

Beecher Terrace Quarterly Consulting Parties Meeting 11, March 4, 2021

Welcome & Intro (*Cynthia*) – Verna Goatley is present tonight and Cynthia will add her to the email list for future meetings. Cynthia reviewed purpose of the quarterly meetings and a map showing areas of discussion. Jecorey Arthur, Metro Council Member for District 4 is also present.

Baxter Community Center (*Megan O’Hara/UDA*)

John explained the community input process. Settled on ideas and preliminary designs; met with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Cynthia since the last Consulting Party (CP) meeting. Moving forward nicely. Working on gap funding.

Megan walked through the presentation slides detailing the project: Replace Old Walnut St. Park, make improvements to Baxter Square Park (future project), Preserving the Baxter Community Center, and new recreational facilities/activities, taking into consideration what other amenities would be on-site at Beecher Terrace (pool for residents, play equipment for young children, community rooms in 450 Roy Wilkins Building, etc.). In the fall, Choice staff & UDA met with eight stakeholder groups which included 35+ organizations. Building on previous *Vision Russell* work and created inventory of what recreational amenities and facilities are already in surrounding area. Goal is to not duplicate but to create amenities within close distance to all parts of Russell. Phase IV of Waterfront Park will be in close proximity to the new housing at Beecher Terrace.

The result of community feedback was the creation of two visions; the first has recreational uses on the former Porter Paints site and BCC would become an art, cultural and historic center. The second restores the Baxter Community Center (BCC) to an active recreational center. Based on community surveys/feedback, there was a clear preference for the second vision. This requires an addition to the BCC building and opens space at the former Porter Paints site for a large pavilion with indoor/outdoor space for events, a larger mixed-use building and other park amenity options.

Megan explained the depth of the required renovation (new roof, HVAC, ramp, elevator, stair egress to each level). These are value added and makes the space more usable and enjoyable. Other changes include removing soffits in lower level to allow more light to enter through windows, remove internal walls at grade level that aren’t loadbearing, add Wi-Fi throughout the building and surrounding space, renovate internal spaces, open up the front entry and create a check-in area.

The addition will be diminutive and include a new point of entry with a check-in desk. The original staircase at the front of the building will be more of a social gathering place. Open basement concept with lounge and classrooms. Gymnasium would be the same size it is currently, which is not regulation size.

On the park-facing facade of BCC the public restrooms could be renovated and improved to make them safe and accessible. The current mural could be restored or a circulating artist/mural program could be created. The new addition could also have an entry that faces Baxter Park. The existing playground at Baxter Park needs to be removed due to inconsistency of use for that property. Proposing a new upgraded playground on the site around BCC, a parking area with accessible spaces and preserving one of the existing basketball courts. In January, we met with Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office. They also had a strong preference of the second vision because it respects and highlights the original historic structure.

The Porter Paints site offers a clean and large site for recreational amenities. It also has a potential partnership opportunity for a mixed-use building (such as retail, community space, active uses, offices, with a parking lot entering off Muhammad Ali Boulevard. Could create an event plaza in between the mixed-use building and the indoor/outdoor pavilion. Could be used as market space, for food trucks, events such as Beecher Terrace Day, family reunions, public restrooms, etc. A soccer and football field for youth under 12 will replace the one that was previously located at Old Walnut Park. There could be opportunities for viewing areas, additional parking off 13th St and new crosswalks at both street intersections coming from BT, multi-use sports court (i.e. tennis), and other active uses such as a spray pad (relocated from Baxter Square Park), walking trails, community garden opportunities, etc.

Initial cost estimate for Baxter Community Center expansion and renovation is approximately \$11,615,000, and \$8,005,000 for Porter Paints site which includes an estimated \$4,320,000 for a mixed-use building, (a potential partnership opportunity) and \$3,685,000 for other park features.

