



Dania Hall Meeting Notes (January 27th, 2009)

Council Member Cam Gordon welcomed participants at 7:07 pm for the purpose of helping define potential uses for the Dania Site.

Joe Bernard went over the agenda and started the presentation:

- Joe described the property as vacant with buildings North and South of the parcel with parking to the east. Vacated 5th street contains utility easements underground that are represented on a survey (available for viewing). An informal pedestrian path across Dania Site has replaced the vacated sidewalk. Zoning is C3A and that zoning allows for a wide variety of commercial uses. The base height of C3A, regulated by zoning, is four stories. The site is not wide enough for structured parking. Joe acknowledged that the art kiosk on the site would either be relocated or incorporated into a future use of the site and coordinated with the City's staff artist.
- The Small Area Plan found that the two additional parcels east of the site (parking lot site) do not easily combine with the Dania site for redevelopment and that Planning realizes that the existing parking lot serves a real need for community retail parking. CPED realizes that the public path crossing the Dania Site is a community priority. The market feasibility analysis that was completed for the SAP indicates single-story development or else mixed use commercial with student housing above as realistic uses for the site. Because the site sits on a community corridor, a commercial structure or mixed-use commercial/housing would be appropriate.

Kristin Guild spoke to the City's disposition process, pointing out that a Request for Proposals was the most commonly used manner in which to find developers for publicly owned sites. Whatever the method, Kristin pointed out that an open and transparent process is important for any method.

- The use of a RFP has some key advantages in that proposals can be evaluated side-by-side, opens up discussion of proposed uses and designs, and relays clear objectives. Oftentimes, however, it does not meet market timing and can raise community expectations unrealistically. There have been times when a RFP process has yielded one (or even zero) responses.
- Property can be sold through traditional marketing practices of listing the property and posting it "for sale."
- Letters of Interest are used to test the waters and identify level of interest.
- A Request for Qualifications is a step more serious than the Letter of Interest and identifies qualification of interested parties.

Kristin talked about disposition and how City Council approval is required for any sale. Fair Market Value is established for sale terms and a sale requires a viable business plan with operating projections; a source and use of funds summary; evidence of full financing for the project (not just the sale price); and a contract for redevelopment. The timeline for disposition is also a factor. For example, given the current economic constraints, it is important to ask if this is the best time to market the Dania Site.

Joe talked about the next steps after tonight and that a website page would have these survey results posted the power point presentation, and how to provide additional comments going forward. Joe reviewed each of the small group activity questions and pointed out that "interim uses" would be welcome as part of the exercise.

Below are the results of the Small Group Activity, going counter clockwise starting with the most northeasterly table. Exact written comments received can be found at the following link (http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/docs/3_Question_Reponses.pdf).

- Table 1
 - Uses include street level retail (restaurant, drug store, etc), a public resource such as a library or post office, youth center, community space, theater/auditorium, lofts for artist studios, offices, or classrooms.
 - Amenities listed were sidewalk lighting, garden, bench, bike racks, incorporate the pillar, LEED, sprinkler, sidewalk improved and a mosaic motif.
 - Design could include windows onto the street, building abuts sidewalk, architecture compatible with surrounding, NOT one level, use most of the space for footprint, and captures the spirit of neighborhood.

- Table 2
 - Uses could include flexible community spaces, do not base use solely on economics, meeting spaces, community-based offices, library with multi-media room, youth center, youth elder center, with any use a result of an inclusive process that is community guided.
 - Amenities include a pedestrian path, plantings, vegetable gardens, container gardens, farmers market, textile mobile, volleyball, outdoor concert space, reuse of kiosk/pillar, and art that honors immigrant history of the neighborhood.
 - Design is urban, human scaled that includes public art. Not anything like Al Bina's building or a cheap replica of Dania Hall. Blend the new with the old and make the design open to the street and inviting. Remove the Al Bina Building addition and incorporate that land into the new development.

- Table 3
 - Mixed use with street level community businesses, post office, retail or café. Upper would be housing using NRP money for student quarters or else home-ownership. Space could also be used for community public spaces such as theater, education, fitness center, library satellite, prayer room.
 - Amenities include bike racks and beautify the vacant lot with sod for interim.
 - Design could incorporate underground parking, include a walk path and be compatible with the adjacent properties' buildings.

- Table 4
 - Use includes affordable residential housing, with ground floor retail, post office, art supplies, internet café, recreation youth arcade, fitness center, clinic, woman center, gardens, farmers market, and paint a mural on the Al Bina's blank wall.
 - Amenities could be a sidewalk café, bike racks, public art, path and landscape. Maybe add public toilets and no chained fence.
 - Design should fit with a community corridor and windows with eyes on the street, innovative 21 century - energy efficient/green blended with architecture that reflects history. Height from 4-10 stories.

- Table 5
 - Use for community education, business/retail, locally-based and mixed use with interim garden, parking, farmers market, and craft/art fairs. Mixed housing that includes student housing.
 - Amenities would include bike stalls, path, lighting, flowers, landscaping, with grass for interim. Move peace poll across the street to public housing? LEED standards.
 - Courtyard area and welcoming four-story with build-out to sidewalk. Brick is historically appropriate. Art is good.

Council Member Gordon asked if we captured everything and did we incorporate the right questions:

- Lisa Hammer suggested we should identify funding for interim sod and/or other uses?
- Todd Smith said it has been nine years since the Dania Hall building burned to the ground and something needs to happen with that site now, even if it is an interim use. We need to talk timelines.
- Doris Wickstrom said we need a decent sidewalk for the interim.
- Tim Mungaven asked to have Dania Partners present their ideas to the community as part of the process and engage the immigrant communities.

Tim Mungaven suggested that Dania Partners be included on the next agenda and asked what expectations are related to community engagement? Someone suggested we make a summary presentation at the Mosques, at the Brian Coyle Center, at a residents meeting at the high-rise, and with other affected parties in the neighborhood.

Council Member Gordon asked that interim use ideas be brought by the community to WBCC to speak to community initiatives, explore zoning and regulatory constraints, determine a need for licensing, understand source of materials, who does design work, and what vendors are chosen.

Community asked that the neighborhood forum meet again in April but questions about timeline need to be addressed sooner because a use such as a farmers market is seasonal and April is too late to get started.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 pm.