

## **Minutes**

**March 19, 2015**

### **Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee**

#### **Present:**

Craig Piper, Chairmain  
Councilor Maxine Beecher  
Tex Haeuser  
Robert Foster  
Mark Eyerman  
Milan Nevajda  
Pat Doucette  
Libby Reynolds  
Stephanie Carver, GPCOG  
Claude Morgan  
Joe Picoraro  
Peter Stanton  
Jim Gailey, City Manager

#### **Absent:**

Craig Gorris  
Kathleen Phillips

#### **1. Welcome**

Craig Piper welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Claude Morgan. Committee members introduced themselves. Tex Haeuser mentioned that Nathan Marles is no longer with the committee and that he and the Chair are considering replacements, possibly from the city's West End neighborhood.

#### **2. Adoption of the Minutes**

Maxine Beecher moved to adopt the 1/15/2015 minutes; Bob Foster seconded. Unanimous approval.

Bob Foster moved to adopt the 2/26/15 (Mill Creek Master Plan meeting) minutes; Libby Reynolds seconded. Unanimous approval.

Attendees were provided with the agenda, minutes from 1/15/15 and 2/26/15 (Mill Creek Master plan meeting), and two memos: one from Milan Nevajda to Mark Eyerman titled Transcription of the 2/26 Public Meeting Feedback on Mill Creek Master Plan and another from Mark Eyerman to the Committee/Tex Haeuser titled Revisions to the Mill Creek Master Plan.

#### **3. Mill Creek Master Planning**

Mark Eyerman gave a brief overview of the current working draft of the Mill Creek Master Plan and reviewed general happenings at the 2/26 workshops. He reviewed each of the two memos and stated that the public feedback from the meetings is now organized so that it matches up to the Master Plan. He noted that there are some outstanding issues to address and others that are out of the scope of the project but good to have on record. He then went through the Revisions to Mill Creek Master Plan memo by four "Big Picture Issues":

Implementation Strategy: There was a suggestion to improve plan by including a separate implementation strategy: to spell out in detail how various actions would be accomplished and how some capital projects might be paid for. Specifically out of that came ideas about how the reserve account/downtown TIF money could/should be used to enhance Mill Creek, much like a mini Mill Creek CIP.

Parking Responsibility: The plan sees parking as private responsibility and talks about reducing parking requirements for small residential units and how to make better use of on street parking (Waterman Drive). Feedback suggested careful thought about reducing parking requirements and allowing on street parking and that the city should consider providing central, common use parking. By creating a parking district to allow payment to the city, the city takes a more proactive role in providing public parking (a park once strategy where one parks once and walks to different desired locations).

Bolder Redevelopment Concept: There were comments that the plan isn't bold enough and should look at elimination Q Street or making Market Street into a pedestrian street. However, the national experience on pedestrian streets is dismal—ones that are successful are where there's a generator of after-hours activity. Craig P. asked how predominant this was at the meeting, and Mark and Maxine replied two people expressed this, one from each session.

Pratt Abbott Corner: Parkside residents expressed concern, specifically about the scale of development and using Parkside as access road. Libby mentioned that they are unhappy and want improvement now. Mark brought up the 2/26 meeting's discussion of making Cottage Road two-way impacting those residents, but Cottage changed to two-way when the new bridge was built. The Committee discussed this. Mark then suggested keeping the two lots (one developed and one not) on corner in the residential district as a short term solution. Peter asked who owns the undeveloped property, and Bob said Hanna Realty owns 2 & 4 Parkside, Noreen Vincent owns 3 & 6 Parkside, and there are three undeveloped lots. Mark mentioned height on that corner—five stories was an objection. There may be a way to address the height issue; it's possible to make the corner in the Village Center district to reduce height.

Maxine mentioned there are already to large senior centers in that location. Peter said those are already big but they're far enough away from the people on Parkside. He asked if the owners of Pratt Abbott said anything. Maxine, Mark and Tex said no.

