UK Master Plan Update
Columbia Heights Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Location: King Alumni House
Date: September 4, 2012

I. Introductions/Overview

Members of the Master Plan Team were introduced, and an overview of the project was given by UK and RossTarrant Architects. Project goals, timeline and work completed so far were discussed.

II. Discussion of Property Acquisition Boundary

The following questions and concerns were highlighted regarding the acquisition boundary:

- What is the definition of the acquisition boundary? What exactly does it mean to a landowner or resident within the boundary? Landowners need a clear definition of what it means to them and how much say they have in what happens within the boundary.
- What is the timeline for acquisition within Columbia Heights (CH)? Since the residence halls will not be placed in this location and the track is complete, does this mean that there is still a chance for acquisition in this neighborhood? Will the acquisition boundary go away?
- If CH is removed from the acquisition boundary, what will UK do to minimize the impact of the campus on the neighborhood? There is no transition zone. The neighborhood is diminished.
- The neighborhood was mainly owner occupied until recently. Permanent residents provide an invaluable service to UK by mentoring students on the street as to the responsibilities of being a good neighbor.
- Many landowners in CH are in limbo. They are in the zone, but UK doesn't want to purchase their land.
- Acquiring the land would kill the neighborhood. With one side of Columbia Avenue gone, there would be no neighborhood. Should UK include both sides of the street in the zone?
- Is the line hard and fast? Can UK acquire land outside the boundary? (In order to pursue acquisition, the land must be in an acquisition zone that has prior approval from the Commonwealth.)

It was noted that more discussion will follow on the definition of the acquisition boundary and whether CH should be removed from the acquisition boundary in the Master Plan Update.

III. Discussion of Neighborhood Needs and Concerns

Discussion continued in regard to neighborhood itself. The following questions and concerns were highlighted:

Campus Social Organizations

- Residents would like to be a part of the discussion early on when fraternities or other organizations relocate into their neighborhood. They usually don't know anything is

about to happen until a rezoning or other request goes before the Planning Commission.

- Smaller organizations cannot afford to buy into campus space which forces them out into the neighborhoods (EDR may be able to address some of this by including space within the new residence halls for some of the smaller organizations.)
- There are continued problems with de facto Frat Houses being established off campus by groups of students from the same fraternity renting all of the rooms in one house.
- There is a large frustration with fraternities or other social organizations being kicked off campus. They just take up residence in the surrounding neighborhoods, bringing all of their problems with them.

Lessons from the Track Construction Project

- The intensity of use along the edges of campus needs to be kept low. Both inside and outside the boundary. There needs to be a soft transition from on-campus to off-campus. There is the worry that the intensity will grow even more than it is now.
- The adjacent residents had no idea how the enormous scoreboard, the lighting and the blaring speakers would affect their neighborhood until it was in place. There are continued problems with sound levels being too high and lasting well beyond the timeframe of the event. (The example used was of the repetitive announcement used at track meets that makes residents cringe – “Will the people in and around the track please sit down.”)
- There should be a phone number like the 311 system that residents could call after hours when problems occur, such as when the lights are left on all night. There needs to be dedicated staff to solving after hours problems.
- The neighborhood has not been put back to its original condition before construction. There is still notable damage to trees, curbs and pavement due to construction traffic.

Other General Issues

- What about policy issues outside the realm of physical buildings surrounding UK such as student behavior, parking, and maintenance? Will these be a part of the planning process?
- We don’t know all the questions right now, will there be future opportunities to have input? (There are more meetings scheduled later in the process. There will also be a newsletter and website for information and feedback purposes as well as a UK staff member acting as a liaison between the project and the neighborhoods.)
- What will the process be of keeping up with initiatives beyond the Master Plan? Will UK maintain an interest in the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods once the plan is complete?
- How are we contacting people about these neighborhood meetings? Can we attend all of them in order to hear other perspectives? (They are currently being organized through the Neighborhood Associations. Meetings and meeting minutes will also be posted on the website. An e-mail list will be started using meeting sign-in sheets.)
- Will the information and ideas that Omar Blaik formulated be used in this Master Plan, such as the lack of services within walking distance of South Campus?
- Is the University open to mixed use along University Avenue?
- There is a lack of affordable housing for students directly adjacent to campus. Will the new residence hall plan address this? Can the university do anything about the high rents close to campus?

- Is the University participating in local planning discussion concerning infill and redevelopment?
- Improvements to the main approaches to campus along Woodland, Euclid and Columbia should be part of the Master Plan.
- There are continued problems with parking that need to be addressed.
- Safety of bicyclists is also a problem. When service trucks park along Columbia Avenue with deliveries for the fraternity houses, it creates a hazard for cars and cyclists. This happens often and the trucks are often 18 wheelers. The trucks have also hit parked cars along this street on several occasions.
- Bike paths that are in place are being used regularly, however, they don't connect. This leaves several places where safety is a concern, such as along Woodland Avenue.
- A dedicated bike path from campus to downtown would be well used and should be considered. A suggestion would be to dedicate half the width of Martin Luther King Boulevard to bikes.
- Thought needs to go into what is an acceptable transition zone. Guidelines should be put in place that take into consideration the height of structures, density of use, light and noise.
- Are there plans to acquire Wildcat Market or other small businesses adjacent to Campus? (Not at this time. Separate meetings will be held with adjacent businesses in order for them to voice concerns as well)

Positive Feedback

- CH residents would like to thank UK Facility Planning for responding to their request to look into the condition of the sidewalk that extends into their neighborhood from campus.

Minutes prepared by Judy Needham.
These are intended to be a record of the general issues discussed and are not meant to be a quotation of any individual(s) attending the meeting.

cc: All attendees