

## **EWEB Riverfront Master Plan Community Advisory Team (CAT)**

Wednesday, April 8, 2009, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

EWEB Board Room

Present: Dave Hauser, Tom Hoyt, Mark Johnson, Pat Johnston, Dean Pape', Mary Unruh, Anita Van Asperdt and Gary Wildish, members; Mark Oberle, Project Manager; Jeannine Parisi and Debra Smith, EWEB staff; Tom Larson, City of Eugene; Bart Johnson; Greg Rikhoff; Diane Wiley, University of Oregon; John Rowell and Kaarin Knudson, Rowell Brokaw Architects (RBA); Diane Wiley, University of Oregon; Vicki Maxon, Recorder; Julie Fischer, Bob Hart, Kevin Matthews, Tim Shinabarger, Tom Snyder, and Zachary Vishanoff, public.

Absent: Desiree Moore

### **1. Welcome and Agenda/Material Review**

Dave Hauser welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda. He noted that tonight's agenda continues the CAT's information-gathering process with two presentations, one regarding the neighboring Riverfront Research Park and the other the ecological potential of EWEB's riverfront property.

He also reminded the CAT of a series of upcoming charrettes on April 27, 28 and 29 regarding Walnut Station mixed use center, which will utilize a form-based code.

### **2. Comments from the Audience**

Zachary Vishanoff said he had gone to a Planning Commission meeting regarding the Walnut Station node concept viability study which was done by Johnson-Gardner. He urged the CAT to get copies of this study as it may assist riverfront master planning. He added that he has also read a new report on code development for Walnut Station which was done by Lydia Buchanan.

Zachary also said that he has received tentative approval for a City Club presentation regarding the EWEB riverfront property in October or November. He said that last year Mayor Piercy had spoken about this topic in relation to a new City Hall site, and had received very positive feedback. He is hoping to bring Mayor Piercy back for another meeting, if she agrees. He said he hoped that a few members of the CAT could speak at this session, or possibly an EWEB Board member and the Mayor. He added that this presentation may or may not include the concept of EWEB property being purchased for a future City Hall, but would be more of a general discussion. He asked the CAT to let him know if they have any ideas regarding a presentation at that meeting.

### **3. Approve March 11 and 17, 2009 Minutes**

Both sets of minutes were approved.

#### **4. Riverfront Research Park (RRP)**

Tom Hoyt introduced Diane Wiley, Riverfront Research Park Director.

Diane began by telling the CAT that she admires and respects the work they are doing and that the EWEB property is very unique. She said she agrees that it is important to talk to stakeholders and hear diverse points of view at the beginning of the process. She added that there are many areas of potential intersection between EWEB and the research park as neighboring property owners.

Diane then gave a Powerpoint presentation that included the park's mission statement, some fast facts, and a list of the companies that make up the park. She said that there were some key interfaces and opportunities with the EWEB property:

- Return to the River – pivotal site connecting people to the river
- Confluence of downtown, courthouse district, RRP and U of O, all connected by the river
- New ORI building and standards for the riverfront, including bike patch and public access improvements. Possibility of rebuilding bike path to 14 feet wide with lighting, railing, berms and riparian planting
- Possible plaza/overlook at 8<sup>th</sup> & Hilyard
- 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue bike path reconnection potential
- Access issues – infrastructure, utilities and parking (potential use of environmentally constrained property as parking asset)
- Need broader discussion about the millrace and a vision for the future – University has new cooling tower and will no longer need millrace water; issue around costs to continue diverting water into the millrace (operating and maintenance of pumps/fish screens, etc.) and who will pay for those

Gary Wildish asked what the water level of the millrace would be if the pumps were not in operation. Diane replied that there would not be much flow.

Pat Johnston asked what would happen if the University were to give up their water rights. Diane replied that they could be sold to another party. She added that there may be a tradeoff with the City of Eugene for storm fees, in some equitable distribution, and that there is a team of people who are involved in this discussion.

Pat Johnston then asked if permeable concrete had been considered for the bike path. Diane replied that the engineers were concerned about how that material would hold up, and that they are leaning toward using regular concrete. Pat told Diane that she would like to follow up with her regarding the permeable concrete possibility and also regarding the lighting that is being considered.

Dave Hauser asked if there are any issues regarding street connectivity between the RRP and EWEB properties. Diane referred to an enlarged street map and replied that in the Parks Master Plan, the road system is a loop to Agate Street and that, depending on what structures are retained (including Willamette Substation), there could possibly be a road along the railroad tracks. She added that the University has worked with the City of Eugene on alternate road configurations and that there are many restrictions around this process.

Dave Hauser asked if there are standards embedded in the parks master plan. Diane replied that there are, and that the RRP has a special zoning district for setbacks, the bike path, etc.

Once again referring to the enlarged street map, Diane explained that at 8<sup>th</sup> & Hilyard the bike path connector went through the South Bank Trail and that EWEB snaked the bike path around its property, which is less than optimal. She added that the OPI project would straighten that out, and possibly reroute that portion entirely but, based on some environmental issues, it will remain in EWEB's ownership. She said a possibility might be to approach 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue from downtown.

