

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

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

EWEB Board Room

Present: Dave Hauser, Tom Hoyt, Mark Johnson, Desiree Moore, Dean Pape', and Mary Unruh, members; Bob Cassidy, EWEB Commissioner; Mark Oberle, Project Manager; Kaarin Knudson and John Rowell, Rowell Brokaw Architects; Julie Fischer and Ellen Teninty, T'NT Consulting; Chris Zahas, Leland Consulting; Jeannine Parisi, EWEB staff; Nan Laurence, City of Eugene; Vicki Maxon, Recorder; Deb Fritsch, Bob Hart, Tim Shinabarger, and Zachary Vishanoff, public.

Absent: Pat Johnston, Anita Van Asperdt, and Gary Wildish, members.

### 1. Welcome and Agenda/Material Review

Dave Hauser welcomed everyone and asked EWEB staff and CAT members to introduce themselves to Chris Zahas of Leland Consulting.

### 2. Comments from the Audience

Dave Hauser reminded the public to limit their comments to three minutes each, and that any comments which need to be addressed will be addressed at a later time in order to be able to cover all agenda items and finish the meeting on time.

Deb Fritsch commented that she believes the CAT team has no credibility, that it is made up of mostly business community representatives, that it uses the same facilitators who have been used for previous City of Eugene projects, and that she believes it is connected to the LCOG Willamette River project. She said that the CAT is outsourcing money from Eugene and that Eugene doesn't need any out-of-town or local consultants' advice. She added that she believes the CAT is making a mockery of public process, and she asked the CAT to consider her as their enemy.

Desiree Moore thanked Deb for her comments and acknowledged that it takes courage to speak to a group of people who may not always agree with her opinions.

Zachary Vishanoff said he felt like the deck was being stacked at the last meeting because of the pre-conceived public process outcomes that were presented. He said that if he looks at the way the American Institute of Architects (AIA) conference posted their charrette, he feels the CAT is developing "Walnut Station planning disease." He said he hopes that the CAT will reconsider the two public hearings that he asked for at the last meeting with a chance at the front end to watch for pitfalls with partnerships and focus groups. He urged the CAT to not get too involved with the AIA and not to develop too many outcomes. He said the CAT needs to uniquely reflect the people who live in Eugene and that a diversity report is in the eye of the beholder, and reminded them that Portland, Oregon isn't Green City USA. He urged the CAT to be educated

by the community and interface with the public directly, early in the game. He used the example of PeaceHealth holding two public hearings when they built RiverBend Hospital, which helped their Board have a reality check. He closed by thanking Desiree Moore for her questions at the last meeting and said it is his feeling that any member of the CAT should be able to ask members of the audience for information.

### 3. Approval of Minutes

The May 27 minutes were approved.

### 4. Project Update and Upcoming Events

Kaarin Knudson of Rowell Brokaw Architects (RBA) said that Jeannine Parisi is updating the meeting/event calendar and that it will be ready in about a week. Tom Hoyt commented that he would like to receive the calendar as soon as possible as he is beginning to develop some conflicts with the CAT meeting schedule.

Kaarin said that the public engagement plan is being revised and will be ready soon. The project website is in process and is about two weeks away from going live. The public will be able to submit their comments on the website in e-mail format and the project description will be posted, including technical and background information, design documents, and public comments.

Desiree Moore said she hoped the project description section of the website would address not only why this project is necessary but also why it is necessary for it to be conducted at this particular time. Kaarin asked the CAT to give RBA additional suggestions for website content.

Kaarin continued, explaining that the website will also include a brief biography of each CAT member with their photo and some background information, including volunteer interests, etc. Tom Hoyt noted that Kaarin could find much of that information in the application that each CAT member filled out when they applied for the CAT team.

Desiree Moore said she would like to update her biographical information. Julie Fischer replied that each member will be able to edit their biographical information before it appears on the website, and confirmed that all CAT members were comfortable with their biographical information being posted on the project website.

Kaarin Knudson reminded the CAT of the City Club presentation being held on Friday, July 10 at 11:50 a.m. at the Eugene Hilton. She noted that this session will generate some interesting comments from the community, and that all City Club presentations are re-broadcast on radio station KLCC on the Monday night following the City Club meeting.

