

MEETING NOTES

MACON/PLEASANT HILL PROJECT

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

Version #: 1.0

Issue Date: 4/25/13

Attendees: GDOT: Clinton Ford, OPD; Eric Duff, OES; Charles Lawrence, OES

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

Lord Aeck & Sargent (LAS): Kristin Halloran

Moreland: MJ Sheehan and Russell Claxton

New South Associates: Mary Beth Reed

PHNIG: Captain Willie May

Community: Alice Jackson; Pastor Tony Lowden; Sheryl Welton

Local Elected Officials: Representative James Beverly; Jacob Beverly

Location: 4499 Riverside Drive, Macon, GA

Date: 4/25/13

Purpose: Macon/Pleasant Hill – Mitigation Progress Meeting

CC: Peter Givens; Naomi Johnson; Della Henderson; Captain Willie May; Pastor Billy Graham McFadden; Father Melaba; Pastor Tom Anderson; Pastor Tony Lowden; Camilla Johnson; Judge Billy Randall; Senator David Lucas; Representative Nikki Randall; Representative James Beverly; Representative Allen Peake;- Meeting invitees received email invitations and telephone calls reminding them of the meeting.

Discussion

Item 1: Community Outreach Update

Action Item(s)

Banks Craig began the meeting with introductions. Next, Banks explained Clinton Ford, Karlene Barron, Jeff Dickerson, and Banks Craig have been engaging in community outreach activities. Banks Craig provided a more in depth discussion of these outreach activities:

- Banks began by discussing the quarterly project newsletter. Banks explained the spring issue of the newsletter is now printed and was mailed on Tuesday of last week to residents in Pleasant Hill.
- Next, Banks discussed the project website: www.i16i75.com. Banks stated EnviroResolution has been working with Michael Gill, webmaster for Moreland, to update the website.
- He stated the “Mitigation” link on the website is now “live”.
- The Mitigation link contains a link to the three major documents which lay out GDOT’s mitigation commitments for the project. 1) Memorandum of Agreement between FHWA/ SHPO/ and GDOT 2) Mitigation Plan between FHWA/ PHNIG/ and GDOT 3) Memorandum of Agreement between City of Macon and GDOT
- Banks stated the website also contains links to the project newsletters. The most recent newsletter has been submitted to the webmaster and should be posted within the next day or two.
- Banks said the website also contains a link to the project brochure.
- The website contains links to the project meeting minutes under the “Public Involvement Tab”. The most recent meeting minutes have been submitted to the webmaster and should be posted shortly.
- The website homepage also contains a link to the project Facebook page which was developed

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by Mary Beth Reed of New South Associates. The link to the Facebook page is:
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Uncovering-Pleasant-Hill-DNA-Macon-Ga-478283362237095>.

- Banks explained since the last meeting outreach meetings have been held with Father Melaba of St. Peter Claver Catholic Church, Pastor Tom Anderson of Strong Tower Fellowship, and Roy Robinson, a lobbyist in Atlanta and son of Pat Robinson.
- Banks explained that meetings have been held with Benjamin Sullivan, Ava Sullivan Davis, Camilla Johnson, Gallet and Marvia Mitchell, Margaret White, Pastor Tony Lowden, Pastor Billy Graham McFadden, Father Melaba, Pastor Tom Anderson, Roy Robinson, Sen. David Lucas, Rep. Nikki Randall, Rep. James Beverly, and Rep. Allen Peake.
- Banks reported the meetings went well, and he explained that GDOT is trying to include as many people as possible in the project and make sure everyone is informed about the project. In addition, he described how each person contacted has been helpful in providing GDOT with more contact information to further expand its outreach efforts.
- Captain May stated he would like for GDOT to set up a meeting with some of the senior members of his church, Community Church of God. The group meets on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
- Jeff Dickerson told Captain May GDOT would like to set up a meeting with his pastor, Jason Mclendon, and it would be helpful if Captain May would provide his contact information.

