

Date: April 27, 2010

I. Review of Agenda, Ground Rules

Betsy Pringle, Chair, opened the meeting at 7:00. Ms. Pringle reviewed the ground rules that the advisory group members had agreed to at the outset of the process, and emphasized the importance of ensuring that all members are provided an opportunity to speak.

Ms. Pringle introduced Tom Markl, representative for the Nelson Legacy Group, owner of the Houghton Center.

II. Presentation by Tom Markl, Houghton Center

Mr. Markl provided a presentation on the topic of the Houghton Center, covering the current development underway at the site, and the owners' future vision for the center. Mr. Markl provided the following comments:

- ◆ Current development is a "face lift", with the addition of a major tenant, the Metropolitan Market
- ◆ Some additional new tenants include "Sports Clips" men's salon and a natural pet store
- ◆ Tables and umbrellas are planned for the enhanced open space
- ◆ Metropolitan Market will be on two levels
- ◆ Metropolitan Market "tower" – approximately 30' in height
- ◆ 5/21 is official grand opening date for market, although this date may slide a bit
- ◆ The market will be open 24 hours/day, 7 days a week
- ◆ Background on Nelson family and approach to future development for center:
 - Conservative approach to development – will wait to see evidence of market demand before proceeding with development
 - Long term view
 - Have had architects do conceptual designs and massing studies for the site, but have no immediate plans for further development in next 20 years or so
 - Future vision would include more dense development, moving buildings to street to support pedestrians and transit, structured and/or underground parking, possibly 5-6 stories with retail on ground floor, and non-retail commercial and/or residential on upper stories

III. Discussion

Advisory group members asked Mr. Markl questions following the presentation. In response to questions, additional comments from Mr. Markl included:

- ◆ Accessible access between upper and lower levels in the market and in the outdoor sidewalk/stair area will be provided by an elevator located in the Metropolitan Market
- ◆ Additional redevelopment on site will be limited for the next 20 years due to lease agreements with Metropolitan market
- ◆ Most other leases are for 5 years, with 5-year options to renew
- ◆ No additional space can be devoted to community gathering space until more parking is provided
- ◆ Metropolitan Market will rely on the local community rather than the larger region for customers

Additional comments from advisory group members included:

- ◆ One member noted an interest in retaining a building setback from NE 68th Street to preserve the view corridor down NE 68th Street.
- ◆ Another responded that members should take a look at the view down 68th because the trees and plantings along the street are now mature.
- ◆ Topography of the Houghton Center site is conducive to terracing of structures, accommodating building height
- ◆ One member asked whether a bridge could be built across 68th Street to link the Center property with the PCC site to the north. Staff responded that this might be possible, but could be expensive, and present safety issues

General discussion on the issues of urban design, land use and building height related to the Houghton Center and highlighted in the staff memo began.

Urban Design

The group discussed and voted on the question, "Does the advisory group support a policy that would support development incentives in exchange for amenities (space, facilities, etc.) for the community?" *The vote was 8 in favor of incentives, and two opposed.* Several of those in favor noted that they would support this concept if a review process were retained. Those opposed noted that they would be open to re-visiting the concept in the future, but would prefer to retain existing provisions at this time.

Discussion included the following comments:

- ◆ Better urban design planning for the area would be achieved through studying both sides of NE 68th Street at the same time. A common approach to the intersection of NE 68th Street/108th Avenue NE and the NE 68th Street corridor would be more appropriate.
- ◆ Some members noted that they did not want to support regulations that applied to a "special case"
- ◆ Some commented that since the next neighborhood update is likely to occur in many years, a long term vision should be taken now.
- ◆ Another member cautioned that conditional elements should not be relied upon in regulations, since the outcome would be unknown.
- ◆ Some increased density would be acceptable, but would like to retain control.
- ◆ Comments regarding financial feasibility were made, such as that in order to encourage or require buildings to be brought out to the street, underground parking would be necessary. Also, additional height would be required to support redevelopment.

Land Use

The group discussed the question, "Does the advisory group support a policy related to the types of businesses that should be encouraged within the commercial area?" They also discussed and voted on the question, "Should a policy be included that would discourage expansion of the boundaries of the commercial area?" *Regarding expansion of the commercial boundaries, two votes were in favor of policies that would support expansion of the boundaries, with the other eight opposed to expansion, and supportive of policies that would discourage expansion.*

Advisory group members were generally supportive of allowing residential use above commercial use in the Houghton Center. They were also in agreement that no policy was needed related to the types of businesses to be encouraged or allowed at the Center. Several stated that the existing text in the neighborhood plan addresses this issue well, in that it states that uses should serve neighborhood needs.

Building Height

The group members discussed the question, "Should the neighborhood plan provide direction for areas where additional structure height may be appropriate?"

Discussion indicated support for policies that encourage terracing of taller building forms, using existing topography. Members also indicated support for policies that allow for additional height if public benefits are provided. Examples of public benefits cited by the group included superior design, right-of-way design and affordable housing.

Several members also asked staff to look into ways the entire commercial corridor (both sides of NE 68th Street) could be studied together.

IV. Review of policy direction on residential land use from April 13th meeting

Advisory group members reviewed the summary of residential land use direction, included on page 5 of the staff memo for the meeting. They agreed with all of the bullets, and added the following policy direction:

- ◆ Require minimum densities in multifamily areas (including medium density residential areas, where development may occur as detached single family on small lots).

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.