Kaarin asked the CAT if they are comfortable with receiving meeting materials on the Monday before each meeting (two days before) instead of a week before each meeting, which would give RBA more time to prepare meeting materials. Desiree Moore said she wants to be sure that would still allow the CAT enough time for review in order to comment or make a decision at the meeting and that she would like to allow for adjustment if necessary.

Mark Johnson said he is comfortable with that as long as the CAT is kept informed. Dave Hauser said if any CAT member feels there hasn't been enough time to make a decision regarding meeting materials that were provided before any given meeting, they can state that concern at the beginning of the meeting. Desiree Moore agreed.

Kaarin Knudson replied that any major issue that comes up will be addressed well in advance of a meeting, especially if it affects public process.

#### 5. Materials Review for EWEB Board Backgrounder

Mark Oberle said he will be giving the EWEB Board a project update at their July 21 meeting, and that he will be e-mailing a draft of his presentation to the CAT and consulting team tomorrow. He asked the CAT to send him their feedback on this by Friday, July 10 but added that there is no new information in this presentation. He noted that he will be on vacation for two weeks beginning Monday, July 13 but will attend the July 22 CAT meeting.

Kaarin Knudson went over the schedule for public events.

#### 6. Riverfront Visions, Opportunities and Constraints

John Rowell said that the group and individual interviews are going well and that they still have more to do. He said there are some similar themes that are developing with the people who have been interviewed—some exciting ideas, some cautionary concerns, etc. He added that Chris Zahas of Leland Consulting has also been conducting interviews in Portland and Eugene. He also thanked Tom Hoyt for his idea to include an aerial photo of the EWEB property in the interviews, which has been very productive.

RBA then gave a Powerpoint presentation regarding riverfront visions, opportunities and constraints, an outline of which is included below:

- Look at the whole river

Dean Pape' noted that people often ask him to look outside of the urbanism of the river. John Rowell replied that one person they interviewed talked about what the river looked like 200 years ago. He noted that the master plan may present an opportunity to evaluate where our efforts along the river can be most meaningful.

- Look beyond boundaries of the site
- Find the balance

John Rowell noted that the goal with this portion of the master planning process is to talk with people who know about each of these pieces, i.e., urban context, parks content, etc. John then showed some historical maps which depicted habitat, landscape, etc.

Dean Pape' asked about encumbrances on the site. Mark Oberle reminded the CAT of an earlier CAT meeting presentation which revealed that many of the encumbrances listed on the title report either no longer exist or are no longer valid concerns, but that some in fact do still exist. John Rowell noted that developers who were interviewed placed the title report very high on their importance list. Mark Oberle added that the Electric Operations Department has already discussed relocating overhead and underground lines on the property but they want to make sure that is justified in relation to property value. He noted that the transmission line along the railroad tracks is the biggest cost concern.

John Rowell continued with a diagram of existing easements in relation to the targeted development area and access issues at the south entrance to the property, the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue relocation possibility, and procedures and stipulations for installation of new road crossings. Kaarin Knudson noted that the EWEB site could qualify as a railroad quiet zone if safety upgrades were made, but that installation of a four-arm railroad crossing would be required in order to receive that qualification. She noted that, according to the City's capital improvement program, there are also six railroad crossings within a six-block area of the Whiteaker neighborhood, which some City staff believe is not only an access issue, but a major safety issue. She also noted that in the event that the City and community decide to close any of these crossings in the future, it may be worthwhile to consider a crossing relocation rather than simply a "closure," as Union Pacific Railroad rarely grants new at-grade crossings, but relocating crossings is possible.

- Willamette Greenway regulations are broad
- No specific setback established as Code
- How is river protected?
  - Permit required by land use code
  - Adequate setback lines

Dave Hauser asked if there will be an opportunity at a future meeting to discuss how these regulation/code interfaces happen. John Rowell replied that there are some other local projects addressing these same issues currently, and that they may present some good leads.

- Existing buildings – many interviewees have favorites, and not just the steam plant
- Oregon Research Institute/Riverfront Research Park – location relative to Master Plan and a reference point for how it fits into the larger picture

Tom Hoyt asked if there is enough room remaining to accommodate traffic from Agate Street underneath the railroad tracks and onto the EWEB property, or if that is going to be blocked. Mark Oberle replied that that was discussed when EWEB met recently with the University of Oregon regarding steam service, and that there is room for that although the map provided for tonight's meeting doesn't show all of that area.

