

CTM Special Meeting Minutes

7:00 PM

July 25, 2011

Clifton Recreation Center

Meeting Called to Order:

The special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Clifton Town Meeting was called to order on July 25, 2011 at 7:06 PM at the Clifton Recreation Center at 320 McAlpin Avenue, by Trustee Karen Imbus, who chaired the meeting.

Trustees in attendance for the meeting: Bob Blum, Eric Clark, Brian Curwin, Bill Fant, Linda Goldenhar, Christian Huelsman, Karen Imbus, Malcolm Montgomery, Jeff Rose, Pete Schneider, and Mary Jo Vesper. The presence of a quorum is duly noted.

Karen provided a brief intro for the evening including the history of how tonight's evening came about. She then asked for attendees from other organizations to introduce themselves.

Attendees included, but were not limited to: Steve Schuckman (Superintendent, Parks); Andrea Henderson (Project Manager, Transportation and Engineering); John Ashton (Riddle Road Market); Sally Larsen (CUF Board); Sharon Buckner (CUF Board); Daniel Lewis (CUF Board); Rolf Coon (former CUF Board); Gayle Prager (former CUF Board); Alice Connor (King and Clifton Edge House), Donna Emerson (University Heights Neighborhood Association); and many residents of CUF and Clifton neighborhoods.

Andrea Henderson then walked through a PowerPoint presentation. She is the Project Manager for the West MLK improvement project and has been involved in several meetings with the community. Her PowerPoint presentation included many slides from her previous presentations as well as new slides for the special meeting. The original mock-ups contained a number of options, including 4 options to improve the "S-curve" and 10 options for the MLK Ave./Clifton Ave. intersection. In the initial planning stage, her committee met with communities and asked them for their concerns. The proposed project was then created within the confines of those concerns and to support the Purpose and Need approved by ODOT. The overarching Purpose and Need statement was used as guideline going forward. Project goals were a compilation of community input and requirements set forth by the City's engineering staff. All goals had to relate back to the Purpose and Need otherwise they were not included.

The final plan calls for the S-curve to be widened by holding the south line and widening the north line at the expense of 30 structures scheduled to be razed. For MLK east of Dixmyth, the project calls for the continuation of the side mixed use path, but for no change to the roadway. Finally, the most difficult portion of the project was the MLK Ave./Clifton Ave. intersection. The plan calls for flattening the radii on all four corners in order to make the pedestrian islands much larger. The committee also worked to maintain the parking lot behind the building on the NW corner of the intersection. The revised plan no longer calls for widening

MLK at the expense of land from Burnet Woods. Brookline Ave.'s connection with MLK will become a right-in/right-out only intersection. The revised plan also calls for extending the left turn lane from MLK Ave. to Clifton Ave. due to the no left turn from MLK Ave. onto Brookline Ave. Ms. Henderson noted that the landscaping at the corner of Burnet Woods will be relocated due to the rounding of the northeast corner of the MLK Ave. and Clifton Ave. intersection. The mixed use path running along the north side of MLK will run between two tree lines in order to set it off somewhat from the roadway. It will be 12 feet wide and be located anywhere from six to 24 feet from the roadway.

Project Timeline: The preferred alternative was scheduled to be completed Summer 2010 with design completion to occur in late 2011. As of Spring 2011, 70% of the design had been completed. Property acquisition along the north side of MLK Ave. will begin in 2011 and finish in 2013. Final plans are due to be completed Summer 2013 with the bid and award due in Winter 2013. Construction is slated to begin in 2014.