Item 1a: Penniman House Acquisition Announcement

Action Item(s)

Tommy Craig discussed a meeting he attended with Mayor Reichert regarding the announcement of the Penniman House acquisition at Mercer University Commencement Ceremony:

- Tommy stated the President of Mercer University, William Underwood, contacted Mayor Reichert regarding Mercer honoring Richard Penniman with an honorary doctorate degree in Humanities at the Mercer University Commencement Ceremony on May 11th.
- On May 10, the City of Macon plans to host a celebration in Pleasant Hill for the Penniman House acquisition announcement. At the celebration, the community will announce the acquisition of the Penniman House.
- The City of Macon is planning on hosting the celebration at L.H. Williams Elementary School in Pleasant Hill. The City of Macon Staff is working with Little Richard's band to see if they will play a few numbers. Also, the Staff is trying to see if Richard Penniman can attend the celebration and play with his band. In addition, they are seeing if a children's choir can attend and sing. The City is also providing refreshments for the celebration.
- Julie Moore, Keith Moffett, Sam Henderson, and Wanzina Jackson are planning the celebration.
- Eric Duff asked if GDOT or EnviroResolution has talked to PHNIG about this event.
- Tommy Craig said not yet because we only found out the Penniman House has been acquired by GDOT yesterday at 5:00 p.m.
- Eric Duff asked if GDOT can have a meeting at GDOT Macon Area office next week to inform the PHNIG about the celebration.
- Eric Duff told Clinton Ford GDOT should work with Banks Craig of EnviroResolution to send out an invitation request next week for this meeting.
- Clinton Ford said these celebration plans are still tentative.
- Tommy Craig said the plans are still tentative but are rapidly becoming firm as the City of Macon is working hard to secure the venue. Tommy Craig stated the Mercer University Commencement ceremony will be held on May 11th at 3:00 p.m.

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- Eric Duff stated we need to talk with the Pleasant Hill Community about the announcement as well.

Item 2: Right-of- Way Update

Action Item(s)

Eric Duff updated GDOT's right-of-way acquisition activities:

- Eric said GDOT has acquired title to six more properties.
- He said GDOT crews will begin mothballing those structures next week if not before.
- Eric said GDOT will also be sending out a team to secure/fence the properties.
- Charles Lawrence said Captain Woodham and Lieutenant Wilton Collins are working with GDOT to help secure those properties.

Item 3: Moreland Altobelli-Public Involvement Plan for Noise/ Visual Barriers

Action Item(s)

MJ Sheehan gave a presentation about Moreland's plans for public involvement and schedule regarding the noise/visual walls:

- MJ said the noise and visual walls will be on both sides of I-75 between Hardeman Avenue and Riverside Drive. There will also be noise walls between Pierce Avenue and Corbin Avenue and between the Ocmulgee River and Spring Street.
- There are a total of nine noise and visual barriers currently proposed within the project limits.
- The noise walls and visual walls will be adjacent to the Pleasant Hill Community, Linfield Cemetery, Riverside Garden Apartment Complex, Riverside Cemetery, Winship Hills Community, Shirley Hills Community, and North Highlands Community.
- MJ said there will be meetings coming up to introduce wall aesthetics.
- Then, there will be a second series of meetings where the affected communities will vote on what type of wall it prefers.
- Right now, there is a twenty-three week schedule for gathering information, getting approval of the final wall details, and giving a final presentation to the local government and affected communities.
- Steel barriers are not preferred. Patterned or geometric texturing is preferred.
- Where not warranted for noise, some areas will be getting visual barriers. Earthen berms are also going to be used.
- Moreland has suggested a music theme, a Cherry Blossom theme, and a Rodney Davis Medal of Honor theme.
- Clinton Ford said GDOT expects this twenty-three week schedule to be reduced.
- Clinton said Chetna Dixon of FHWA has given her blessing on the noise wall/visual wall plan but wants to see it one more time. She should sign off tomorrow or next week. Once Chetna signs off, this will kick off our schedule for the meetings.
- MJ said Moreland plans to start with Pleasant Hill first.
- Eric Duff said it could be as early as May when we start having these meetings.

