

Working Groups Kick Off Meeting Notes

Tuesday, April 12, 2022

5:30pm – 7pm

- Welcome by Maritza Pechin (Deputy Director, City of Richmond Office of Equitable Development)
- Introductions by Project Team:
 - Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (Lead Grantee & Housing Lead): Desi Wynter
 - City of Richmond (Co-Grantee & Neighborhood Lead): Maritza Pechin, Yessenia Revilla, Dominic Barrett
 - Richmond City Health District (People Lead): Jackie Lawrence, Amy Popovich
 - Storefront for Community Design (Engagement Lead): Shawn Balon
 - LRK (Planning Coordinator): Danielle Lake, Nando Micale, Michael Kimmey
- Choice Neighborhoods Project Overview by Project Team
 - Team will share slides from presentation with all attendees
 - Visit <https://reconnectjacksonward.com/> for more information about the Reconnect Jackson Ward project
- Q&A / General Comments:
 - What's the timetable on Gilpin redevelopment and what's the vision for mix use zoning?
 - Are there other constraints articulated by the grant that we should be aware of that may limit outcomes?
 - How will the project team share information between all the groups internally to make sure everyone is aware of what is discussed?
 - Programming around entrepreneurship should be supported through the plan
 - Consider development at the Diamond District and how it can benefit/enhance this plan
- Breakout Groups – see end of document for separate notes.
- Early Action Activities – reach out to Maritza.pechin@rva.gov with ideas

- Initial ideas: outdoor drum garden; mural project at Baker Annex Building; Blues Armory revitalization; structure for families to set up pop up tents/ events in the garden area of Gilpin Court

- Upcoming Meetings:
 - Resident Information Exchange | May 10 @ Fay Towers
 - Community Expo | May 12 @ Hippodrome Theater
 - Steering Committee | May 24
 - Resident Listening Workshop | June 14 @ Fay Towers
 - Community Listening Workshop | June 16 @ Gallery5
 - Working Group Meeting #2 | July 26 – location TBD

- Homework:
 - Working Group Recruitment – reach out to your network and invite folks to join a working group
 - Attend an upcoming engagement activity
 - Visit the website: jacksonwardchoice.com

- Q&A
 - How can we guarantee residents will join all meetings?
 - What can we do to ensure all families are included and wholly part of the process?
 - What forms of communication will we use?

Working Groups Breakout Session

Neighborhood Working Group:

Attendees: Maritza Pechin – City Office of Equitable Development
Shawn Balon – Storefront for Community Design
Yessenia Revilla – City Office of Equitable Development
Danielle Lake – LRK
Carlton L. Boisseau– Club 533, immediate past president
Robert Lester – Club 533, president
Brandon King – Program and Operations Supervisor at City of Richmond
Department of Public Works
Deborah Morton – Deputy Director at Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities
Jack Berry - President at Richmond Region Tourism
Oldson Duclos - Campus Operations Coordinator, CHAT; Gilpin resident
Doyle Sapp - Superintendent of Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site
Josh Bilder – Sterling Bilder Development
David Lambert - Business Owner, Eye Que Optical, BCL Properties (family business), son of Senator Lambert
T. Knight Womack – Greater Mt. Moriah
Shawn Balon – Storefront for Community Design
Yessenia Revilla – City Office of Equitable Development

General Comments / Desired Outcomes from the Planning Process/Concerns:

- Safe zones, better opportunities, reduced crime
- Better transit connectivity
- Buy-in from the community, implementation, include all aspects of Jackson Ward
- Prosperity; financial and community stability; the neighborhood has been fractured from the city, would like to see “wholeness” take place here
- Neighborhood improvement that balances new development with historic character
- Empower community with aggressive rezoning to encourage development; 1st street commercial corridor; bring the community together
- Look at North Jackson Ward Study