Ms. Henderson then opened up the room to questions. L. Goldenhar asked about the mixed use path. Ms. Henderson replied that ODOT is planning to install a mixed use path up to Dixmyth Avenue, and the City of Cincinnati plans to continue this path along the north side of MLK up to Burnet Woods. C. Huelsman asked about the height of the mixed use path in relation to the roadway. Ms. Henderson stated that it will be the same height as the roadway. Total cost of the project is estimated to be \$11 million with \$3.5 million for right of ways and \$7 million for construction. B. Blum expressed concern over the long left turn lane from MLK Ave. to Clifton Ave. Ms. Henderson stated that this was necessary in order to not cut into the park (the dual left hand turn lane would have required about one third of an acre of Burnet Woods). Thus, their only option was to extend the storage length of the lane. The turn signal has been timed about as well as it can be for traffic flow, but it will be reviewed again after the project is complete. C. Huelsman asked about traffic totals for each roadway. Ms. Henderson stated that in the morning, MLK Ave. eastbound traffic is heaviest, and in the afternoon, MLK Ave. westbound traffic is the heaviest. Clifton Ave.'s traffic is fairly constant throughout the day. Total daily traffic is approximately 30,000 vehicles for MLK Ave. and 25,000 on Clifton Ave. Most traffic engineering projects are designed to look ahead 10 to 20 years. Ms. Henderson stated that there may be a slight increase in traffic over the coming years due to additional development in Uptown. K. Imbus asked if straightening MLK Ave.'s approach to Clifton Ave. would help with the left turn issues onto Clifton Ave. Ms. Henderson said that the intersection is currently at capacity and are unsure whether straightening would help. The department also cannot predict what will happen when Hopple interchange is changed. Audience member Rolf Coon asked if something could be done about the downhill speeding at Riddle Road and potentially installing a traffic light at the top of Probasco Street. Ms. Henderson said that her office could look into it. She also stated that the Riddle Road and MLK Ave. intersection would remain not have restricted left turns. An audience member stated that she chose to live in the city due to the number of parks and expressed concern about any land being taken from Burnet Woods. Ms. Henderson stated that the revised plans minimized the amount of Burnet Woods being used for the project. The previous plan called for taking one third of an acre. Steve Schuckman from the Parks Board stated that they had heard the community's concerns and also worked to minimize the impact. The amount of land

taken will be very minimal, and the landscaping will be relocated with a sign. B. Blum asked if the MLK Ave. park entrance was still planned to be realigned with Dixmyth Ave. Mr. Schuckman stated that the project has been cancelled for now. Ms. Henderson stated that the amount of land being taken has decreased from 10,000 square feet to 2,000 square feet, which includes a portion of land taken on the south side of MLK from U.C. (which belongs to the Park as well). M. Montgomery asked if it was possible to give additional land to the Parks to mitigate the loss of 2,000 square feet. Ms. Henderson said that Burnet Woods is constricted, but that some green space has been given back to the city in the past. For example, green space along MLK Ave. has been given to Parks. Mr. Schuckman said that for any project, they try to have no net loss in green space. For this project specifically, the new sign, new landscaping, and pedestrian safety are an exchange for the loss of land. He added that over 3,000 square feet of green space has been added along Ludlow Ave. An audience member asked about what would be done with the newly created open land along MLK Ave.'s north side. M. Henderson stated that there were two options: to give the smaller pieces of land back to the property owners or to turn it into green space. Due to the slope of the land and desire to minimize the number of driveways, the most likely outcome will be green space. M. Montgomery expressed concern about the Forum's interest in taking some of the land on the north side. Ms. Henderson stated that driveway restrictions would most likely curb that interest. City architect Jack Martin stated that a pier wall will be in place along the north side of road to support both the road and the sidewalk. A 3:1 grade will be in place after that with engineered fill and there will not be any driveways entering the north side of MLK Ave. except for Clifton Colony. C. Huelsman asked about what would be done with the space on either side of the mixed use path. Ms. Hendsen said that the City is not in the business of owning land and said that they would love for the parks to take over ownership and maintenance. C. Huelsman also asked about railing being installed where drastic slope drop-offs occur. M. Henderson said that railings would be in place along certain sections. An audience member asked about the southwest corner of Clifton Ave. and MLK Ave. and if anything was planned for the area. Ms. Henderson stated that Good Samaritan could keep the building in use for an indeterminate amount of time. Audience member Rob Neel, President of CUF, asked about any potential tree loss with the project. Ms. Henderson stated that any lost trees would be replaced. An audience member asked about how the construction project for the I-75/Hopple interchange would be coordinated with the MLK Ave. realignment project. Ms. Henderson stated that ODOT and the City will be coordinating. ODOT will most likely go first. Ms. Henderson said it will then be up to the contractor to determine the best area to start and stop with the project. There will be some traffic disruption as ODOT will restrict traffic to one lane both ways during the project. She said that the City will most likely try to build at the same time to minimize the time of traffic disruption. She also noted that the grade of the mixed use path would be ADA compliant.