- EWEB remediation area – safe or not safe (PCBs, etc.)
- Large infrastructure
- Stormwater pipes, etc. (portion under the millrace)
- Overlapping concerns, but still a fabulous opportunity (according to interviewees)
- Working site base – concern about distance to top of base

Dave Hauser asked John Rowell if RBA has ever worked on a master plan this large with this many constraints. John Rowell replied that constraints can often assist a project. He referred to a comment Margot Long of PWL Partnership had made that constraints need to be embraced and made positive, and that the challenge is to know everything about the constraints and the context of them. He added that even though it is sometimes daunting to communicate those constraints to the public, they cannot be over-simplified.

- Examples of existing plans – Eugene Downtown Plan, Great Streets/Special Places, etc.

Tom Hoyt asked if an under- or overpass of the railroad tracks as an extension of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be explored. John Rowell replied that it will, along with other ways of making connections and the obvious public desire to connect to the City grid. Tom Hoyt said that it seemed to him that the existing crossing by the courthouse could be used, to come up either 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue or Broadway.

John Rowell noted that there had even been some discussion regarding a possible trolley system. Chris Zahas added that a bike trail has also been part of that discussion.

- Connections to other current planning efforts
  - River Visioning
  - Walnut Station Node
  - Comprehensive Lands Assessment
  - Public and Land Trust Open Space from Willamette Visioning
  - Building on previous planning efforts (Courthouse Plan)
  - Connection to other visions – 2000 Downtown Plan, etc.

Mary Unruh suggested that a group tour of the adjoining properties might be beneficial to get an overview of this project and to gauge the overall community psyche. John Rowell agreed, saying that things change when one is walking around with the public vs. sitting at a table.

Dave Hauser asked if the CAT could hear more about the interface between the project's natural context and urban context in the near future.

- Connection to parks planning
- Riparianistas – previous City Club presentations
- Eugene Downtown housing void
- Walking distance illustration (walking distance to the river from various areas of town)

- Emerging visions from the community:
  - Recycle Eugene
  - Riverfront neighborhood
  - Sustainable demonstration
  - Public place
  - Eugene's Destination (i.e., for visitors)
  - Bridge/gateway/keystone/porch
  - Art museum anchor
  - A connector/connections
  - Balance development and open space
- Pedestrian crossings (bridges)
- Wildlife habitat

Tom Hoyt asked Chris Zahas to tell the CAT what his assignment is for this project. Chris explained that he is researching the range of potential uses for the site and the market and economic-based reality (or not) given what is known about what developers are likely or able to do. He added that he is researching the Eugene business market, visibility, access and parking requirements, and the Eugene real estate market. He said he has a list of over 20 Eugene developers to interview (group interview, 3-4 at a time) and will also be doing one-on-one interviews. He added that he is also interviewing Portland developers and researching other funding tools and disposition options.

## 7. Closing Comments/Next Steps

Tom Hoyt asked about the agenda for the July 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Kaarin Knudson replied that the entire core design team will be in attendance and that the meeting will consist of a broad presentation about development and feasibility as well as a preliminary discussion of use scenarios. She added that the CAT will begin digesting ideas about the program, project parameters, project goals, etc. She added that the next five CAT meetings will mostly involve discussion of the issues that will influence the development of project goals and parameters.

Mark Oberle said he will set up a site tour for the core design team.

Desiree Moore said that in the near future she would like the CAT to discuss how to deal with the sometimes challenging public comment portion of their meetings, and that she felt that tonight's reaction to the public comment portion was somewhat abrupt.

Dave Hauser agreed and replied that it didn't feel right to him either, but that the CAT is trying to respect agenda time by keeping to their scheduled public comment time and agreed-upon format. Mark Johnson noted that there will be other opportunities in the future for the public and CAT to engage at much greater length.

Julie Fischer said that she feels the CAT does need to thank the public who take the time to attend the meetings. She added that she feels the CAT needs to think about other solutions for this issue.

Desiree Moore added that she believes the public comment portion of the agenda needs more structure, but that the CAT needs to continue to show respect for the public. Dave Hauser thanked Desiree for her comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

**Next Meeting:           Wednesday, July 22 – 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.**  
**EWEB Board Room**