

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
Annie Glidden North Revitalization Plan Task Force Meeting
May 7, 2018

The Annie Glidden North Revitalization (AGN) Plan Task Force held a meeting on May 7, 2018 at the DeKalb County Community Outreach Building, 2500 N. Annie Glidden Road, DeKalb, IL.

Task Force Chair Herb Rubin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL

The following AGN Task Force members were present: Gip Seaver, Tiara Huggins, Chad Glover, Dan Kenney, Kurt Thurmaier, Derrick Hiland, Patti Perkins, David Castro, Will Heinisch, Mike Pittsley, Herb Rubin, Ellingsworth Webb, Morgan Brickley, Glenn Roby, Shelly Perkins, Denise Weinmann, Michelle Bringas.

The following City staff members were present: Management Analyst Aaron Stevens, Community Development Director Jo Ellen Charlton, Economic Development Planner Jason Michnick. Attending from Camiros was planning consultant Adam Rosa. Also present were DeKalb City Council members Bill Finucane and Dave Jacobson.

Notes were taken by NIU CGS Director Diana Robinson and Research Associate Mim Evans.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 29, 2018 MEETING

The minutes of the January 29, 2018 AGN Task Force meeting were approved without changes.

C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Scott Weber and Jim Horn from the DeKalb United Methodist Church stated that the Church is in the process of buying land along Annie Glidden Road. They are here to listen to the meeting and see if they can incorporate some of the neighborhood needs into the plans for their new building.

D. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Subcommittee meeting outcomes summary briefs

A handout summarizing the recommendations of each subcommittee was provided to all present. A representative from each subcommittee commented briefly regarding their recommendations. See handout for findings and recommendations. This was followed by questions from the rest of the task force.

Community Services presented by Chad Glover

Follow up question: What would the CDC do and is it a permanent or limited term?

Response: No definitive answer at this time.

Housing and Commercial Development presented by Denise Weinmann

Follow up question: Are there specific sites in mind for additional housing or other development such as 912 Edgebrook?

Response: No. Combining lots and doing land swaps might be a way to get the best combination and consider multiple uses.

Transportation, Infrastructure and Open Space presented by Kurt Thurmaier

Follow up questions-none

Neighborhood Safety and Security presented by Mike Pittsley

Follow up questions-none

2. Review of subcommittee recommendations

No comments

3. Short term, mid-range, and long-term prioritization of action items/projects

The discussion of which of the recommendations should be high priorities began with a task force member suggesting the plan focus on projects that generate the most return for the least money. Communication could be that focus. There needs to be someone who can be that communicator. This should be a long-term position.

Adam Rosa suggested establishing the position and then seeking funding.

Task force members continued the discussion by asking if this could be same as the CDC director suggested by the Community Services Subcommittee. It was suggested that local banks could be asked to fund startup costs through community reinvestment credits.

An alternate view expressed that a new position or agency is not needed. The City has a community development department. How do we help that department make this a priority of the City? There are already several staff familiar with the project.

It was pointed out that we should not look just internally for fixing the neighborhood but rather how to reintegrate it into the rest of the city. This is a philosophical issue. There are assets in the neighborhood. It is near the high school and there is vacant land nearby that someday will be developed. AGN should be a centerpiece for growth and development.

It was suggest that Proudly DeKalb could handle communications.

The discussion briefly shifted to transportation with the comment that transit should be a high priority.

Then returning to previous comments, there was some agreement that AGN is part of the whole city's growth. There was disagreement on assigning the role of managing AGN improvements to the Community Development staff because they are already very busy. There should be someone totally focused on this area. This thought was clarified that there does not need to be a new agency to run AGN, but perhaps a new position within the Community Development Department. It was emphasized that there needs to be follow through. Someone needs to be responsible. There needs to be something to keep the focus after this committee is through.

The discussion then returned to transportation. AGN residents do not know anything about the transportation plan. Putting information at the bus stops would help keep people informed.

The future of 912 Edgebrook was discussed. There was support for a community center on first floor. Perhaps healthy food distribution could occur there as well.

It was asked whether the building should be torn down or renovated and reused. Adam Rosa stated that the cost to build new would probably be less than renovating the existing building.

Dave Jacobson said that some on the Council want to include demolition costs in the budget. He asked if the Council should look into reuse or just tear it down, making it green space for now and rebuild later?

There were many comments that the question of tear down versus reuse cannot be answered without information on costs and proposals for reuse.

Denise Weinmann discussed potential cost of redeveloping the property into single units. She estimated that the building currently has 48 units. If the first floor was a community center, there might be 36 efficiency or 1B units on the upper floors. Based on typical per unit cost, this might cost \$1.5 million. This is less than tear down plus rebuild costs. We do need more of these smaller units.

Herb Rubin stated that the task force wants more information and would appreciate the Council not proceeding until there is more information and the AGN report is complete.

It was noted that the City took the building away from a property owner and it would be counter-productive to redevelop for residential again. It was stated several times that there are already a high number of vacant properties and a rental property surplus in the area.

The discussion then turned to the need for green space and parking.

It was suggested that the City, Park District and NIU should discuss how to jointly fund a green space plan for AGN, including considering the 912 Edgebrook site.

A task force member then presented a summary of his impression of how the task force was prioritizing projects. When he suggested tearing down some residential buildings, others expressed concern that families would be displaced. There was general agreement that density needs to be reduced, land used more effectively to improve the neighborhood, and consideration given to how people are relocated both within the neighborhood and elsewhere in the city with the addition of new subsidized housing options.

The general suggestion was made that we need a big idea to get funding. The recommendations should not just be a collection of small projects or there will be no interest in funding and no real change to the neighborhood.

Adam Rosa then summarized his thoughts on priority projects, as follows:

#1-Transportation, especially transit

#2-912 Edgebrook should be community space, mixed function

#3-Redesign of Welsh Park and increasing activities in the park

#4-Safety and code enforcement, including cameras

#5-creating implementation leadership whether in the City or an outside organization

#6-Strategic demolition, redevelopment and redesign

Adam said that the focus should be on the big projects without losing the smaller projects, but the list needs to be relatively short to be doable. He also mentioned looking at citywide organizations and roles, and metrics.

#4. Implementation strategies for action items/projects

It was asked what is recommended for the Campus Cinema area?

Adam replied that the market study suggests a TIF district there.

#5. Draft Revitalization Plan timeline review

Adam presented a handout that summarizes the timeline to complete the plan (see handout).

It was commented that it will be hard to get public input on the draft report over the summer. Both families and students gone.

Aaron Stevens stated that after we see the draft we will determine when to hold public meetings for community input.

It was brought up that we need early action projects that we can do now.

Aaron asked the group to think about if they want the task force to continue or focus on subcommittees and to proceed forward as a group working on this project. Send thoughts to Aaron, Herb Rubin or the Mayor. There has to be some structure after the report is completed.

Early action projects were then suggested by the task force members, such as communications regarding where residents could go for various needs and establishing neighborhood leadership.

Herb Rubin suggested that rather than a big meeting, the draft should be reviewed in the subcommittees, but the subcommittees need not focus just on their subject areas. Kurt Thurmaier asked why the subcommittees need to meet to review the draft plan that they have already provided their input for. Aaron explained that the draft plan would encompass more than just the subcommittee recommendations and that the plan in its entirety should be reviewed by task force members.

Adam stated that the subcommittees could review and augment the draft plan.

Discussion then returned to early action projects. It was stated that the City should start the communication process before the report comes out. The report is not needed to do that. Get a coordinator now. This is true with code enforcement, too.

Aaron stated that he is currently consolidating subcommittee recommendations and assigning action items for the City for any that can be started now. He might reach out to some of the task force members. Aaron stated he is the project manager and will continue to serve in the communications and coordination role for the project.

6. Open discussion/questions

Bill Finucane provided the time line for the new DSATs transit plan proposal review and implementation.

E. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:50. Motion seconded. Motion passed.

Mim Evans, Research Associate, CGS

Minutes approved by the AGN Task Force Meeting on: N/A.

Note: the AGN Task Force was disbanded before these meeting minutes were approved. As such, the City of DeKalb City Council approved the minutes on January 28, 2019.