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## MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** 05-8-2008

**Time:** 3:00 PM

**Location:** Booker T. Washington Community Center, Pleasant Hill, Macon, Georgia

**Project Name:** I-16/I-75 Interchange Improvement Project

**Subject:** Pleasant Hill Historic District – Proposed Mitigation

### Attendees:

Sam Pugh	<i>GDOT OEL</i>	<a href="mailto:spugh@dot.ga.gov">spugh@dot.ga.gov</a>
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Peter Givens	<i>PHNIG</i>	<a href="mailto:pleasanthillneighborhood@yahoo.com">pleasanthillneighborhood@yahoo.com</a>
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**Prepared By:** Linda Cooks

- The Pleasant Hill Neighborhood Improvement Group (PHNIG) is delighted with the project and that Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is accommodating the Pleasant Hill plan.
- Peter Givens stated that there will be a “resource” house within the neighborhood. He talked to Richard Penniman and he will support what the PHNIG is doing. The PHNIG wants to consider moving the Little Richard House and use it as a resource house for the neighborhood.

- Larry Schlesinger was concerned about lane closures and that people might use other routes during construction. GDOT is not anticipating that this would occur. Brad responded that no lanes would be closed except, perhaps, at Riverside and Second Street. May add additional bridge structure to maintain lanes. Clarify within the document that there will some reduction, but that no lanes on the mainline would be shut down. Local TV, local radio and newspapers would be notified to keep the public informed of the project construction and ensure excellent communication with the public. Project construction is scheduled for 2011 and will take four (4) years. Portable and permanent variable messaging boards will be used during construction. A traffic impact study is currently being prepared to see how much of the interstate can be reduced.
- Jefferson Long Park (a passive greenway park) is being proposed at Pursley Street. Peter Givens stated that in previous discussions with Ben Buchan and Glen Bowman, GDOT would improve this park. The park would blend into the gardens down toward the other green space. The park would have fountains, a trail, and benches. It would blend into community gardens to First Avenue. Russell Claxton has a rendering. Chuck stated that no rendering was received by GDOT. Mr. Givens stated that the PHNIG had not contracted with a Landscape Architect to produce Landscape Plans. Once contracted and produced, the plans would be delivered to GDOT for funding consideration.
- The PHNIG has \$40,000 for design of the Jefferson Long Park with Economic and Community Development Corporation.
- Wendy Dyson - Of the 23 structures evaluated for relocation, only three (3) are not structurally feasible to move, due to slab foundations: the Masonic lodge, 425 Middle Street, and the 2-story duplex on Middle Street Place. Vacant parcels in the Pleasant Hill neighborhood have been identified on a map within the report. There is a desire among the residents to stay on the east side of the interstate. Wendy noted that the open area between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenues has traditionally been used as recreation area and recommended that it stay open. Vacant lots in the neighborhood are city owned, church owned, and privately owned. Five to six lots are currently up for sale.
- Owner occupied homes will have first choice to which side of the interstate the house will be relocated to.
- Wendy – in terms of organizing the relocation process, we looked at the community aspect first and then the architectural.
- Peter stated that the neighborhood is waiting for this project and see it as an opportunity to revitalize the community. People have started rehabilitating their homes in positive anticipation of the project. Some see this as their last opportunity to see this area improve. The PHNIG also wants to purchase lots from the city and put houses on vacant lots to build up the community. Have had talks with the city. Peter will take the plan that has been discussed at this meeting and present it to the community.
- Katy asked if the PHNIG would hold the land as part of their non-profit until they develop it. She suggested that FHWA could work with the community and help move the houses to the lots,

especially the houses that people do not necessarily want to relocate with. Peter will take the information back to the community and get their questions and if necessary, they will have GDOT come back to answer those questions. Peter Givens stated that many of those being relocated are older and in their later years in life. Want to make the people who will be impacted as comfortable as possible. People have hope again due to this plan.

- On the west side of the interstate, the PHNIG wants landscaping in created green space on Frontage Road between First and Second Avenues.
- Add a landscape berm along Frontage Avenue where feasible. Peter – would prefer “natural” barrier in lieu of a wall along old Frontage Road between First Avenue and Second Avenue. In areas where a noise wall is not needed, just do a visual barrier. Screen the wall rather than spending money on the wall itself. Katy needs to know if there will be landscaping or the construction of a wall in the area west of the interstate. Other noise mitigation may need to be investigated. Russell and Peter are ok with a metal barrier as long as it is hidden from the neighborhood side.
- Create a cross section at First Avenue, Second Avenue, Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue that shows noise walls. Bring views for the neighborhood to review. Katy noted that a thorough understanding of exactly what is proposed is needed. Need concurrence from the neighborhood. Katy will e-mail Peter Givens to tell him what she needs from him
- Question was asked by a member of the PHNIG: How will renters be handled? Melanie responded that both owners and tenants would be involved in negotiations.
- Katy - The PHNIG could build a partnership with FHWA and the houses could be relocated to lots. A community land trust could be created to encourage residents to stay in the community.
- Peter does not see the relocation process as a problem. There has been recent concern with slumlords buying up the properties in the neighborhood for speculation, hoping that GDOT will pay them more for the property. Katy stated that FHWA can do early acquisitions of parcels for owners being approached by speculators.
- Question arose from a member of the PHNIG whether compensation of fair market value of a property would be sufficient compensation to the owner to purchase another house. Chuck explained that relocation assistance would also be available to cover additional cost needed to move to a “comparable” house in the area.
- Peter Givens noted that 85% of residents are over the age of 65 years old.