Craig P. said the initial intent on that corner was to have a hub of density at the edges where the road is busy and still have a walkable path to downtown; it's either no development or high density development and they're struggling with eight homes in a very suburban setting. Peter mentioned there's also a business in that location.

Milan noted that, at the 2/26 meeting, Mark asked what the residents' solution is/what their vision is, and they said they want an extension of what they have now. He's not sure if they'll tolerate duplexes. Tex spoke to the current zoning: LB. He said it's not as good of a zone as something they could propose. Redevelopment could occur that would make them unhappier than if it's rezoned. Claude asked for a worst case scenario, and Mark said drive-thru's: McDonalds, a bank, a drugstore, with 24 hours of conditional use.

Peter wondered if there is a parking limit that limits the height; if anything facilitated more parking that allowed that building to be taller. Mark replied yes—they included the vacant lots on the park side of Parkside Terrace. Milan agreed; he showed two vacant lots with two lots with the single families.

Peter: The two lots of the single families belong to Pratt Abbott, so there's logic in tying those together. If there's no right to park on other side of Parkside Terrace, by eliminating that parking, that brings down scale of building because they can't match parking to building height.

Mark said that is correct.

Milan asked what the recommendations around parking/sharing parking were. In the zone they recommending the use is for parking along Greenbelt side. If that qualified as parking space to be counted it would be a moot point, whether or not it's included with this development and they buy the lot. It may not be the best solution. Peter said they would have to purchase the lot from the current owner and Milan said yes. If you redrew building based on parking available rather than extending it, then you have a smaller building that's a story lower that's not as big of a mass on the property. Maxine mentioned the major concern of traffic in and out of Parkside. Peter said that's another issue—how to connect that property to Parkside terrace.

Tex suggested backing off on this particular property, but that it should be included in some way. Peter said the people in Parkside need to be protected. Because of the way that property is owned, he's uncomfortable saying someone developing it can't have a driveway access on Parkside Terrace. You can deal with scaling buildings in zoning, but he doesn't see how it's possible to not enter/exit on Parkside. Tex suggested including some general policy language to encompass the idea that a problem exists and the potential exacerbation that could occur if Pratt Abbott redeveloped, suggesting that careful traffic study should be done. Peter thought that was fair and Maxine said it doesn't speak to the existing zone issue; this draft should have recommendation for zone change and residents of Parkside should be invited to a meeting to learn how a zone change is better than what exists. Craig P. said that, reading Mark's options, one is to define boundaries better. That maybe all they have to do. Tex showed this location from the Mill Creek Master Plan draft (page 77).

Craig said, reading Mark's options, one is to define boundaries better. That may be all we have to do. Parkside stays how it is, we are looking at Pratt Abbott. Tex showed this location from the Mill Creek Master Plan draft. Peter explained how the building's size determines parking in the image and how losing a third of the parking defined for that building doesn't allow the building to be as large. Craig P. mentioned that the only way to access it is off Broadway, and Peter said no, because they own property right up to Parkside. They may still be able to have driveway access from there. Mark said they would work with that idea and the idea of Tex having a meeting with residents.

Mark asked the committee to discuss the Implementation Strategy. Tex said this was the idea that we had feedback on at both sessions, to be more specific about which gateway improvements, bridge, etc. He suggested adding a mini CIP timetable in the plan. Craig P. asked if the role of this committee is to get into that level of detail. Mark said in respect to the TIF account from Mill Creek, what are the priorities for spending that could come from downtown TIF? Craig asked if that's in the plan already. Mark said nowhere does it say what the most important things to use money for are. There are competing interests. Peter asked who is responsible for saying what money is spent where. The group replied the Council is. Peter said there are big land holders and no one is sure who may want to do something first. That may affect how to spend the money.

Mark asked Jim about capital budget and the proposal to use some downtown TIF for the Armory project. Jim said it was for the pedestrian bridge study. Jim said Peter hit it on the head: do you want to enhance development? He gave an example of how you could spend money in one place and they have a large landowner want to develop in another section.

