

MINUTES OF ALLINGTOWN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
Notre Dame High School
May 21, 2019

Members Present: Ron Quagliani, Chris Suggs, Robbin Watt Hamilton, Lou Annino, Kevin Vine, and Kathy Weilk. Staff Present: Fred Messore and Dave Killeen.

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

1. Call to Order, Welcome

2. Discussion of April 1 Community Workshop

- a. Review of Summary Notes from Small Group Sessions
- b. Steering Committee Input on Small Group Sessions

Initially, the Steering Committee began reviewing the report of Small Group Sessions from the April 1 Community Workshop. Mr. Vine and Mr. Suggs, who participated in Group #1 addressing “Commercial Redevelopment”, discussed the small group session and commented that many of the suggestions made during the session were to:

- Encourage more vibrant public activities as a draw to the neighborhood.
- They clarified that the comment on “Signage” was to suggest that there should be better identification and more way finding signs for Allingtown.
- The library could be repurposed to provide art space.
- There was discussion of the need for better traffic calming and safer pedestrian crossings
- It was suggested that maybe a walk-over bridge could be created at some point. Committee member Annino pointed out that studies show that walk-over bridges must be designed to make pedestrian travel easier, or people won’t use them. For example, if students have to go up and down stairs, they may take a direct route across the street if it is easier. Mr. Annino said that the University had identified a potential location for such a bridge near Campbell and First Avenue to a future parking garage. The bridge would need to be ADA accessible, possible with an elevator.
- Mr. Vine suggested the use of rental electric scooters to enable students and UNH employees to easily travel around campus and to other parts of the City.

- It was reported that the State of CT has created a program called “UPass” which provides access to the train system for enrolled students.
- Participants wondered if there could be tax incentives for small businesses in this area. Mr. Messore stated that there are no current incentives of this type from the City, though a large portion of Allingtown, North of Route 1 is in the State’s Opportunity Zone program

After some discussion, Committee members noted they were generally comfortable with the summaries of each small group session as they were presented. Rather than spending time at this meeting to review these reports further, the Committee preferred to discuss goals for the Allingtown Plan, based on what they had heard during the workshop.

3. What Are Some Goals the Committee Would Recommend for the Allingtown Plan?

Mr. Killeen had circulated a summary of ideas from the workshop, titled “Possible Goals/Strategies for Allingtown Plan”.

Mr. Annino stated that one of his major goals was to address Housing, Blight, and Absentee Landlords. He feels this is an enforcement issue and that landlords need to be held accountable to keep housing stock safe and up to code. He is concerned about the safety of students who live off campus. He believes landlord registration and inspection programs can be an effective way to monitor and improve housing conditions. Mr. Quagliani commented that he has seen such programs work in other communities successfully, and he believes the programs can be supported with the revenues from inspections. He noted New Haven as one community that uses a program of this type (“Livable Cities”). He also reported that the City of West Haven had started a program of this type in the past, and he wondered what had happened with it. Building Official Frank Gladwin should be able to provide some history of this program. A Task Force was formed at the time, including the Police Dept. and the Fire Marshal. It was noted that Hamden also has a licensing program.

Mr. Messore commented that he understood the program was generating about \$25,000 when it was operating, but it was not enough money to staff the program. Mr. Killeen stated that we could check with the CT Conference of Municipalities for a report on such programs to see how they are funded and the cost of their inspection fees.

Ms. Watt Hamilton commented that Yale New Haven Hospital offers a Home Ownership Promotion Program in New Haven where they will provide funds to encourage employees to live in the neighborhoods around their hospital. She would like to see them consider a similar program for West Haven since Yale is now having more of a presence in West Haven.

There was discussion about Marginal Drive. Committee members agreed that a greenway along Marginal Drive was an important goal for the Allingtown Plan.

There was discussion of the possible use of parking zones for Allingtown. It was noted that this would require the creation of a parking authority, similar to the one in New Haven.

Mr. Annino stated that the University has conceptual plans for locating UNH parking on the perimeter areas of campus and locating structured parking at some point near the center of the campus.

Re: Community Facilities and other topics for the Allingtown plan, Mr. Messoro reported that:

- The status of the library is status quo. He believes the facility may not be functioning to its full capacity. He noted that a community center at the Blake Building might have more attraction.
- There are some structural issues at the Fire House on Admiral Street, and he knows that there are some volunteer groups using the Admiral Street and Fairfax Street stations.
- The State Opportunity Zone may be an important program to promote development north of Route 1.
- He envisions a potential new corridor along Derby Avenue promoting biomedical and research uses, building on areas such as Science Park in New Haven and the universities in the area. Mr. Annino agreed that it would be beneficial to UNH to have access to research laboratory space (approx. 300 to 1000 sf in size). Mr. Messoro would like to see some of the larger tracts of land utilized now for used car dealerships to be considered for this kind of use in the future.

4. Next Steps – Next Meeting Date(s)

It was decided that staff should spend some time researching these areas of interest further during the summer and be prepared to come back with some preliminary suggestions for consideration by the Steering Committee in the early fall.

Adjournment

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM