

Affordable Housing in Faith Communities

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #1

Wednesday, October 3, 2018

11:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

1900 SW 4th Ave, 7th Floor, Room 7A

Attendees: Lisa Miles (Metro), Deb Meihoff (Communitas Planning), Jan Elfers (Ecumenical Ministries of OR (EMO)), Stephen Himes (BES), Patricia Neighbor (PBOT), Sushma Raghavan (Unite Oregon), Damian Crowder (Prosper Portland), Marguerite Feuersanger (BDS), Matt Wickstrom (BDS), Ed McNamara (Turtle Island Development), Caitlin Burke (Joint Office of Homeless Services), Emily Benoit (PHB), Shawn Wood (BPS), Travis Phillips (PCRI), Nick Sauvie (ROSE CDC), Nan Stark (BPS), Leslie Lum (BPS), Samuel Garcia (BPS), Jena Hughes (BPS)

Project overview, purpose, outcomes

Goals and Outcomes

- Create momentum for concept
- Serve as model
- Set stage for ongoing projects
- Continuum of housing needs
- Bring together faith communities
- Select 3-5 sites
- Create Guidebook
- Identify process roadblocks; streamline them

Project Milestones

- Site selection criteria and application
- Outreach
- Faith community forums
- Site selection
- Design and feasibility analysis
- Revisions to Zoning code and other regulations/ streamline process

Role of SAC

- Input on criteria
- Faith forum
- Technical expertise
- Outreach expertise
- Guidebook

Housing Continuum

Different stages of housing on faith-owned land:

Homeless shelters → RVs → Pods → Permanent affordable housing structures

Opportunities for land banking

Forum and resource fair

EMO is organizing this event, inviting all 435 faith organizations in the city.

Thursday, November 15

6:30 – 8:30 pm

Grace Memorial Episcopal Church; Pastor: Martin Elfert

1535 NE 17th Ave/Weidler

Invitations have not been sent yet. Aim to send out next week via email and some by US mail.

Forum will have panel discussion of experts + resource fair. Would be good to have some SAC members there as resources and to answer questions.

Jan has reached out to:

- Evangelical
- African-American churches
- Interfaith (Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh, Hindu)
- Immigrant and faith communities

Some challenges: Mistrust of City government. Community wants to have examples of models. In conversation with pastor at Portsmouth Union Church- could be used as a model.

Portsmouth barriers: Signalization of intersection on Lombard expensive. Needing to add more bathrooms for the expected occupancy.

- Miracles Club – creative model for financing. Land and building have different owners.
- Marguerite: Will do a search in the permit system and compile list of faith orgs that have projects in the pipeline.
- Patricia: Look at non-profits as well? Could be other examples. Artists Repertory Theatre on SW 15th/Alder doing AH project– opportunity to look at other non-profits

Criteria for site selection for consultant work

Potential site criteria:

- Location
 - Opportunity area
 - Geographic diversity. At least 1 in East Portland. At least 1 in inner NE/SE?
 - Centers and corridors
- Land availability
- Size of project. Min number of units? Open to SF houses?
- Diversity of housing types and populations served
- Level of difficulty – expensive, site characteristics (intersection improvements, etc.)
- Zoning – over half of faith sites are SF zones
- Diversity of faith communities (non-Christian)
- Vulnerability score
- Replicable as a case study
- Readiness of congregation – wealth, capacity (technical knowledge)
- Opportunities for collaboration – multiple congregations near each other

Discussion

- Caitlin: Would these criteria be a point system? Or are these minimum requirements? Harder to meet all these points. Minimum or max number of criteria met?
- Shawn: More non-city staff should be selecting sites for transparency and additional input. Conditional use congregations should have letter of support from NA to gauge neighborhood support

Conditional Use (CU):