Peter: This could be incentive to get someone to move. We need someone to kick things off.

Claude: It's not a lot of money to apply anywhere. It seems like this kind of funding is more for more abstract project. Mark said that money comes in every year.

Mark, Jim, and Tex explained how the TIF and spending typically works. Jim spoke about deficit spending and Tex spoke about financing. The committee discussed.

Claude: Is TIF open and can we add more businesses into it, or is it closed off?

Tex: No. We are in year 7 or 8 of a 30 year TIF. The thing about this TIF is that there's no credit enhancement capability—it all goes into city's funds. If, for example, Finard comes forward and we want to entice them, we may want to suggest an amendment to the TIF in the plan.

Mark: To go back to Claude's question, if CVS rebuilt, incremental property tax goes into the TIF fund. There's existing tax flow where value increased since the TIF was created. If other valuation increases, that cash into account increases proportionally.

Claude said he didn't know amending language to access TIF for particular activity was something they could do. Tex said they would have to go back to Augusta, and Maxine asked if that's worthwhile. Tex said yes, if they want more flexibility. Claude said for \$100-200,000, it still doesn't sound like a lot to go to Augusta.

Peter said if, for example, Finard redeveloped, there could be a lot of money coming in. It may be worthwhile to set this up now to tell them how we are planning to spend if they decide to redevelop. Jim agreed. Tex mentioned making an incentive for first property owner to redevelop.

Craig gave an example of the banks on Hinckley. If developers built multiuse building with residential above, where the residents key interest is biking. If the committee says a key piece of the plan is the bridge across 77 and a key to selling units is having a safe place to bike. He asked if that sort of project would get the city going to create the bridge, and the development would tie into the Master Plan. Tex said yes, that is a more traditional use of TIF. Craig said if the comprehensive plan guides TIF, we don't want to limit how it's spent. We don't want to be too prescriptive.

Maxine: Is it more advantageous to make adjustments to the TIF now before anyone comes forward, to it's more of a broad base?

Tex: The gist of the conversation is increasing flexibility.

Craig asked if it's a good idea to add such a specific strategy. Tex said maybe a specific strategy for amending the TIF. Maxine and Peter agreed.

Mark said there is already language in draft that talks about if redevelopment occurs in Finard block, using the TIF to assist with creating connections through the block, for example. There's already some language about using TIF funds for those kinds of projects.

Maxine: But the TIF itself isn't written for that?

Mark: The TIF only allows the captured revenue to be used for public activities: for street, pedestrian

improvements, studies. You can't do a credit enhancement, where you give property owners their property taxes back. If the Finard property comes along and you want to redevelop an intersection to connect through, you probably could use the money there.

Peter said TIF should be spent for improvements that everyone enjoys, not just the property owner. Claude agreed; that is the principal.

Peter: It sounds like they are used the other way.

Mark: They can be.

Claude: In bad instances, but not here. We would like to enhance and add a public component.

Tex: This is a good discussion to have to raise questions, but it is confirming what the original group felt.

Mark: Given discussion, does the committee want to add something to the plan to deal with the implementation discussion more directly?

Maxine didn't think it would hurt.

Craig: The fear is that having it so specific, does this become lightning rod of project? These are highlights of things that rose out of the public meetings, how predominant was this?

Mark: It was a suggestion of 1-2 people.

Maxine: The group decided it belongs there.

Joe: It's good to have encouragement to have when companies look. It's a little more descriptive, and encouraging, so companies can have a better idea of why they want to develop here.

Jim: Instead of prioritizing, is it best served through visual aids? We don't know what the landowners will do; development surprises us and comes through our door. Keep it general but give visual examples.

Maxine asked if it should be in the appendix. Jim is fearful in burying it. He suggested making a standalone document—advertisement, brochure. Peter said we're marketing to a small number of landowners. Jim said we're marketing to many different people: real estate, architects, etc.

Mark and Craig discussed projects done by firms from away or where there's a local partner.

Mark said they will look into this point.

Mark asked if there's anything to change in regard to parking.

Tex gave an example of how two people each need a car but don't necessarily need them onsite. He asked if there's a market for leasing driveway spaces or for a municipal parking district to locating people willing to do this. Mark said yes and gave an example of this being done in an Auburn neighborhood.

Tex mentioned that there's old language that allows property owner to meet off street parking requirements through leased spaces but they have to be within a certain amount of feet. He suggested removing that rule. He thinks idea of requiring only one space for a one bedroom unit makes sense. Otherwise, require 1.5 for a multifamily, and allow more distance space to be leased. Put the requirement that you can't have more than one car onsite in the deed/lease.

Claude said it seems that the willingness to park far away and walk into an area is commiserate with the action you're going into. Parking on Waterman is interesting—you would park there only if there's something of significance going on. You need attraction spots; there isn't enough pull to get people to buy into people having to walk. Peter said you will have that by the time there would be a problem.

Tex: In regard to a parking garage; similar to regular zoning, if Finard develops, then we'll be willing to work with you on zoning if you meet our Master Plan objectives. So, don't plan now for a central parking garage, but if property owners comes along for public/private partnership for garage we will talk.

Joe: Encourages and supports that. Successful places such as Burlington, VT, have a mix of garages and on street parking. A mix beneficial and should be thought about for the future.

Peter asked who goes into Portland and parks in garage. Many people say they use a garage. The group discussed free versus paid parking. Peter said the jump to paying for parking is far away in this area. Tex said you have to keep track differences between parkers: employees, residents, shoppers. A public parking garage doesn't help residential parking.

Tex showed Milan's example of the Finard area in the draft Master Plan (page 65), where parking is snuck into the central building. He asked Milan if it's just ground level.

Milan: Visually you can't tell the difference, and there isn't a certain space applied for parking. The bulk of building is big enough to accommodate parking for businesses.

Tex: Theoretically, you could have enough parking for what we see?

Mark: Yes, but it would have to be structural. A lot of the parking would have to be inside the building.

Milan: Just under 500 spaces are internal, 300 are surface (includes the whole parcel).

Stephanie: Asked what percentage of building is for parking.

Milan wasn't sure off the top of his head. Mark said it's a significant portion.

Craig said seeing that, he thought the parking was for that building. Mark said that's correct; it serves that site. Craig said, so you could park and go elsewhere and said he's struggling with goal of what we're revising.

Mark: The issue was that rather than saying that Finard, for example, has to provide parking, there would be long range common parking solution so that the spaces created could be used by building on Q or Market, etc. He mentioned an example of parking in Brunswick that has a certain number of spots dedicated to each

business with signs in each spot. Many spots are open, but you can't park there if you're not going to that specific business.

Peter brought up diagonal versus parallel parking and asked if much is gained with diagonal.

Mark had two points: 1- Is the on street space in front of store? 2- Diagonal parking relative to traffic movement is an interesting issue. People advocate for back in diagonal to eliminate problems backing out. Reality is, in traditional layout, on street is only going to meet a small percentage of parking needs for most businesses.

Peter mentioned spots being taken in Knightville but not many customers in the businesses.

Mark: Long term, the plan suggests trying to maximize/provide for maximization of on street parking. The question is: Are we comfortable with where we are or do we want to be more expansive in common public solutions to a parking requirement?

Maxine: Use the term "being open to those."

Mark: There's action in there about creating parking district and can include that as part of it.

Peter asked how many extra spaces there are when they're diagonal. Mark said it depends on the width of the street. Peter said it's only issue when buildings are built to sidewalk; this is surrounded by parking lot. Use the extra space for diagonal and bring sidewalk back. Mark said the tradeoff is the situation of having extra wide streets for diagonal parking on both sides with two travel lanes in middle. Peter said this plan has parking lots behind buildings that could be green or buildable space. There are a lot of surface parking lots. You could accomplish a lot along Market by opening it up to diagonal parking and positioning buildings appropriately. The group discussed. Tex suggested moving some parking needed for customers offsite; the property owner has to worry about accommodating residential parking. He said the committee should be open to idea of some additional parking. That opportunity was looked at along Waterman, maybe it should be considered one side of Market also. Maxine asked if that should be added to the plan. Peter said with the Finard block, to open streets and encourage additional on street parking. Mark said it's a good opportunity in internal streets; traffic streets are more problematic because of safety.

