

EWEB Riverfront Master Plan Community Advisory Team (CAT)

Wednesday, May 27, 2009, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

EWEB Board Room

Present: Dave Hauser, Tom Hoyt, Mark Johnson, Pat Johnston, Desiree Moore, Dean Pape', Mary Unruh, Anita Van Asperdt and Gary Wildish, members; Bob Cassidy, EWEB Commissioner; Mark Oberle, Project Manager; Greg Brokaw, Kaarin Knudson and John Rowell, Rowell Brokaw Architects; Julie Fischer and Ellen Teninty, T'NT Consulting; Jeannine Parisi, EWEB staff; Nan Laurence; City of Eugene; Vicki Maxon, Recorder; Bob Hart, Kevin Matthews and Tom Snyder, public.

1. Welcome and Agenda/Material Review

Dave Hauser welcomed everyone and asked the CAT members to introduce themselves to the consulting team. Mark Oberle welcomed Commissioner Bob Cassidy.

2. Comments from the Audience

Bob Hart handed out a flyer regarding an upcoming economic development project "River Runs Through It." Jeannine said she would e-mail a link to the article to the CAT.

3. Approval of Minutes

The April 8 minutes were approved.

4. Contract Update

Mark Oberle gave a brief update regarding EWEB Board approval of the contract for Rowell Brokaw Architects. He thanked the CAT members and EWEB staff who helped compile the information that addressed the EWEB Commissioner's questions and concerns. He reiterated that the Board approved the contract in the amount of \$499,966 with a 5-0 vote, but that the Board still has concerns about cost. He said he will be watching project costs closely and will question any expenditure that goes beyond the Scope of Work.

Mark Oberle added that the consulting team and staff have no way of knowing what additional studies may be required to help inform the Riverfront Master Plan, but that there is a good probability that those studies won't be conducted at this time due to cost constraints. He noted that the final report will include recommendations for any additional studies that may be desired. Anita Van Asperdt asked if the contract amount includes contingencies. Mark Oberle replied that it does not.

5. CAT Leadership Discussion

Dave Hauser recalled that when he and Pat Johnston were chosen as co-chairs, it was agreed that the CAT would revisit how to proceed in terms of group leadership once the consultant was on board. He asked the CAT for their feedback.

The CAT members said they would like to continue with Dave and Pat as co-chairs and that their time and effort is greatly appreciated.

Jeannine Parisi noted that as the project moves forward, there would be occasions when the co-chairs will be representing the entire CAT in some decisions that are made. She said she wants to make sure that the CAT is aware that some of those decisions will be made outside of a CAT meeting by leadership, without other CAT members' input.

Desiree Moore said she is comfortable with that as long as the rest of the CAT is kept informed of any decisions that are made. Anita Van Asperdt commented that it will be good to check in with each other in a few months to see how that process is working.

CONSENSUS DECISION:

The CAT voted to retain Dave Hauser and Pat Johnston as co-chairs and to revisit leadership positions in six months.

Dave Hauser assured the CAT that his and Pat's preference is to make as many decisions as possible in a group meeting. He thanked the CAT for their support.

6. Project Schedule Overview and CAT Decision Points

Greg Brokaw, John Rowell and Kaarin Knudson gave a Powerpoint presentation regarding the overview of the project schedule:

- Phase 1 – Research and Interviews (from now to July)
- Phase 2 – Focus Groups (July-August)
- Phase 3 – September (building toward first public event), then bulk of design process (Fall 2009)

John Rowell said the main purpose of tonight's presentation is to get feedback from the CAT regarding the project schedule and key decision points for the CAT.

Dave Hauser asked John Rowell to give some examples of potential parameters that the CAT would recommend to the Board:

- Anticipated value of property
- Issues outside of Master Plan control – give people parameters and allow them to engage – we want people to wrestle with tangibles and not just say that anything goes
- Ability to question parameters in a design process – set ground rules up front

Pat Johnston asked how much the Master Plan will focus on what's happening outside of (adjacent to) the EWEB property, for example downtown. John Rowell replied that there will be lot of flexibility in the program unless something clear comes along, and that there is likely to be a broad mix of uses. He noted that there is a tension between this project and other important priorities—and that one has to think beyond the boundaries, but also stay within them, and find the balance.

Kaarin Knudson added that there is a diagram of the downtown area in the Downtown Plan. That diagram includes the riverfront and the connection to the river.

Dave Hauser confirmed that some of the input that informs the parameters is prior studies and a variety of stakeholders, a combination of quantitative and qualitative.

Pat Johnston asked if the group is thinking about percentages or balances in the parameter stage, like open space vs. built environment. John Rowell replied that parameters will be set where necessary and it will be important to find the ones that are objective. He added that there may be consensus between open space and developed land, and that natural balance may be found, and that some of those facts may come out as part of the interviews.

Gary Wildish asked about parameters relating to existing easements. Greg Brokaw replied that this will be a significant parameter regarding site constraints that will include existing infrastructure like water mains, etc., and also Greenway issues, but that they will probably be more fact-based.

