community feedback for **Multi-family Residential**:

- Of the different types of residential use, participants were only supportive of senior housing because they were concerned that other residential projects might attract violence/additional drug use in the area.

- In addition, participants were not supportive of subsidized housing as there is already ample affordable housing in the area and they didn't want an additional concentration of subsidized units.

The technical assessment indicated that Ladd is not a strong candidate for retail use due to its location and layout (lack of exterior and interior visibility). The following summarizes the discussion during the Phase II meeting:

Community feedback on **Retail Use:**

- Participants wanted some assurance that they could limit/deter undesirable activities in the reuse of the building. They were generally not interested in any use involving the exchange of money because this might draw an undesirable element/clientele to the area; the exchange of goods or services brings along the chance of negative activity taking place on the property. As such, they did not believe a grocery store would be a good fit for the site.
- Participants did indicate; however, that a commercial or retail use that catered to/provided services to seniors would be appropriate for the site.

The district has received a few inquiries about the site from start-up charter schools. The following summarizes the discussing about educational reuse during the Phase II meeting:

Community feedback on **Educational Use:**

- Several participants did not feel the neighborhood needed an elementary school in the area.
- Participants were not in favor of reuse of the site by a start-up charter school because there is no guarantee of success with a start-up charter school. The charter would have to be an established school, however, this is not a high priority for the neighborhood.
- Participants were supportive of a pre-school use or services/training/life skills for women. Both of these uses were attractive because they target a specific audience. The life-skills training for women would bring a technical training facility to the area for women specifically. The pre-school could be partnered with the like-skills training center.

Note: Training bubbled up to the top often in the discussion. A known, reputable organization would be preferred to provide training services.

**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.

Community feedback on the **Solicitation Process:**

- Participant feedback on sale versus lease was mixed. They indicated that a sale would be the more stable option; however, a lease would allow the site to remain a community asset and allow for community use
- Participants did not have a clear preference for any of the three methods for the sale/lease of the site. They did express a concern that a broker may have no vested interest in what the community wants
- Participants stressed that regardless of the process used, community needs input. Constance Norton, the President of the Oak Park Neighborhood Association should be the main point of contact

**INTERIM REUSES/ACTIONS**

In the event the district doesn't receive viable proposals for Ladd, or if it takes several years, the district solicited feedback from the community on interim actions/activities.

Community feedback on **Interim Uses:**

- Participants indicated that they were pleased that the fields are currently used by several little league teams, and that this was an appropriate use of the grounds.
- In addition, a walking trail on the site would be the most desirable new interim use.
- A community garden would also be acceptable; the Oak Park Neighborhood Association currently has a garden initiative. This may be a possible location for that effort.
- In addition, the following interim uses were mentioned:
  - Community meeting space
  - Farmers market
  - Community events

**DEMOLITION**

For every site, the district is gathering community feedback on the possible demolition of the building.

Community feedback on **Demolition:**

- There was consensus in the group that they were not supportive of demolition of the building, even if a viable proposal comes in that is consistent with community feedback.
- In the event, the building remains vacant for several years, the participants indicated that they are still not supportive of demolition, but after exhausting all options, the district should come back to the community to discuss demolition and other alternatives.