

Reinventing the Crescent

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February 23, 2007 Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Attending: David Mize, Joe Cocchiara, Larry Schmidt, Danny Hughes, Sean Cummings

Sean Cummings

Sean offered thanks to Joy Robinson of EDR for organizing the meeting, and Gen. David Mize for helping to put together the plan for the Port of Embarkation.

He named Steering Committee members not present: Leslie Alley, Keith Butler, Pam Dashiell, Ken Ferdinand, Reed Kroloff, Stephen Perry, Warren Reuther, Kathleen Turner, Andy Wisdom (Turbosquid).

Allen Eskew

- The fireboat ride crystallized it for team. He explained timeline and the way the team will work. He stressed that the team sees the steering committee as the client voice.
- He said this is plan will intersect with UNOP on its way to LRA. While this meeting is an introductory opportunity, the next meeting will include some choices and analysis of existing conditions.
- Area was defined, but then expanded to include Holy Cross, an approximately 4.5-mile stretch.
- Introduced team members not present but who will contribute:
Moffat Nichol: homeland security issues/maritime issues
Subhash Kulkarni: utilities
Development Strategies: public/private funding strategies

Alex Kreiger

Firm has done much work around waterfronts. Economic advancement, but also for return to better living conditions, recreation and environmental issues.

- Anacostia Master Plan – Historically industrial area redeveloped to provide opportunities for people living there all along, not just for those who might come. Clean river, sites for 30,000 housing units, connect open spaces. Identify areas for monuments. Anacostia Development Corporation created to implement ideas. Third century for planning the in the capital area. Continuity between good parts of city with perpendicular roads that connect to river. Recapture industrial areas for public benefit. Some just walkways, some recreation/park settings. Redesigning green major street (like Canal) .
- Dallas – convergence of flood protection to create series of lakes, reintroduce flora and fauna. Make Trinity the heart of the community. Will be one of largest parks in America on the scale of Central Park. Levees will be raised, but roadways and byways will be built on top of that that.
- Cincinnati – Fort Washington Way along Ohio River. Built highway that separated River from city to achieve area of development between river and highway.
- Three Rivers in Pittsburgh – Area has been losing traditional industry at this point where the Ohio River begins. Created Riverlife with stadium, housing, etc. Lively environment draws visitors. Looking at developing river as a transportation corridor.

Enrique Norten

- Brooklyn Public Library – use for visual and performing arts.

- Sustainability is “trendy” subject, but Norten has worked on it for some time.
- Miami – designed the tallest tower...residential, commercial...”little vertical city on difficult piece of land.”
- Hotel in W. Hollywood will break ground in a few months.
- Lower NY – restoration of industrial buildings. Quite a wealth of existing architecture, but needs a new vocation. The goal is to bring new together with old to reinvent the waterfront.
- Master plan for Rutgers which sits on river, with the idea to connect the river to the campus.
- Guggenheim Museum in Guadlajara, a city ready to reinvent itself.

George Hargreaves

- Worked on connecting tissue with Enrique on housing project in Brooklyn.
- Chattanooga – park, then created infill in city grid. Mayor got hotel tax to pay for it. The waterfront park adjacent to the aquarium is home for riverfront festival. This was jumping off point for trail of tears. Worked with some Cherokees who did artwork for the park.
- Louisville Waterfront Park – ULI says it is one of the top 10/ festival plazas. People need a major cultural reasons to come, then discover the rest.
- Circulation Corridors – dense programmatic spine on college campus at U of Cincinnati.
- \$85 million park in Los Angeles, near Hispanic area and Chinatown, a dynamic area that creates literal bridges to culture. It is urban, celebratory space connected to flexible space.
- Olympic Stadium design in Australia. Lots of water.
- Big openings, cantilevers, etc. will help not to block view/access to river.

Allen Eskew

This is not recovery planning. This is an opportunity for people to seize. We have to be ambassadors and champions in the process. We will have to confront planning fatigue to come up with “transformative contemporary work.”