Pat Johnston asked how parking issues are being dealt with. Diane commented that the research park could benefit from structured parking, in her opinion, but so far that is not financially feasible. She added that the building setback is 75 feet and the parking setback is 35 feet.

Dave Hauser asked Diane for an update regarding the urban renewal money that was used for this project and what its status is. Diane replied that the urban renewal district lost money when the Agripac cannery was demolished and that by the time the money came back around, most of the roads had been completed. She added that the urban renewal district was extended in 2004-05, but the resources were dedicated to the courthouse neighborhood and spent on the street system, etc. She confirmed that the EWEB property is in the urban renewal district but in general there is not a lot of income being generated for that right now.

Anita Van Asperdt asked how the research park is different from any other urban business park that exists, specifically, how its design incorporates the river. Diane replied that it was developed on a building by building basis, so they don't have just one single architectural standard to go by. However, there is landscape continuity between the different sites, and that they don't have just one single architectural standard to go by. She said a lot of attention was put into site detail and that it is important to her that when two sites come together, they look like they were meant to be conjoined.

Tom Hoyt asked what the best way is for the CAT to get involved in future development conversations regarding use of the millrace, including water rights and flow, and also regarding how steam is shared between the EWEB and University of Oregon steam plants. Diane replied that right now there is not a common vision and that they are in the early development stages, and that she will relay the CAT's interest to the correct people. Referring to an enlarged photo, Diane showed the steam pipe route and explained the intertie system between the two entities. She added that currently the conversations involve whether or not to relocate the intertie or discontinue it all together and have each steam plant be independent.

The group thanked Diane for her presentation. The group then took a 10-minute break.

## **5. Ecological Potential for Riverfront Property**

Anita Van Asperdt introduced Bart Johnson, a landscape architect and ecologist who is a professor at the University of Oregon. She noted that Mr. Johnson had worked on the courthouse neighborhood project as part of the design team.

Bart gave a Powerpoint presentation regarding the ecological potential for the EWEB riverfront property. A short summary of this presentation follows.

Important Questions to Ask:

- 1) Can riverfront development assist social/economic revitalization of urban cores while serving efforts to restore aquatic and riparian habitats?
- 2) What would it take to do both well? What are the tradeoffs?
- 3) How do you optimize or prioritize?

Bart showed examples of some riverfront developments worldwide and also in the United States and explained the characteristics of a healthy river habitat, including riparian vegetation, large wooded areas, sloughs and gravel bars. He referred to the Salmon Habitat Conservation strategy, which recommended a 75-foot setback and 45-foot transition area as a middle ground response to the ecological needs of river species.

He then presented three ecological options for EWEB riverfront:

- 1) Retain current riparian zone and restore as best as possible (remove rip-rap and invasive plants)
- 2) Expand riparian zone over top of bank up to 150' wide where possible – sculpt out certain areas for buildings, develop paths, and improve habitat
- 3) Lay back banks on south side to create high-water habitat for salmon and low-water habitat for people
  - Create flood plain for a daylighted millrace
  - Establish salmonid resting and rearing habitat
  - Resolve existing infrastructure issues – water and steam lines, etc.

Finally, ask if there other places better suited for this extensive modification, or are the benefits here significant enough to justify the expense at this property?

Dean Pape' asked what cannot be affected in this area (regarding salmon). Bart replied that salmon exist in the EWEB section of the river but that there is no breeding habitat there, and that the species in this part of the river is the same as in the McKenzie River.

The group thanked Bart for his presentation.

## **6. Contract Negotiations Update**

Mark Oberle said that after general agreement on scope of work at the last meeting, he had several conversations with the RBA team, and the scope was changed slightly, i.e., eliminating some hours and refining involvement of the financial consultant on the front end. He added that he sent the scope of work to a Portland design firm and asked for their feedback, and that they thought it was very good, the costs and hours attributed were reasonable, etc. One suggestion they had was to think differently about how the focus groups are conducted. RBA has incorporated the changes.

Mark said he now feels confident that the scope of work is reasonable, and that he is currently working on the backgrounder for the EWEB Board work session on April 21. He added that the presentation will be at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Mark said that the approach with the Board will be to provide background on the history of the project and also give the Board an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the proposal, but not ask them for a decision on the consultant. He added that he has also talked to RBA about a possible one-month delay to give the Board time to consider their options. He said he hoped that Dave Hauser and Pat Johnston could assist him with the Board presentation.

Debra Smith noted that it is important for the CAT presentation to be limited to 15 minutes (of a one-hour time slot) in order to allow plenty of time for questions from the Board.

Regarding the potential delay, John Rowell commented that the AIA doesn't do charrettes in the summer, with University students being out of school, so moving that portion to the fall would be beneficial. Kaaren Knudson added that there is still an opportunity in the summer for other public engagement; just not in the form of a charrette.

Tom Hoyt said he believes that the CAT can do a lot of work during that time period. Mark Oberle replied that Ellen Teninty is anxious to start figuring out the plan for public engagement, and that all parties are awaiting contract finalization.

## **7. Closing Comments and Next Steps**

Mark Oberle noted that there will be no second CAT meeting in April because the contract is still being finalized.

Pat Johnston asked that tonight's Powerpoint presentations be converted to PDF files and sent to CAT members. The CAT thanked Mark Oberle for a great meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting: TBA**