

West Central Neighborhood Association
Association Meeting Minutes
July 17, 2017, 7:00pm

Call To Order – 7:05pm, approximately 120 attendees

Announcements

- August 12, 11am-2pm – Neighborhood picnic at Moody Park
- August 26 – Neighborhood clean up and Artsfest

Team Introduction – Kevan Biggs

- Kevan Biggs, Biggs Development
- Josh Parker, Cross Street Partners
- Bill Struever, Cross Street Partners
- Jeff Kingsbury, Greenstreet
- Josh Anderson, Anderson+Bohlander
- Cory Miller, Elevatus Architecture

Presentation

- Vision Behind the Innovation District – Jeff Kingsbury
 - A lot of communities around the country that previously had “research parks” have begun to recognize the importance of locating those in more urban settings – connect commercial, retail, education, restaurants, etc. to foster innovation
 - Three things that create a great innovation district:
 - Physical assets – historical buildings
 - Economic assets – the tenants
 - Networking assets – the things that connect them all together (plazas, parks, high speed network connectivity, etc.)
 - Cross Street Partners has experience in developing these types of places – American Tobacco, Under Armor, etc.
- Overall Design – Josh Parker
 - Connectivity – making sure it’s not a stand-alone campus
 - West Campus (Phase 1)
 - Building 27 – market, culinary institute
 - Building 19 – institutional anchor
 - Building 26 - tech-related office spaces and housing
 - Buildings 20 & 22 – restaurants, brewery, bar, or retail
 - Wall Street – primary pedestrian plaza space
 - Gym building will remain a community amenity
 - Building 21 – lab space
 - Continuous walkway/bikeway that goes along the tracks and over Broadway to connect the West and East campus
 - East Campus

- Hotel, housing, and retail
 - Buildings 7, 8, & 9 – quiet, sophisticated retail
 - Infill where buildings were torn down with a modest apartment building
 - Create a road that connect Broadway through the campus to Fairfield
- Building Uses – Cory Miller
 - A lot of housing potential with some superb views of the skyline
 - Trying to think 4 steps ahead so that Phase 1 doesn't limit them from making the most of the rest of the campus
 - Phase 2 will focus on a lot of public parking, ensuring it's wrapped in housing or retail to make it blend in to the existing buildings
 - Educational Uses
 - Flex spaces
 - Start-up growth space
 - Leadership institute
 - Phase 1 – West Campus
 - First thing will be demolition (nothing older than 45 years)
 - Next will be construction – new windows, replications, etc.
 - What's happening now:
 - Environmental testing
 - Talking with local preservation office and National Park Service to try and figure out what's historic
 - Touring potential anchor tenants through campus
- Community Engagement - ???
 - Four phase approach
 - Community leader engagement
 - Broader community engagement
 - Temporary activation
 - Design and tenant focus groups
 - Plan interactive community activities to both grow excitement and gain input

Question and Answer (questions by meeting attendees, followed by answer from the developers)

- How can we improve the railroad, street crossings, and underpasses to make them more pedestrian-friendly?
 - CSX has control over the railbed and the posts that hold up the underpass
 - The city controls all of the street and sidewalks that go under the tracks
 - Improve the safety, look, and condition of the embankment walls
- How will Moody Park be incorporated into the project?
 - Short-term plans call for surface lots along the south part of Jones Street

- Long-term plans will convert the surface lots into townhomes that face the park (the same development team)
 - Toying with the idea of creating a spur off of Jefferson that leads south of Jones Street to the surface lots and the parking garage so traffic doesn't cut through the neighborhood as much
- Is the building on the northwest corner of Wall and College part of the development?
 - Yes, it's building 36
 - They currently have no plan for that building, but they're having some casual discussions about possible uses
 - It's a non-historic building
- Will the brick streets remain brick?
 - Yes, it's their current plan to keep all brick streets as is
- Will the campus be all cement, or will there actually be green space?
 - There will be certain areas that will be primarily plaza due to the use of the space, but they will also incorporate a lot of grass space and trees
 - If McCulloch Park didn't exist, they would have created it
 - The park acts as a "living room", and acts as a completely different space than other areas of the campus
 - They're looking to connect the campus to other parks and areas of downtown
 - They will hopefully look to West Central to be the steward to McCulloch Park and the programming of that space
- How accessible will the campus be for those who are less mobile?
 - It is a challenge, because the first floors of most of the buildings are above ground the basements are below ground, but they're working with the design team to do their best to smooth everything out and make it accessible
- Is the overview online where it can be viewed?
 - It is not at this time
 - Everything is still in the planning process, and they're not ready to unveil it to the whole city
- How many residential homes will be torn down?
 - There are a few strategic parcels that will need to be used for the project
 - If they had to guess, maybe 6-8
 - They're contemplating a few house moves as well
- Is a supermarket something that is planned for the development?
 - They haven't spoken to the city about it yet
 - Building 27 is the food venue / market, and will hopefully have 3 components:
 - 7-day farmers market
 - Culinary training (maybe Ivy Tech)
 - Restaurant incubator