- Marguerite: Pre-screening of potential sites: look at site history. Does the site already have a conditional use on record that requires certain amount of parking? Is there nearby parking that can be shared (e.g. grocery store)? Size doesn't matter as much (SF vs. MF). Conditional use (CU) is uncertain and early process.
- Travis: For those who need conditional use, there is opportunity to use this grant project to ensure they don't get stuck in that process. Determine some ways to smooth this process.
- Stephen: Pick a couple of these 3-5 sites to go through the CU process to test it out. Would be costly.
- Ed: I avoid CU. I wouldn't encourage anyone to commit to that because it's so uncertain. Don't pick ones that need CU. If they're not ready, I wouldn't look at anything else. We can't wait. We want to get something done and want success. Other criteria are good, but don't add too many more. AH is tough. Adds to more uncertainty and delay. Need some indication from congregation that they have land. What are plans to replace parking. Leadership. Community support. Letter of intent from them that says something like, "If you help us with design, financing options, we would proceed".
- Stephen: Make them explain what their decision-making structure is and express that they're ready to go and excited.
- Ed: Need ways to protect churches. They should be holding onto land. Should have potential to get money off it. Developers can take advantage.
- Matt: Water and sewer service can be a huge expense (ex: Agape Village is far from street). Look into RLUIPA (Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act) If AH is part of their mission, what requirements can the City put in place to achieve that mission? We should go through that and see what it means. Could be exemption or basis of why exemption is put in place.
- Travis: Is there a preferred income bracket for AH? Lisa: Everything's on the table right now. We want input on this.
- Is there prop tax abatement for Faith orgs that they wouldn't need to utilize other tax exemptions. Improvements would still be taxed.
- Caitlin: Look at who already has relationships with culturally-specific orgs. Pushback against neighborhood support being a requirement. It would be great, but we just really need to build housing, though it depends on the situation.
- Ed: Waivers for 60 MFI or below. Property tax abatement
- Emily: Like Housing bond there should be categories. Must be in a certain zone before it can move to the next stage. Set up basic minimum qualifications, such as legal proof that you can even sell your land. Must be at a certain level of vulnerability. Must meet these points, but here are some other desired qualifications. At least a committee of 5 people/dedicated staff person. Registered 5013c?
- Travis: couple step process for approval. Capacity and expertise. Don't want them to go through huge hoops just for an app.

- Ed: Churches need pre-develop. Can cost a couple million dollars for plans even before construction. They have land, not money. Start a pool from PHB for prep costs? Long term: Liaison at City to help them figure out the process and help them make informed decisions. The developer is often imperfect agent. This is saving City money to build this housing.
- Shawn: Does vulnerability matter? Could draw people from other parts of city to areas that are high opportunity.
 - o Emily: Vulnerability measures displacement so people can continue living in their neighborhoods.
- Ed: leave centers/corridors off. Can't move the church. Leave off opportunities for collaboration. This sometimes creates more complexity. Don't want to give points for that. Size of project – larger better. Focus on financial feasibility, though maybe not at this stage of the process. "Replicable" – I'm not sure we can judge on this criteria point.
- Travis: hesitant about requiring meeting all or most. Weight things more than others. Readiness is important. I want to be flexible on other things. Inner NE Portland not particularly vulnerable, but we know that a lot of displacement has happened there.
- Patricia: Will the site need transportation requirements? Sidewalk corridor provided? Could be very expensive, like a signalized intersection. Admin Rule 1.22 – City won't require replacement. I like idea of centers/corridors. If right on Corridor, likely that they'll need to replace sidewalk corridor. Look at proximity to corridor. If it's right on the corridor it will be more expensive. Look at proximity to destinations. Walk/bike/etc to locations.
- Deb: Is there a way to test out figure out the zoning issue, but not through this site selection process? Don't want projects to fail but this is an opportunity to make changes to code, etc.
- Marguerite: Use us [BDS] as advisors for selecting sites
- Ed: Most important thing is to get successes in this first round. Idea: If churches need CU, they can sell their single-family land to developers and use that money collectively to build something new.
- Stephen: We [BES] could find red flags, development roadblocks (soil, etc.)
 - o Patricia/Stephen/Marguerite/Matt could workshop some sites
- Patricia: Equity – Less infrastructure in areas with more vulnerable POP

Outreach:

- Emily: How are we doing outreach to get apps? Website? Equity is important. Application in multiple languages, available in paper and online.
- Matt: OMF's project on safe places to park for faith-based. I can find out their list of who they reached out to and how they did outreach.

Next steps

Forum:

Thursday, November 15th, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Grace Memorial Episcopal Church, 1535 NE 17th Ave, Portland, OR 97232

Nan will contact City staff and one or two others in attendance about speaking on the panel for the presentation part of the forum. All SAC members are invited to table at the resource fair.