Tom Hoyt asked about parameters around the millrace daylighting issue. John Rowell said he knows there has been a lot of excitement generated about this possibility with its technicalities and cost. He reminded the group that they have used the term “millrace neutral”—meaning that the master plan neither depends on it nor precludes it. He added that the team needs to hear from the people who know more about the millrace and ride the middle ground until more information is discovered and it will become feasible, or not. He acknowledged that by talking to knowledgeable people, new solutions that were originally thought to be not feasible might be identified.

Tom Snyder asked about RBA's mechanism for public input and whether or not there is a mechanism to inform the public about cost, i.e., how will RBA get a sense of cost around anything that a member of the public may suggest.

Kaarin Knudson reiterated that the team will be very conscientious about cost and that the approved scope could not accommodate a study of every issue that will be raised during the master planning process. For example, there has been research done related to the millrace and that research will be relied upon, along with information from experts in that field, and then a recommendation for additional studies may arise from that.

John Rowell added that RBA wants to create a positive dialogue and be responsive to the public's questions: If the answer to a question is known, the answer will be given. If not, that question will be researched and a response will be given later.

Kaarin Knudson reviewed the proposed CAT meeting schedule and asked if the members can accommodate the proposed schedule.

7. Discuss Project Launch and Interview Phase (Phase 1)

Ellen Teninty confirmed preliminary concepts definitions as they relate to the upcoming charrettes. She noted that the September 9 CAT meeting would be a critical one for all members to attend, when approval of the project parameters would be requested.

Anita Van Asperdt requested that the focus group interviews be recorded.

Gary Wildish noted that the fourth Wednesday in August is available for a meeting, if necessary, to complete discussion of constraints and preliminary project parameters. He also asked about extending some CAT meetings to three hours in order to continue the current meeting schedule of 2nd and 4th Wednesdays.

A discussion ensued regarding when the focus groups will be held and how to determine who to interview.

Ellen Teninty discussed how public engagement fits into the master planning process. She explained that in the next week or two the consultant team wants to interview each CAT member for about 30 minutes, asking for individual visions and concerns, what tasks the CAT member is interested in doing in the public engagement process, such as possible outreach, speaking and writing. She added that she would also like to get a list of names of people, organizations and other contacts that each member believes should be involved at various stages of the public engagement process. She asked each member to see Julie Fischer at the end of the meeting to sign up for a time that works for them.

The group then took a 10-minute break.

Ellen Teninty distributed a handout regarding goals for the interviews. Ellen and Julie Fischer then asked the CAT to identify categories of types of public to interview and what questions to ask them, and these were recorded on flipcharts. The categories and questions are listed below.

UNDER-REPRESENTED:

What facilities are necessary to respond to your needs?

What would draw you here?

Teaching connection – history of City—families, educational opportunities

What barriers can we avoid?

TECHNICAL ISSUES:

- Access – multimodal – pedestrian, bike, rail, car
- Right of way
- Easements
- Title encumbrances
- Parking? (design + tech + dev)
- Soils
- Bart Johnson diagrams of history of fill/layers? What is/should be changed?

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES:

- What is an appropriate balance of development area + open space?
- Envisioned character of built area? Of open space?
- “Highest and best use” of site – economic value
- Flexibility needed?
- Uses/types – feasibility – influence on framework
- Retail, commercial, developer – how can site + history – how to engage?
- Economy within the City economy

DESIGN ISSUES:

- Access to the river – what is meant?
- Connectivity to river – what is meant?
- Connectivity of downtown and river – what does it mean to be connected?
- What do people DO here?
- What specific visions/uses seen here? Historical museum, open space
- What would DRAW people here?
- What is publicly accessible vs. privately held?
- Potential uses for Steam Plant and other existing buildings on site? – adaptive reuse
- “Active people place” – what type of place?
- Alternatives to daylighting millrace
- What is sustainable development?
- What’s standard view?
- LEED for neighborhoods?
- What is the single most important thing we need to consider?
- What would it take for you to live here (housing)?
- What would it take for you to start a business here?
- Attract arts, music and cultural events – how?
- Connection to after-hours activities

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

- Contamination issues
- River connection/ecology issues – respect for river – how?
- Others’ visions and dreams for river

NEIGHBORS:

How can EWEB Master Plan complement your place? How can we help you?

Courthouse district connection

ORI/Riverfront Research Park

Courthouse + EWEB building

Alton Baker Park – access and sufficient connection

Role of EWEB site along river – place in overall Willamette vision

Walnut node connection – planning now

Skinner's Butte historical district

5th Street Market

University

Downtown connection – riverfront as catalyst for downtown?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

Definition of mixed use (in MOU?) – how quantified? What uses? Proportions? Market-driven?

Capacity for site to host events

Nan Laurence noted that the City Council is the decision-making body for the master plan and therefore cannot participate in the process. She said we will need to get a legal opinion on whether the City Council can be interviewed as individuals and not as a public body, but noted that even then, the Councilors may need to declare those as ex-parte communications. Dean Pape' said that he wouldn't want to be influenced early on by interviewing the City Council if they are the decision-making body.

8. Closing Comments and Next Steps

Mark Oberle reminded the group that there will be no meeting on June 10.

Kaarin Knudson asked the CAT to e-mail any additional questions or comments regarding the project schedule to her with a cc to Mark Oberle, and reminded them that Ellen Teninty and Julie Fischer will be scheduling interviews with each of them in the next week or two.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 24 – 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
EWEB Board Room