Tex: Joe said we should think about garage here in future and we haven't heard support other than forming a parking district and having them look at idea. The group discussed; Libby mentioned picturing parking here similar to that in Freeport. The group discussed large the large expense.

Jim: We need to create a zoning; allow residential and commercial density to support garage. Parking can be buried similar to the design we saw. To green up district, you have to go up with parking. Suggested design standards that support the structure but make sure it meets what we want it to look like.

Peter: Are we at technological/social turning point where parking lots won't be important if people don't each own their own car?

Stephanie: How far ahead does this plan look?

Tex: There are examples of redevelopment of parking garages into other uses. Keep that in mind as part of design. Claude mentioned an example of this in Boston's Chinatown.

Craig: This is a good discussion; what do we need to change?

Mark mentioned four points: 1- Tex's comment about relaxing/eliminating distance limits on leased off street parking to meet requirements, 2- Willingness to consider using public funds in conjunction with a private developer to work with city/provide common public parking, 3- On street parking to include references to not just parallel but diagonal, 4- Structured parking with linear building enclosing it so parking isn't obvious.

Craig: In regard to what Jim said, it could be zoned to one end so it's less visible.

Jim: With elevation being on bridge, your eye will catch garage. The example shown earlier captures what we should do.

Claude mentioned that everything you see heading to Portland on the bridge looking down is the city's worst – sewage treatment, back of the VIP building, electrical works. He sees putting garage there as a step in between; there's already the worst there.

Joe: There's a lot of design today that blends in well in regard to parking garages.

Peter: Shouldn't it be required that it's within a building? Or are there other ways of camouflaging that's cheaper?

Mark: Another issue isn't visual, it's the pedestrian environment on the street.

Peter: Storefront on ground floor is a good requirement.

Mark: The issue is not creating dead spot.

Tex: Back to Mark's four points. We don't need to worry about location. Point 5- Include in the plan an affirmative statement seeing the need in the long run for a municipal parking structure that can accommodate customer needs to increase potential for additional mixed use development in the area. Rather than leaving it up in the air—including it has to be properly designed for exterior appearance and potential reuse.

Craig said he struggles giving the developer guidance on a garage. Tex said we're giving guidance to ourselves; he's not sure what steps would be—studies, etc. In the meantime, people have to find their own parking. Libby said that's scary to think if something happens tomorrow.

Tex: To point #2, we would help them. In the picture we saw, they're accommodating their own. It's not municipal parking, it's how they could redevelop their site.

Peter: To have municipal parking garage, you need municipal space.

Tex: We have to acquire property, that's why it's a long term project. Joe agrees, especially on long range.

Peter: With development on large chunks of land, can't developers be thinking of this? If there's profit to be had running garage, they will put it on their site.

Craig asked for a one minute wrap up.

Mark: Mentioned the bolder development point. Is there a willingness to consider the future of Q Street, or is that something to take off table?

Tex: Can remove tuning it into pedestrian mall.

Peter: It needs to be lined with businesses. Could it become that? Finard could do half, other side is parking serving businesses. Being successful could be difficult. It could be easier on Finard block or Market Street.

Mark made a proposal to the Chair: On page 3 of the Revisions to Mill Creek Master Plan memo, there are other issues. He suggested resolving those in the next week or so. He mentioned the shared space streets.

Maxine: On things that have we have an interest in, should we send suggestions to Tex?

Mark: Yes

#### **4. Comments from the Public**

None

#### **5. Round Robin**

None

#### **6. Adjournment 8:00**

Craig Piper motioned to adjourn; Maxine Beecher seconded. Unanimous approval.