- A husky, industrial waterfront in Charleston, SC. has become cultural facility.
- Baton Rouge – Shaw Center. Fountain was what brought them there.
- Creation of front porch – communal space outside museum.
- Graphic educational process will be important technique for this project
- In terms of sustainability, Brad Pitt is working in Holy Cross, dealing with 19th century fabric and hoping to increase density. The architecture leads to the river.
- The 20 percent undamaged area is future of city. A string of parks is more important than ever because of concentration of population along that area.
- Tulane is recommitting to Riversphere, but differently. TPL and Port are instrumental
- Asked Sean for Phase 4 of CC information to know what the plan will be over 20 years. This needs to be processed quickly.
- Hydrology examples to use for power. Tulane still wants leadership position in river turbine activity.
- This is the sweet spot. This is the future of the city. Compelling, seductive and provocative plan will be acceptable.”
- 7 planning districts touch the 4.5 miles. New presentations will show connectivity to the neighborhoods.

Carol Bebel

- Culture is the social connective tissue. In New Orleans, the practicing of culture, the rituals are important. Landscaping and history need to work together. There are an energy and spirit to work from. The need is to layer information about culture, so that can be part of the creativity. There is a need for bridges between brown and black and to memorialize and celebrate all cultures.
- This is an opportunity for healing....opportunity for a vision for the future.

Commissioner Hughs

The port is out of break bulk space. Phasing will be important. The Port has some major plans and will have to dovetail with riverfront plan. Port has engineering department at disposal of the team..

Port will move flex space out of belly of city so cruise passenger can be downtown.

He recommends an heir apparent commissioner attend, so there will be a baton passing when he leaves the board.

Allen Eskew

What are latitudes?

Commissioner Hughes

The Erato Street terminal underway. There is renewed interest in New Orleans as cruise port. Average cruise passenger spends \$60 in port; here it's \$300. Port operates like business, not like other government entities...no millage to support it.

Joe Cocchiara

\$40 million can be saved because of the wharf platform in place. Because of the curvature of river, Gov. Nicholls is the worst spot for safety.

Enrique Norten

Enrique asks for site elevation. Joe responds that it is not an area of active development, so there isn't one. Port Commissioner said the raw data is available from Port staff.

Alex Kreiger

Alex said that if cost is the principal value, the project will fail. This is a moment for New Orleans to consider the long-range future. The point of the study is to increase investment. Pittsburgh is a diminishing regional population. They found \$1 billion to build new cultural and recreational facilities. New Orleans can leverage what it has.

Sean Cummings

The city wants to make an investment in the 21st century. A cost-benefit analysis has to go on to determine value. If a cruise ship terminal is built, city will work with Port, which will have major responsibility. The goal is to "get to the delta."

Ken Ferdinand will help with public financing. Some things will be philanthropically- funded by donations, foundations, etc. It will all have to be evaluated for local return on investment.

Alex Kreiger

It should not be a plan to say "here is \$\$\$ what can you do for it?"
A portion of plan has to attract those who wish to invest.

George Hargreaves

It will be some big bullet things (2,3,4), and they will have some idea of what it will cost, but that won't be the not primary factor.

Allen Eskew

The next four meetings:

- 1- Analysis and options.
- 2- Alex will lead three development plans...imbedded with several hotspots.
- 3- Three revised versions to pick preferred scheme.
- 4- Three spots for major development.

Commissioner Hughes

The Riverfront Streetcar will be an intersection of several lines. and cost lots of money. All this should create excitement. There are not a lot of other places that have what is offered here.

Allen Eskew

The plan will be "sexy, beautiful, provocative stuff."

Joe Cocchiara

Continuous linear green space is part of the Port's agreement with the city. It should be viewed less as a continuum and more as a series of neighborhoods, translating to a series of opportunities.

Enrique Norten

Those approaches are not mutually exclusive, and they make for a rich tradition.

Allen Eskew

The Samuel development group is showing Tulane drawings for the power plant area. Yvette Jones is talking to them re: partnership.

Sean Cummings

- Sean asked Larry Schmidt what he (Trust for Public Land) is looking for. Larry said that initially TPL wanted to be a developer of the land. Now the role might change; the group might want to play the part of open space developer. They are committed to the space and can bring some funding dimension. They will carve out a specific piece.
- He is reaching out to Wynton Marsalis and Emeril Lagasse, asking how to bring food, music and cultural disciplines to engage them in the process.
- “When we talk about 21st century design...how to express the soulful place in modern terms. Need to understand it at cellular level -- this sense of place that inspires a cross section of New Orleanians. We must inspire the imagination of the public.”
- The Public Belt Railroad is an issue that must be dealt with.

Meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.