

# MEETING NOTES

## MACON/PLEASANT HILL PROJECT

MASTER CONTRACT#: TOOELENV100523 · TASK ORDER#: 10 · PROJECT#: NHIM0-0016-01(092), BIBB

Version #: 1.0

Issue Date: 1/23/14

**Attendees:** GDOT: Eric Duff, OES; Clinton Ford, OPD; Karlene Barron, Communications; Kraig Collins, Area Engineer; Scott Roberts, ROW; Keenan Ford, Assistant Area Engineer

EnviroResolution (ER): Tommy Craig, Banks Craig, Jeff Dickerson

Moreland: Brad Hale; Russell Claxton

URS: Mickey O'Brien; John Hightower; Travis McClam

LAS: Courtney Swann

GSFIC: David Felts; Dexter Dumas

Allstate Construction: Will Sumner

Harmon Construction: Adrian Harmon

PHNIG: Peter Givens, Naomi Johnson, Captain Willie May

Local Elected Officials: Chris Floore (Mayor Reichert's office); Sam Henderson (Mayor Reichert's office)

Pleasant Hill Community: Yolanda Latimore; Pastor Jason McClendon; Alice Jackson, Chester Gibbs;

**Location:** GDOT Macon Area Office-4499 Riverside Drive, Macon, GA

**Date:** 1/23/14

**Purpose:** Pleasant Hill Community Mitigation Progress Meeting

**CC:**

### Discussion

#### Agenda Item 1: Ongoing Activities

##### Action Item(s)

- Banks Craig welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Banks asked meeting attendees to introduce themselves.
- Banks introduced Scott Roberts of GDOT who gave an update on property acquisition.
- Scott Roberts reported that all properties in Pleasant Hill have been purchased except for vacant lots.
- Scott reported there are still two owners in their homes, and they are expected to be out in February.
- Only three vacant buildings remain that have not been wrapped.
- Next, Banks Craig introduced Courtney Swann of Lord Aeck & Sargent who gave an update on the revised vacant lot plan and the historic structure reports and relocation plans.
- Courtney Swann reported LAS has measured all the buildings. LAS has created existing conditions drawings and floor plans for the historic structures.
- LAS plans to take off portions of the historic properties that are in bad shape and that will not survive a move.
- LAS has also been working on relocation lot selection. LAS made a relocation property site visit. Currently, LAS is making changes to the vacant lot plan.
- Courtney Swann said the historic structures reports and relocation plans will be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office. Once the plans are approved, construction can commence.

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- Courtney Swann said the vacant lots must still be acquired.
- Courtney said he is unsure of how long it will take for SHPO to review the historic structure reports and relocation plans.
- Next, Banks Craig gave an update on the oral history project with information from Mary Beth Reed of New South Associates who was unable to attend.
- Banks reported New South has completed the Design Guidelines for Pleasant Hill to help shape future development by enhancing the historic character of the neighborhood.
- Historians have completed the documentation photography for buildings that will be moved as part of the project and have created a Permanent Archival Record for the photography that will be archived at the Historic Preservation Division.
- The largest effort last year was the completion of an oral history project that included 21 one-on-one interviews and four group interviews with long-term Pleasant Hill natives.
- The group interviews were conducted at the following churches: Greater Allen Chapel AME, Community Church of God, St. Peter Claver, and New Hope Baptist Church.
- In total, sixty individuals have participated in the oral history program. Some of the interviews were filmed for incorporation into a short video on the neighborhood and its history.
- The transcription of the interviews is almost complete and those will be used in a booklet that will provide profiles or personal perspectives on life in Pleasant Hill.
- Analysis, research, and the compilation of the video and booklet are ongoing.
- In addition, fifth-grade curriculum on conducting oral history was developed using excerpts from taped interviews.
- The curriculum will be posted on GDOT's website after review.
- Finally, New South has hosted a Facebook page, called Uncovering Pleasant Hill DNA, which allows community members to provide historic photographs, thoughts, and memories about what made Pleasant Hill such a unique place.
- Peter Givens said he would like to see and approve the oral histories before they are presented to the public.
- Eric Duff reminded Mr. Givens that the entire oral history report will be submitted to the community for review.
- Next, Brad Hale of Moreland Altobelli gave an update on the Pleasant Hill draft noise wall/visual wall aesthetic plan.
- Brad said Moreland has been working with communities about how the noise wall barriers will look from the community side.
- Brad noted the Pleasant Hill Community stated consensus for a timeline theme along the barrier.
- Brad displayed a PowerPoint which showed the Pleasant Hill noise wall timeline divided into themes: 1) The Village 2) Medicine 3) Government 4) Music 5) Literary 6) Churches 7) Schools and 8) Education.
- Brad said Peter Givens has given Moreland a list of names of specific people the Pleasant Hill Community would like to see featured on the noise wall, but Mr. Givens said there are still additional names to be added to the list.
- Brad noted that the Community consensus was for a noise wall with a smooth concrete finish, and at selected areas there will be a theme with a plaque containing a narrative of events in Pleasant Hill history.
- Mr. Givens said he wants to see the wall done tastefully, not too big, not too busy.
- Peter Givens said there will be additional information provided about each historical figure through QR codes on kiosks which can be scanned with a smartphone.