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Item 4: Lord Aeck & Sargent-Presentation of Vacant Lot Plan Progress

Action Item(s)

Kristin Halloran gave a presentation about Lord Aeck & Sargent's progress in developing the Vacant Lot Plan:

- Kristin said LAS has taken into consideration many factors when developing the Vacant Lot Plan. A few of these factors are distance and noise from the interstate, activity level of an area, locations of amenities, etc.
- LAS showed the inventory of vacant lots to the Pleasant Hill Community.
- There are also certain structures such as the Masonic Lodge, Half House, and Little Richard House which will have to be moved. LAS is not making recommendations for where these structures will go. LAS wants the Pleasant Hill Community to decide where these structures will be relocated.
- Recently, it was suggested the Masonic Lodge be located near Jefferson Long Park with parking nearby.
- Clinton Ford said the Masonic Lodge is a structure which will be sold.
- Charles Lawrence stated LAS is doing what they can to rehabilitate the structure to make it look like its original state.
- Tommy Craig said one of the pastors wanted to know the square footage of the Masonic Lodge because it could possibly be used for a community work program.
- Kristin Halloran said she did not know the square footage but would be glad to find out.
- Kristin said LAS looked at several relocation concepts.
- Scheme "A" consisted of a clustering of buildings with Fourth and Fifth Avenue buildings clustered and also Second Avenue buildings clustered.
- Scheme "B" consisted of a Second, Fourth, and Fifth Avenue Cluster and also a 400 Block Middle Street Cluster.
- Scheme "C" is similar to the first scheme but added a few more streets to be clustered.
- Kristin said LAS gathered input from the Pleasant Hill Community, and they recommended we focus on Forrest, Ward, and Pursley Streets. In addition, they asked LAS to focus on Third and First Avenues and Monroe and Madison Avenues.
- After this meeting, LAS developed "Concept E" which is the preferred concept.
- Charles Lawrence said Concept E is the concept we are running.
- Sheryl Welton asked if GDOT will be removing all the houses on Fourth Avenue.
- Charles Lawrence said Sheryl will not be affected if she lives on Monroe Street. All of the relocation locations are south of her house.
- Charles stated the idea was to focus relocations and rehabilitations on areas to have the greatest catalytic effect. We wanted to focus on corridor areas and schools and parks. We want to fill in the gaps and leave healthy, vibrant streets.
- Captain May asked where the Masonic Lodge is going to be relocated.
- Charles said right now we are looking at Craft and First Streets.

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Item 5: New South Associates-Presentation of Design Guidelines

Action Item(s)

Mary Beth Reed gave a presentation about the recommended design guidelines for Pleasant Hill:

- Mary Beth stated these guidelines are only advisory guidelines. They represent a starting place. We are not telling the community what to do.
- These design guidelines are what we as professionals see that makes Pleasant Hill so special.
- New South decided to use a quilt pattern theme because it reminds us of the vitality and different structures in Pleasant Hill.
- The design guidelines are a set of recommendations to guide future development in Pleasant Hill.
- Pleasant Hill is one of the most historical African American communities in the State of Georgia. It is important to preserve the Community's history.
- Pleasant Hill is significant for its African American history, its community planning and development, and its significant architecture.
- Mary Beth showed a map outlining the Pleasant Hill National Register District.
- She said New South wanted to identify defining patterns of the Community.
- Pleasant Hill has eclectic architectural character, building materials with siting and scale that differs house to house and block to block, and a unique network of streets, alleys, and lanes.
- We talked to many residents to get in touch with the flair of the neighborhood.
- Pleasant Hill consists mostly of small lot sizes, is primarily one story frame houses, has many streets and lanes, has a pattern of incremental growth, and has several house stores.
- Pleasant Hill has an amazing social fabric with people such as Richard Penniman and Jefferson Long.
- New South recommends 1) to work with the grid system, 2) to work with existing topography, 3) to maintain social spaces (porches), 4) to retain the pattern of dispersed commercial and institutional buildings throughout the neighborhood, 5) to remember scale, proportion, and setback, 6) to preserve historic features and, if need be, replace with in kind materials 7) to retain diversity in residential landscaping
- The big guideline is work should adhere to the established design and placement within that hillside, block, or street.
- Charles Lawrence said Mary Beth will be working in the neighborhood for a while longer so if anyone has photos, stories, artifacts, or anything they want to contribute, please contact her.
- Mary Beth said the Facebook page is about the entire project, but is mostly to help collect Pleasant Hill's history, photos etc.
- Tony Lowden asked why the Booker T. Washington Community Center was not mentioned in the history of Pleasant Hill. He said he found some important pictures and artifacts in the basement of the Center from the 1960's. He said of 100 original centers, the one in Pleasant Hill is one of only twelve left.
- Mary Beth said the last National Register was from 1988 and is being updated so the Booker T. Washington Center could possibly be added. Tony also recommended looking at the Bobby Jones Performing Arts Center across the street from the Booker T. Community Center.
- Charles Lawrence thanked Tony Lowden for finding the photos and artifacts and recognizing it needs to be protected. He said he is encouraged by the discovery and excited to have Mary Beth talk to Tony more.

