

EWEB Riverfront CAT
Thursday, July 10 - 7:00 p.m.
EWEB Board Room

Team members present:

Dave Hauser, Thomas Hoyt, Mark Johnson, Patricia Johnston, Desiree Moore, Dean Pape, Mary Unruh, Anita Van Asperdt

Team members absent:

Gary Wildish (excused)

Others present:

EWEB Commissioners John Simpson and Bob Cassidy; EWEB Commissioner-Elect Joanne Ernst

Nan Laurence, Community Development Planner – City of Eugene

EWEB Staff – Mark Oberle, Debra Smith, Mike Logan, Jeannine Parisi

Facilitator – Kathi Wiederhold

Recorder - Vicki Maxon

Public present:

Julie Fischer, Kevin Matthews, Bob Hart and Sid Crenwelge

Welcome and Introductions

Mark Oberle, Project Manager, welcomed everyone and introduced John Simpson, EWEB Board President.

John told the group that this is an incredible opportunity for them to serve as an advisory team for such an important project, with a great combination of depth of knowledge and level of commitment. He added that the team is a good cross-section of Eugene citizens and that he looks forward to the transformation of this advisory group over the next 15 months.

He added that, in his opinion, industrial usage is an inappropriate use of riverfront land and that it is very important to celebrate the riverfront area. This group will represent the community in going to the EWEB Board to help insure a quality final product—the Master Plan. He urged the group to work collaboratively, ask questions of each other and EWEB staff, to support each other, and to interact with each other without fear of their ideas being unsupported. He also reminded the group that they are always welcome to contact EWEB Board or staff with any questions or concerns they may have.

Comments from the Audience

Mark introduced Bob Hart, Executive Director of the Lane County Historical Museum. Bob feels that the riverfront property has high historical value. He said the museum is looking for a new site, and that part of the riverfront property would be an option. He said the steam plant, the millrace, and the existing EWEB office building could be adapted to coincide with the museum site. He recommended a movie called "Ed's Coed," made in 1929 by a University of Oregon student, which shows the original millrace and surrounding area, and will look into getting a copy of the movie for the team to watch.

Each team member introduced him/herself. Mark then introduced EWEB staff and Vicki Maxon, Recorder.

Project Overview

Mark asked the group to refer to the binders that they were provided. He gave a brief overview of the Riverfront Master Plan project, past to present. He then shared his vision of the group process:

- operate as a team
- be comfortable (not threatened) in sharing ideas
- the need to get overwhelming public support by actively listening to the public, explaining ideas that are used or not used, and allowing the public to feel heard in this process

Dave Hauser commented that he believes that the group should consider a different approach for public input, because he is not sure that public hearings are the best way to approach it.

Mark agreed, and used an example of a City project where the developers were brought in first to generate ideas, then those ideas were presented to the public and they were asked for their input after the fact. This caused the public to feel that their ideas were asked for after the fact.

Desiree Moore asked if team meetings would always be open meetings. Mark said that in accordance with open public meeting law, they would. Desiree added that it is her feeling that the public in general doesn't trust public meetings, and she feels the need for this group to develop personal/professional relationships with each other and support each other within the meetings and also publicly.

The group then went over the team's personal contact information and made some corrections.

Mark said that team meetings will be held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month for the next 12 months (including public input session dates that are also listed), and asked the group to look over the tentative list of meeting dates for a later discussion.

Dean Pape asked if the group members' contact information would be available to the general public (i.e., home phone numbers, etc.). Mark replied that he has not provided that information to the public, but that members' contact information was part of their application and that if the public wants to request it, they can, under open public meeting law guidelines.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mark went over the players in the project and what each player's role is. He commented that consultants will be at the team's disposal throughout the process and that team members will be invited to speak at various neighborhood group meetings.

Desiree had a concern about what the team is allowed or not allowed to do in relation to this project. Mark said that would be reviewed in the ground rules portion of the agenda and that an expert would also be covering that subject at a future meeting.