Next steps – follow up with SHPO this month, final grading at Porter Paints site in April, secure gap funding and finalize construction drawings in the Spring 2021, begin construction in Summer 2021, with a projected grand opening of the new park in Spring 2022, and the renovated and expanded BCC opening in the fall 2022.

Question: What is the size of the Porter Paints site?

Response: 5.74 acres

Question: Can Wi-Fi be added to Baxter Square Park?

Response: Yes.

Question: What is funding gap amount?

Response: Total project cost is currently projected to be \$22,230,000 - all but ~\$3M is identified, as we anticipate the mixed-use developer partner providing some of the mixed-use building costs. LMHA submitted a grant application to the James Graham Brown Foundation on March 1. Hope to have a decision by their board meeting on May 18.

Question: Have any baseball related facilities come up since the historical park had reference to that.

Response: It came up but not as much as replacing the little league football with soccer as option. A batting cage could be fitted into the current vision. As plans are refined, conceptual drawings will be developed into working drawings and UDA can make these kinds of tweaks.

Cynthia – we still need to do the DOE so at our June Consulting Party meeting we will have a face-to-face meeting as required for the Programmatic Agreement, but this was a way to have you start thinking about it. In the meantime, send any questions to Cynthia and she will direct to Megan and LMHA.

John – project website link is on the front page of the VR website. There will be periodic updates to this website as we move forward.

Project Updates on Demolition (Ashley) - Phase III is the last phase of demolition at Beecher Terrace and is almost complete. Only two buildings are left to demolish and weather permitting, they will be razed within 2 mos.

Beecher Phase 1 Residential (Ashley) – Residents are continuing to move in the 450 Roy Wilkins Building. Photos were shared with the group: aerial of Phases, and closeups within Phase I and II buildings. Phase I has a craft room, visiting doctor’s office, library, salon, resident liaison office, and a sitting room for community gatherings on each floor.

Project Updates Beecher Phase 2 Residential – substantial completion was mid-Feb. Leasing will begin April 1. (Update: move-ins have been delayed until April 15th.)

Project Updates Beecher Phase 3 Residential – around 9% complete. Foundations have been poured for most buildings, framing is complete on a few. Delays related to recent cold weather.

Mitigation Activities Update Stage I

- Western Library African American Archives (Natalie Woods) – Waiting for server to be installed, so they can upload items to the website for public viewing. She shared a few things they have come across, such as original documents of Reverend Blue and Professor Joseph Cotter, a survey from 1977 of West Louisville, photo of classroom in all-black school, a sample from the May 1968 edition of Soul Force (i.e. the official journal published by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference), etc. Still getting much interest and Natalie has done a lot of interviews. Created a new video for the Western Library branch but it needs editing before making public. The video highlights the history of the library, local participation and partnerships with the branch, footage over the last two years of archiving. She will show it at the June Consulting Parties meeting. Bringing traditions back that they find in archives.
 - Cotter Cup – Professor had a spring story telling contest before the library opened. Youth would come to story time and whoever could recite the stories best, won the