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- Yolanda Latimore said it is important to ensure each of the historical figures listed from Pleasant Hill in fact has a tie to Pleasant Hill.
- Clinton Ford stressed that the intent of this meeting is to narrow down the final list of historical figures for the noise wall as much as we can. Clinton said we need to get the list of figures and theme for the noise wall wrapped up.
- Adrian Harmon of Harmon Construction asked when the deadline is to wrap up the theme and list of historical figures on the Pleasant Hill noise wall.
- Clinton Ford said GDOT must get this completed as soon as possible so GDOT can go back to the Pleasant Hill Community with a more finalized plan.
- GDOT officials stressed that all the noise wall information (historical figure names, themes, and locations on the wall) must be turned in to GDOT within 48 hours (by Tuesday, January 28th). GDOT will be moving forward with the information it has in hand on that date.
- Yolanda Latimore questioned the accuracy of the historical figure information and asked that GDOT work closely with a historian or New South. She noted there are some names listed who don't have much relationship with Pleasant Hill. Yolanda also said William Killings should be listed as John Oliver Killings.
- Naomi Johnson stressed a historical connection with some of the individuals in question.
- Peter Givens said that we can ensure accuracy of the information later. The main thing is to get the noise wall information finalized so GDOT can move forward with the next stage of the project.
- Tommy Craig stated Yolanda's concerns are important and said she should have a conversation with Mary Beth Reed of New South Associates.
- Clinton Ford asked the group to back up and go through the list of themes, with an aim to make definitive decisions about each theme. Clinton asked everyone to focus first on theme.
- Clinton asked the group if everyone is ok with "The Village" theme's location.
- Peter Givens said "The Village" theme is a bit busy, and the Pleasant Hill Community wants the noise wall to be uniform and tasteful.
- Peter said we need to work out the size of the plaques. The Community doesn't want the plaques to take up the entire noise wall from bottom to top. Mr. Givens said the wall should be similar to an art gallery. Plaques should be the same size and uniform.
- Peter Givens said he does not want to make final decisions on the noise wall themes at this meeting. He said the Community needs a little more time to digest what Brad and Moreland have come up with. He said the Community's thought pattern was different, but not far from what Moreland presented at the meeting.
- Eric Duff asked for a timeframe on getting back the noise wall information to GDOT. Peter agreed to have the information to GDOT by Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. Eric has already submitted to Moreland a rendering Mr. Givens sent him so Moreland will have an idea of what Mr. Givens has in mind.
- Karlene Barron stressed that Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to have a definitive decision about what each section of the timeline will look like.
- Next, Mickey O' Brien of URS gave a presentation on URS's design plans for the Jefferson Long Park.
- Mickey thanked Peter Givens, Naomi Johnson, Alice Jackson, Russell Claxton, Reverend McClendon, Tommy and Banks Craig, City of Macon Reps. and GDOT who have helped the project along to the point where it is today.
- Mickey noted that Mr. Givens helped develop a major concept for the Jefferson Long Park, the

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flow of the park from the Jefferson Long Park through the Linear Park.