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- Captain May said Mr. Sheftall gathered all of this history and kept it at the Booker T. Community Center. Captain May commented that he didn't know his collection was still there. Historically, the Booker T. Washington Center was the community center for Pleasant Hill.

Item 6: Community Feedback

Action Item(s)

Banks Craig opened the floor for questions or concerns from the community:

- Representative Beverly asked how "Concept E" of the Vacant Lot Plan was selected.
- Kristin Halloran said LAS gathered input from the Pleasant Hill Community and based the plan on the streets the Community wanted to see improved.
- Rep. Beverly asked if there is a master redevelopment plan for the Community.
- Charles Lawrence stated some years ago the Macon Planning Department developed a plan called "Keeping the Hill Pleasant". Copies of this document are available from the Macon Planning Department. This document is a little dated. Some of the things listed might not be best practices today.
- Rep. Beverly asked if Peter Givens has a plan. He said there is no reason to dump millions of dollars into a community if it is not what the community wants.
- Charles Lawrence said GDOT is limited by many constraints. GDOT can only look at relocating houses impacted by the interstate expansion. We are turning space near the right-of-way zone into a Linear Park. We are relocating houses in a manner which is most beneficial to the community. Right now, we feel like "Concept E" is the best concept, but we are still open to suggestions. If anyone has any information, please submit it to GDOT.
- Kristin Halloran said LAS has tried to listen to the community's concerns and preferences for enhancing community vibrancy.
- Tony Lowden said FHWA has put together a study called "Environmental Justice" which mentions best practices. He asked if this case study is being taken into consideration on this project?
- Charles Lawrence said yes. Over eighty percent of the funding for the project is coming from FHWA so all the agreements have been signed off on by FHWA.
- Representative Beverly asked if all the houses have been acquired.
- Clinton Ford said no.
- Representative Beverly asked how we create opportunities for local contractors.
- Clinton Ford said GDOT held a seminar for small contractors to learn how to get prequalified with GDOT. Clinton stated attendance at the seminar was down.
- Representative Beverly said I think it will be a good idea to hold another contractor meeting because the first contractor meeting was held during the day.
- Eric Duff said GDOT wants the local contractors to have the same opportunity as everyone else. Eric said he would get in touch with the EEO Office to see if GDOT could possibly put on an evening meeting for local contractors.
- Russell Claxton stated the prequalification process is not very lengthy. You can become prequalified in a couple of months.
- Eric Duff said if a contractor gets prequalified he or she can potentially work on any GDOT project.
- Jeff Dickerson said there are only two agencies in the state, GDOT and MARTA, which allow

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minorities to get prequalified. There is a review process every two years, but once you go through that process you remain on the prequalified list.

- Russell Claxton said I want to remind everyone it is very important where these houses are relocated. The location is a very big deal.
- Rep. Beverly asked if the road expansion would occur before the mitigation or after.
- Clinton Ford said the house moving and rehabilitation process is already rolling. The construction of the parks and streetscapes will be simultaneous with road construction.
- Clinton Ford stated the house moving is part of the mitigation. The house moving can start now. The parks will be let with the road widening. Clinton said the funding for the parks is tied in with the road widening funding. The road widening will occur in 2018.
- Clinton Ford said GDOT will get out a date early next week for its next mitigation progress meeting. We will plan on meeting from 5:45 p.m.-7:30 p.m. again.