K. Imbus asked about the possibility of a scramble intersection for the MLK Ave./Clifton Ave. intersection. Ms. Henderson said that she was not familiar with the concept until she spoke with Michael Burrill. She explained that intersections are usually all red lights for only 2-3 seconds, but that a scramble intersection holds all red lights for 30 seconds or so to allow pedestrians to cross in multiple directions. She said that she loves different ideas, but the volume of traffic at this intersection will not allow for a scramble intersection. Another

alternative considered was raised crosswalks to keep pedestrians higher. However, this idea did not make it into the final plan. An audience member asked if there had been any pedestrians killed or injured in the intersection. Ms. Henderson stated that there had been no fatalities. Audience member Gayle Connor asked about the temporary easement for construction around the ministry house. Ms. Henderson stated that construction equipment may need to be parked there temporarily and could be there for up to 12 months after the project is complete. The parking lot will then be rebuilt.

An audience member asked about the possibility of getting a traffic light installed at the top of Riddle Road, as traffic from the west makes it hard to exit via a left hand turn. Another audience member asked about potentially installing a warning sign or flashing light for drivers traveling eastbound on MLK Ave. Andrea said that her department had previously looked into a traffic light, but it hindered traffic more than helping. An audience member commented that it was great to keep the Riddle intersection open in all directions as the closure of McMicken will put pressure on Riddle Road. Ms. Henderson agreed. Another audience member stated that the intersection is dangerous due to bushes at the corner blocking lines of sight. Uptown had previously redone the corner and cut the bushes back, but it needs to be done again. An audience member asked if there were any meetings planned with ODOT to discuss the Hopple interchange. Ms. Henderson said that she believe meetings with the community were now finished, as the stage three plans for the project had arrived at her office a few weeks ago. Ms. Henderson recommended calling the project's director directly. Audience member Tom Ashton stated that the extra traffic on Marshall and Riddle will need some help. He asked if a flashing light with a 25 MPH speed limit sign could be installed to help the dangerous intersection. Andrea said they could look into that independently. C. Huelsman asked if cost savings within the MLK realignment project could be used for the Riddle Road light. Ms. Henderson said that some scope creep had already raised expenses (e.g. the mixed use path being moved between the two tree lines and taking over some of the project originally slated under ODOT). She stated that they are probably slightly over budget now and would use every penny.

Audience member Dan Ames asked about the 30 plus structures that would need to be razed and if the number of total housing units to be lost was known. Ms. Henderson stated that a total of 110 units would be lost but that the units were only at about 75% occupancy. Mr. Ames asked about replacing the lost units. Ms. Henderson said that relocation of the misplaced individuals is part of the project. The city architect stated that the businesses in and around Clifton were the second largest job center in city, including the hospitals and U.C. With the growth of these institutions, an increase in automobile traffic was inevitable. An audience member asked if any historic buildings would be razed. Ms. Henderson stated that none would be razed. B. Blum asked if any of the buildings currently had orders to be razed. Ms. Henderson said that she did not believe any currently were scheduled. An audience member asked if there were other ways to increase safety on MLK Ave. Ms. Henderson said the changes will bring the roadway up to 35 MPH standards and the removal of onstreet parking would also help to increase safety.

Brad said that ODOT is also building a mixed use path from Central Parkway to West MLK. The MLK Ave. realignment project will extend the mixed use path up to Clifton Avenue. There are also discussions within the city to extend the mixed use path even further, but there are currently no funds. It's part of the City's plan to improve bike access citywide. L. Goldenhar asked if the master bike plan could be seen by the public. Brad said they are currently working closely with the public to complete it. M. Montgomery asked about the line of trees in front of the mixed use path potentially creating safety issues with the path being hidden from public view from MLK Ave. The city architect stated that the lighted sidewalk will stay as an alternative. Ms. Henderson added that there is a wetlands designated area that they must avoid building on so not much of the mixed use path would actually be hidden behind the tree land. L. Goldenhar asked if people would be able to bike on the sidewalk. Ms. Henderson said yes. C. Huelsman asked if portions of the mixed use path could be lighted. Ms. Henderson said she could look into it, but reminded the audience that the project is currently over budget.

Announcements: Next Meeting August 1, 2011 at 7:00 PM at the Clifton Recreation Center

Meeting Adjourned 8:22 PM

Respectfully submitted: Jeff Rose, Secretary