- A grocery is on their radar and they've spoken to a few people who represent grocery chains
- Will you be opening Union under the train tracks?
 - Yes, there is an old underpass at the end of Union, that they plan to reopen
 - It would lead right into a key space between Buildings 20 & 22
 - On the north side of the tracks, they will build a parking garage, surrounded on 3 sides by residential treatments
- What would the street borders be of the parking garage?
 - The current plan shows for a new street on the north side of the parking garage to provide a buffer between the structure and the rest of the neighborhood
- Have we considered any unique spaces or points of interest (like a rock climbing / yoga gym) that would attract young talent from other areas?
 - Yes, they are considering these things, and looking for a good balance in who the campus caters to
 - They are planning to put in a full gym on the corner of Broadway and Swinney
 - They've also been approached by a couple rock climbing outfits
- Will we see an influx of people parking on our residential streets instead of using the parking garages/lots?
 - They are aware that this may be an issue, but they aren't far enough into the details to have it all figured out just yet
- Which buildings are in the different phases?
 - There will be very little housing in Phase 1 – food hub, innovation space, office space, retail, restaurants, a gym, and some housing
- When Phase 1 is complete, won't everyone want to park on the streets north of the tracks?
 - Phase 1 includes the parking garage north of the tracks, which will have enough spaces to handle all of the parking needed for phase 1
 - The surface lots south of Jones will also be improved
 - As additional parking garages are built in later phases, they can convert the surface lots south of Jones into townhomes
- What do they mean by "innovation" and "institutional anchor"?
 - Innovation is a space where various businesses and people can come together to further education and create new businesses and networking opportunities
 - Institutional anchor refers to a college, medical education center, etc.
- Have you looked at the impact that traffic and foot traffic will have on the surrounding area?
 - By creating a mix of uses, where people can walk, bike, taking the bus, car share, etc., you can create households where they don't need as many cars

- They want to create the type of place where this could happen in the future, but for now, they have to plan for automobile traffic by building the garages to handle it
- They're looking at how they can focus Broadway as the main access to the campus, limiting people cutting through the smaller streets
- They're talking with the city about Broadway connectivity, and how they can slow traffic through there to make it more pedestrian-friendly
- What is the timeframe on the project?
 - They are currently under contract with GE and will close, at the earliest, next month
 - Once they own the project, they will continue on the design and community engagement, and hopefully solidify the plan by early next year
 - They hope to begin construction the middle of next year
 - They hope to begin Phase 2 before Phase 1 is complete
- In your experience, how do projects like this drive property values in surrounding areas?
 - They hope there will be an overall elevation in property values near the campus and in all of Fort Wayne
 - They are not concerned about an issue with people being displaced (gentrification).
 - Our neighborhood will probably see an initial bump in property values, then a steady rise after that
- I fear the southern part of West Central will be torn down and rebuilt in the next 10-15 years instead of seeing rehabilitation.
 - In the last 6-12 months, our neighborhood has seen about 20% increase in property values
 - They hope the investment in our neighborhood will snowball and continue
 - Hopefully some of the non-owner-occupied rental properties will be purchased and renovated
- Is there any chance that this project won't happen at all?
 - There is a very small chance that it won't move forward
 - They are receiving an incredible amount of support from all parties involved
- What value is there in having the campus gain a historic designation?
 - One valuable funding resource is a historic tax credit, which requires a historic designation
 - 4 part process, currently in the second part

Concluded - 8:32pm