- Mickey noted the Jefferson Long Park is a tremendous opportunity. Mickey said the park is flat, lush, and already has a beautiful community garden maintained by Peter Givens and Naomi Johnson.
- Mickey noted that including Pecan Street widened the green space.
- Mickey also noted the relationship of Pursley Street and the park is very important.
- Mickey commented on the elements of successful parks: simple is usually better, need areas of sun and areas of shade, and public and semi-private experiences.
- Mickey thanked Senator Lucas for coming to the initial Jefferson Long Park site analysis meeting.
- Mickey showed the results of a May 2, 2013, work session and tour. He showed a refined master plan from July 10, 2013, noting that it has a great lawn, pedestrian promenade, Jefferson Long memorial, a community garden, a founder's garden, on-street parking, and other elements.
- Mickey said URS received a topographic survey of the Jefferson Long Park site, and it is ready to start the final design of the park to improve the quality of life for Pleasant Hill residents. He said URS is seeking a final framework for the park and would like to seek additional comments from the Community.
- Peter Givens said the Community has a layout that delineates the park from the garden. Peter said there are some things missing from URS's current design. He said URS is showing an open area. Mr. Givens commented the great lawn is not a playground or football field.
- Peter said the great lawn needs to be designed so that it is a more passive area with more trees and walking trails.
- Mickey reminded Mr. Givens that there have already been two work sessions, and URS still hasn't seen the Community's existing Jefferson Long Park plan. Mickey asked that Mr. Givens bring the plan to the next Jefferson Long Park meeting.
- Chester Gibbs asked if Washington Park near the post office is an example of what kind of park the Community is trying to create.
- Peter Givens said the Community wants the park to be less busy than Washington Park. Peter suggested adding one strategically placed tree in the park to stop children from playing soccer or football in the park.
- Eric Duff requested that a Jefferson Long Park meeting be scheduled for next week. The meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, but had to be cancelled due to bad weather. A new meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, February, 18<sup>th</sup>. Eric Duff and other GDOT officials said there will be a two week deadline (week of February 24<sup>th</sup>) for the final design framework for the Jefferson Long Park. Eric stressed GDOT must have this framework wrapped up by the week of February 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Peter Givens said the Community can have the final framework for the park completed by the two week deadline.
- Brad Hale of Moreland gave an update on the design of the Linear Park.
- Brad Hale said a work session will be conducted next week to refine design plans (this was completed).
- Brad noted that the Community has requested the David Lucas Pedestrian Bridge remain open during construction.
- To accommodate this request, Moreland proposes shifting the site of the new bridge 20-30 feet in order to maintain pedestrian access over the interstate.
- Brad also proposed adding plant life over the culvert representative of the stream area. He also

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noted the cul de sacs at Second and Fifth Avenues need a way for emergency vehicles to turn around. Brad proposes a turnaround with an impervious surface.

### Agenda Item 2: Historic Structure Relocation Process

#### Action Item(s)

- Will Sumner of Allstate Construction and Adrian Harmon of Harmon Construction discussed logistics for moving houses.
- Will and Adrian displayed the 26 structures which will be moved.
- They noted their preliminary work ties in closely with Lord Aeck & Sargent's work.
- Will and Adrian noted that some elements of historic structures such as brick facades and chimneys will have to be removed to protect the historic structures during the moving process.
- The brick facades and chimneys will be reapplied to the structure after moving to preserve the historical integrity of the structures.
- Will and Adrian noted Middle Street as a potential good moving route.
- Adrian and Will said Hardeman Avenue has been identified as having many overhead lights and utilities. They said Allstate and Harmon Construction are already coordinating with local utility providers to plan utility disconnections and reconnections.
- Adrian and Will noted the Masonic Lodge will be the most difficult historic structure to move. The building will be reinforced with beams underneath it. Angle irons and cabling will be applied to ensure the structure won't fall apart.
- Will and Adrian gave an update on moving notifications. They said their intent is to keep the Community informed of every phase of the relocation process. They said GSFIC and GDOT will be meeting with the Community to go over the relocation schedule. They said there will be another meeting to go over which properties' utilities will be affected and on what day.
- Peter Givens said he would like to get this information distributed to everyone in the Community at least three weeks in advance so everyone can plan accordingly. Peter noted there are many elderly people in Pleasant Hill who will need plenty of advance warning of utility disconnections.
- Eric Duff said he would like to have a Community open house where all of these issues can be discussed.
- Eric Duff said GDOT's first priority will be moving the Little Richard House and Carolyn Nedd's house which are near each other on Fifth Avenue.
- Eric said he needs the next relocation priority schedule so GDOT Environmental can coordinate its work on the vacant lots.

### Agenda Item 3: Community Feedback

#### Action Item(s)

- Banks Craig opened the floor for community feedback.
- Yolanda Latimore asked for the anticipated date of widening the interstate.
- Clinton Ford responded the actual road construction is scheduled for 2018, and the mitigation is scheduled for 2017.

### Agenda Item 4: Next Steps

#### Action Item(s)

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- Eric Duff gave an update on where GDOT is in getting ready to move structures.
- Eric noted the environmental process is ongoing.
- Eric said GDOT is working on environmental surveys on the vacant lots which include archaeological surveys, historical surveys, air/noise surveys, and ecology.
- Eric said GDOT is finished with these surveys.
- Eric said GDOT is waiting on concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Office.
- Eric said once GDOT has environmental clearance from SHPO, GDOT can complete a National Environmental Policy Act document.
- Eric said GDOT hopes to have the NEPA document finished in March or April.
- After the NEPA document is finished and approved, GDOT can turn over the vacant lots to right-of-way for acquisition.
- Eric reminded everyone that all purchases of vacant lots must be consensual.
- As soon as the vacant lots are acquired, GDOT will start moving structures (likely during the summer months of 2014).
- Banks Craig adjourned the meeting.