The EWEB Board will approve the Master Plan and play an important role in the process. Technically, the Board selects the consultant and will weigh the team's recommendation heavily. The core team (listed in the binder) is the primary staff contact for the team, and behind the core team is a support team of engineers, accountants, etc. The City Council will give ultimate approval for the Master Plan.

Desiree asked if the City is interested in purchasing the riverfront property. Mark said he doesn't believe so, but that they want to see the team conduct an effective public involvement process. He added that he believes that the City would like to see EWEB vacate the property and reorganize. The City does have to sign off on any property EWEB sells, including parcels upriver and at other sites.

Dave asked if the Master Plan objectives were agreed upon by the City. Mark said that they were written by EWEB staff and approved by the Board. Technically the City Council is supposed to sit back, observe, and stay out of the process until it is time for them to make final approval.

Tom Hoyt asked if the property will be sold on the open market. Mark said that a portion of it will be. Tom then asked if it is appropriate for the team to seek information from potential buyers. Mark said that it is, as long as that is within a public process.

Mission and Ground Rules

Kathi Wiederhold went over the list of ground rules and added that they are endorsed by the Board. She then discussed consensus and what it means.

Tom noted that there is no reference to conference call meetings in the ground rules (as it was mentioned earlier that the team could conduct a conference call with an absent member). Kathi will make that addition to the ground rules

The team then discussed backup decision-making. Tom asked what will happen if there is a stalemate on a decision. Kathi replied that an impartial mediator could be brought in who is objective and unrelated to the project, as a step previous to establishing a super majority.

Tom added that it is his feeling that the team should try to refrain from discussing extraneous subjects at meetings—no politics discussions, stay on point, and avoid potential hard feelings and disagreements with such a diverse group. Kathi said this point will be listed under the behavior section of the ground rules. Dean added that the team should use their time as efficiently as possible what with everyone’s work and personal commitments, and the mere fact that everyone is taking two evenings out of every month (minimum) to serve on this team.

7th Inning Stretch/Break

The group participated in a “getting to know you” exercise followed by a 15-minute break.

Background and Context

Nan Laurence, Community Development Planner for the City of Eugene, talked about what constitutes a Master Plan and the history of the Eugene Downtown Plan as it relates to the Riverfront Master Plan. She went over the criteria that was used for the riverfront vision. She discussed what the Riverfront Master Plan should do and went over the list of objectives that was distributed to the team. The Master Plan has to be approved before any land use application is implemented. She answered a few questions regarding land use, setback guidelines, etc., and said that more details would be provided later.

Wrap-Up

The team discussed their preferred meeting time. After a brief discussion, it was decided that the meetings should be from 5:30-7:30 p.m. and include a light dinner, thereby allowing team members to arrive directly from work if necessary and be able to still have part of a summer evening left after the meeting is over.

The frequency of team meetings was discussed. It was confirmed that meetings would be twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month.

Mark briefly went over the rough outline for the first five meetings. He added that he has already noticed how interactive the group is, particularly during the break.

Dean thanked Mark and EWEB Board and staff for providing this opportunity. Tom congratulated Mark on choosing a great team and said he is excited to work on a consensus basis, and that he believes the group will be a powerful part of shaping the Riverfront Master Plan.

Desiree asked if there are timelines and benchmarks for the team’s progress. Mark said there are some in place, but not hard and fast ones. The goal is to be finished a little over a year from now with a final plan to the EWEB Board by that time. Time will be scheduled on the Board agenda ahead of time for any updates that will be given to the Board.

Debra Smith added that the team will appreciate the schedules that Mark and the Board have crafted because there are clear deliverables within them.

Tom asked if the team can get an updated aerial photograph that shows the new courthouse and all acreage involved in the Riverfront Master Plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, July 23 - 5:30 p.m.

**Site Tour – wear casual clothes and walking shoes
(dinner/public input will precede the tour)**