- Gun violence, safety
- Food dessert
- Transit access
- Recreation
- Parking an issue
- Beauty – looks depressing, need better trash pickup
- Traffic/speeding issues
- Need for greenspace, beautification, more trees, improved air quality, more shade
- Need attractions to bring people in and maximize rich history
- There are limited job opportunities/limited training
- There's been a lot of plans over the years – need to look at what has been done, feels like nothing has come to fruition
- Deal with zoning issues that limit development

Other Stakeholders to reach out to:

- Churches/clergy
- Historic Jackson Ward
- Military retirees
- Railroad Club – not in study area
- Masonic Temple on 2nd street
- 3rd St Bethel AME
- 4th Street Cobra One Club – motorcycle club

Major Themes of Discussion:

- Green spaces, create a beautiful place, having direction on where to go as a community

People Working Group:

Attendees: Jackie Lawrence – Social Worker at Health District
Amy Popovich – Nurse Manager, Health District
Nando Micale – LRK
Chanel Bea – Thrive
Briana Duclos – STEP Calhoun Work Force Development
Ralph Stuckey – RRHA Resident Services
James Davis – City Ambassador program
Dominic Barrett – City Office of Human Services
Kellie Rowan – City Mobility Office
Marsha Latney - ?
Ralph Dickerson – VUU
Tim Cole – STEP

General Comments:

- Spent time on “How do we move engagement to empowerment and stewardship” many people chimed in on this.
- Briana spoke about “personalized engagement.” How are we engaging?
- Discussion about how we implement the People Plan.
- Are there stats on use of housing vouchers? 78% lease up

Other Stakeholders to reach out to:

- RPS
- Office of Children and Families
- VUU Departments
- VCU
- Gilpin Childcare provider to be on stakeholder group
- Friends Childcare
- Jackie will share list of partners

Housing Working Group:

Attendees: Desi Wynter - RRHA

Michael Kimmey - LRK

Mary Kay Huss - CEO Richmond Metropolitan Habitat for Humanity

David Hahn - former owner of Salt + Forge Restaurant, now closed and is in law school focusing on Housing Law

Donte McCutchen - Greater Mt. Moriah Baptist Church & Jackson Ward resident

Janis Allen - Historic Jackson Ward Association

Keisha Cummings - 2LOVE, LLC (www.2loveeveryone.com)

Charlene Pitchford – Board of Commissioners RRHA

Matt Engel – Enterprise Community Development (Baker School Apartments)

Kathleen Kramer – Enterprise Community Development

Brittany King – Richmond Loft Company (<https://www.richmondloftco.com/>)

Hanibal Hasan

General Comments:

- 10% of all Habitat first time home buyers were once Housing Authority Residents
- Create executable plan
- Build upon growing neighborhood, neighborhood heritage
- Community Inclusion
- Authentic Community Engagement
- Homeownership
- New playgrounds
- New early childhood school for preschool-middle school
- Junior College partnership with Reynolds Community College
- Elderly programs
- Allow seniors to age in place
- Affordable workforce housing
- Youth programing to help large number of single moms, and keep kids on the right path
- STEM / Shop programs to engage youth
- First time homebuyer training/information/process/costs (look at successes and failures in Philadelphia, Atlanta, Denver)

- Rental study, what is affordable in different neighborhoods, and how much money do you need to afford around the city
- Listen to the neighborhood
- Need more residents from the neighborhood to get input from all
- Look at “Partnership for Affordable Housing Study” and City of Richmond Affordable housing study
- Federal Reserve has lots of statistics and studies they could share
- Does RRHA report on-time payments to Creditors to help build credit?
- Many in neighborhood have “technology issues” and should not be a barrier to participate, should have ZOOM set up in the Calhoun Center or some other central location for all to easily participate and hear information, both young and old since there is such a large youth population
- Program for Police to live in a unit, and support community policing, and liaison to police

Major Themes of Discussion:

- First time home-buyers program, equitable engagement for all residents and community members, group zoom session at Calhoun Center, upgraded playgrounds, authentic engagement and equitable results, elderly programs and potential for seniors to age in place, average cost of rental properties and availability of other affordable options