

NOTES OFF THE WALL

Ludlow 21 Working Group Public Meeting – January 20, 2015

Public Services Conference Room, 1115 Bates Avenue, 6-8 pm

Eye Candy Creative Presentation, Janet Berberich, Ben Jason Neal and Christie: Clifton has received an award for 40 hours of free consultation re: branding and marketing strategies. The community will determine the use of those hours. Typical process begins with conversation with residents and businesses to establish common, cohesive goals and viewpoint. Questions: What do we call ourselves? What are we, were we, could we be? (Some descriptives were “historic, cool, cozy, warm, hip, multicultural, eclectic, solid old houses, character of depth.” The resulting brand creates a new, fresh voice that we use to tell the rest of the world what we have to offer.

The people who are drawn to live and work in Clifton define this place. What is the “feeling” of being in Clifton? Magnify the positive aspects, focus on the positive “destinations” while the rest of things pull up into alignment.

Branding can be accomplished in just a few months. The entire process includes:

Phase 1 – Prelaunch work with conversations and consensus building, creation of a baseline marketing plan, social media planning, design of brand materials. Note: The greatest challenge is establishing cohesion, and convening participants is key to success.

Phase 2 – Launch of Marketing plan and brand, including social media messaging

Phase 3 – Get feedback, measure results. Assess effectiveness, work beyond baseline plans

Clifton Gaslight (as a place to reside) and Ludlow Avenue (as a business district) have two distinct identities, but this is common. Other neighborhoods that Eye Candy has worked with (OTR, Corryville) have this situation. Branding is a joint activity between residents and businesses.

Jan Checco will organize interested residents and businesses to join in conversation with Eye Candy pros during the coming month.

Subcommittee Reports

Parking: The big illuminated sign is coming to the Merchants Lot in April 2015. Smaller panels will be mounted on poles along Clifton Avenue directing cars into Howell Avenue. Banks were contacted about use of their parking lots after business hours. US Bank has agreed to allow parking 6 pm – 6 am, US Fidelity is a “maybe” and PNC said “No.” Valet Parking for the entire business district will be made available with the station still on Telford in front of LaPoste. Police, Traffic and Engineering Dept. are looking at how this might impact traffic flow, and are looking at the request to position a sign at Ludlow and Telford when service is operating. Discussions about the valet using the IGA lot for parked cars. In this case, free public parking in the lot will no longer be allowed, pushing more business to the Merchants Lot.

Aesthetics/Signage: This is a delicate subject, asking for improvements. The subcommittee members are studying the Form Based Code Urban Overlay documents to begin setting a standard for new businesses as they move onto Ludlow Avenue. Building owners will need to know of these standards to help renters avoid mistakes in types of signage, etc. Aesthetic improvements are on the business owner, not the building owner, says CBPA President Scott Crawford. He also says that City money (\$77,5000) has been available for matching funds (1/2) for façade improvements. His business “Live at the Ludlow Garage” is using \$15,000 for the their new décor. Signs and logos are not included in this opportunity. Approval for funding has to come before spending, and many businesses are not willing to do the paper work. Help is available for filling out applications at Uptown Consortium.

Marketing: Discussions with Eye Candy will begin next week as we benefit from the 40 hours of pro bono advice. We will ask for 6 month and 12 month proposals with their respective costs, and seek sponsor money within our community to engage this kind of service. Community Calendar streamlining for all businesses and organizations will be pursued. Esquire Theatre/Restaurant pairings will be discussed, with film themes matching cuisine. Keeping an eye on discussions concerning the development of Burnet Woods.

Development: Organization of our preferences as a community is crucial. We want to be prepared to engage developers. There is a contract existing between Jack Brand and CBPA for purchase of Jack's 4 lots between the Merchants Lot west boundary and Ormond Street. Its duration is until June 2015. CBPA owns the central parcel in the land on offer, and will be a key player in any deal. The Merchants Lot land is zoned for business, Brand's lots currently are Single Family (SF – 4). The height of buildings has been established for the entire block, though variances can be sought depending on design preferences. If the Clifton Market campaign to purchase the building is unsuccessful, developers have expressed avid interest in acquiring it. A grocery store can be included in the mixed-use program of an eventual development. An audience member observed that CTM has historically opposed new development, but believes that new building = new life to the Ludlow corridor. The thing that makes this development different than others in the past is that it is community-concerned, and not just about one business. Another audience member who has recently attended 20 community council meetings around Cincinnati noted that all but one had development plans on their agendas.

Ludlow 21 Survey online:

A survey for gathering business and residents' opinions about development and the current state of Ludlow Avenue will be posted online at the end of this evening's meeting. The address is surveymonkey.com/s/ludlow21survey Results will be compiled and shared at the February 17 public meeting, 6-8 pm at the Clifton Rec Center Community Room. Also planned for next meeting: Burnet Woods discussion by Len Thomas and Frank Russell, an update about parking and marketing work.