- Cotter Cup. The Western Library is bringing the contest back this year as a test run. It will be a poetry writing contest in honor of Cotter since he was a poet. Small contest this year as a soft rollout pilot, with intention to expand next year. Open to all grades K-12, fifteen applicants per category, applicants will attend a counseling session at University of Louisville's writing center. Several judges are lined up, including two local poets. Submissions by end of April, announcements just before summer reading program.
- Was contacted by a Broadway play group from New York who put on "Slave Plays" written by black playwrights. It is up for a Tony nomination. They have put together a Golden Collection of 15 plays to be placed at one location per state. Western Library was chosen for Kentucky.
 - She and Lavel White are working on another Vision of Beecher Terrace panel discussion for this summer
- The Beecher Terrace Story (*Lavel D. White*) – As of today, the documentary has been viewed over 14,406 times on YouTube (up from 9K views two months ago). There was a spike in shares, comments and views in February during Black History month. Layla shared on Olmsted Conservancy Facebook page. Looking forward to the upcoming educational opportunity with Frazier.
 - Louisville Story Program (*Darcy Thompson*) – Last quarter was slow. Newest development is a partnership with Louisville Public Media to do a radio show with seasons that will live as a podcast to reach a large audience. Episodes of audio stories rooted in Russell done in the way we do projects, with labor-intensive efforts. Co-produced by whomever the story is about which offers skill development. This will result in an additional suite of products in addition to the book that could potentially end up in print later. Continuing editing, outreach, background research, working with technology to improve work.
 - Question: Any streetscape pictures of the neighborhood (i.e. historic that pre-date BT housing development, particularly in the 12-block excavation area). Response: Have more pictures of people than streetscapes, but if they come across any, he will share them. UofL photograph archives have part of their collection available online but their photos were mainly from downtown to 8-9th streets, not into BT area.
 - Data Recovery / Corn Island (*Anne Bader*) – Now at the tedious part of the project of going thru 95+ boxes to analyze and catalog items. She had hoped to have UofL students tell about their research, but one is recovering from COVID at this time. One student is in medical anthropology and interested in studying black doctors, she is researching a Cuban doctor in the neighborhood. Hopes to have one or two of the students at the June meeting to report on what they are doing.
 - Continually getting info from Canada on the Fitzbutler Family, historical things that showed there was maintained info from BT and Henry Fitzbutler and his wife, Sarah, over the years.
 - Working on another project for the city - Best practices of how to deal with archaeology of urban lots in Louisville. Great deal of BT work will feed into that project, how they investigate in future, how to study, what makes more economic sense, and what to do with massive amounts of artifacts. Also using Shelby Park as a

case study. Will add to their knowledge of all Louisville neighborhoods as they tell history in this area.

- Continuing to give presentations - latest was for Louisville Historic League in January. It was their first Zoom meeting. Responses are generating publicity, they are asking many questions allowing information sharing. Zoom meeting is saved to Louisville Historic League YouTube channel. Link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdjeD9Ny_BQ
- If any resources are located that are map or photo related, please forward to Dave/Anne. They want to see buildings before demolition, their furnishings, doorknobs, chandeliers, etc. Interested in the backgrounds of photos.
- Timeline – so much work is coming in which is delaying analysis a little. Letter of resolution had a deadline for report, but field work took another year, working for final date...aiming for summer 2023 (should allow buffer.) Probably take a year to finish going through the 95 boxes.
- Question: Any reference of old photographs? Since Urban Renewal was a federal project with federal monies in it, they should have documented. Response: Cultural resources laws came into effect in 1966, so in the 30-40's when tearing down buildings, they didn't have the same regulations and were not mandated to take photos. If they did and where they saved them are good questions.
- Education Outreach Status Update (*Kathleen O'Neil / Pam Bischoff*) – IGA approved by LMHA in January, approved by JCPS Board in February and now fully executed. Subbing work to Frazier Museum and Corn Island to help support the overall project. Sketching out two professional learning days for teachers to support them and their efforts so they can build the inquiry design modules. Advertising for teachers in April, after spring break.

Future Residential Phases 4 & 5 (Stage 4)/ Determination of Effect Update (*Cynthia*) – reviewed process of DOE, SHPO had questions of which Cynthia will formally respond to. They want more information/description on the small playgrounds. Ashley - Small “tot lots” play areas in each of the living areas and similar to what they are building in Phase II. SHPO also wants to see how new buildings on Phase V will work with historic Church of Merciful Savior – video shown at last meeting to give a sense of the scale of buildings (new vs. old). Cynthia will send more elevations as well. Working with DOE and will update this group in June.

Next Quarterly Meeting / Conclusion

Provided a list of project contacts in the presentation and verbally added Allison Smith 574-1569. Next meeting will be held on June 3. Future meetings continue on the first Thursday every 3 months.