

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
September 16, 2008

PRESENT:

Andrew Altman, Chair  
Alan Greenberger, Vice Chair  
Camille Cates Barnett  
Patrick J. Eiding  
Bernard Lee  
Natalia Olson de Savyckyj  
Nilda Ruiz  
Joseph Syrnick  
Peggy VanBelle, representing Rob Dubow

ABSENT:

Acting Executive Director

Gary J. Jastrzab

Vice Chair Alan Greenberger convened the City Planning Commission Meeting of September 16, 2008 at 1:07pm. He stated that most of the presentations today are updates and information only presentations except for the last item. He asked if anyone in the audience wanted to speak in regards to the Campus Inn Hotel to raise their hands. He took a count and asked them to place their names on a list for them to be called for their public comments.

Andrew Altman arrived at 1:14pm.

1) Approval of the Minutes for August 19, 2008

Upon motion by Dr. Barnett, the City Planning Commission approved the minutes of August 19, 2008.

2) Executive Director's Update

Gary Jastrzab stated that the two staff presentations are for work that we completed over the summer. The presentation of the Rowhouse Manual, which received rave reviews by the preservation community for suggesting ways that this iconic housing in the City can be saved and preserved to house our residents. And also a study that was completed in April, that is a follow-up to the North Delaware Waterfront Vision Plan that was completed in 2001. This is one of a series of follow-up studies that is looking at specifically the transit stations along the region of the North Delaware Riverfront Rail.

In addition, I am sure that you have heard of the potential change in the gaming facility location of Foxwoods site from the Delaware Riverfront to the Gallery. The commission staff has organized an internal team. We will be working with the Foxwood group, as well as, other city agencies to do necessary planning and analysis to work on that proposal. We are actively working on that issue.

He called the Commissioners attention to a brochure for "2008 National Parking Day".

Parking Day is a global day where artists, citizens collaborate to transform meter parking spaces into temporary public parks. It is a volunteered effort to celebrate public parks in city and to promote greening in the city by temporarily creating public parks in parking spaces. Parking Day is this coming Friday, September 19, 2008. The Philadelphia City Planning Commission's staff concept is to list the volume of water that a single parking space could absorb if green parking techniques are used. Our parking space will be located at the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> and Arch Streets. And there will be many other such spaces endorsed by architectural design firms in the city, as well as, other advocacy groups and organizations, and the City's Recycling Office. If you have a chance, please stop by and see our staff who will be conducting the demonstration.

3) Philadelphia City Planning Commission Staff Presentation:  
Rowhouse Manual

Laura Spina, Center City Planner, gave the presentation of the Rowhouse Manual. She stated the Philadelphia City Planning Commission received a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Philadelphia City Planning Commission along with other city agencies got together a group to address the recommendations. The remaining money went to \$25,000 for the writing and design, and \$13,000 for the printing of the manual. The steering committee for the Rowhouse Manual put together three sub-committees to address marketing, preservation, and housing program, and included additional community development corporations, and housing agencies. The project included Rachel Schade, lead consultant, and writer, plus a graphic artist, and Rachel Schade and Kiki Bolender, her partner, made this project a labor of love. They asked a lot of questions about what this manual would do. Who would be the audience? What income level? What neighborhoods? What would be the construction knowledge of the average rowhouse owner? How will the manual be used and what would be the best way to reach the target audience? We wanted the manual to reach the largest audience available. There is basic information to reach the first time homeowner, and also provide information for people working on major renovations. The manual begins by breaking the rowhouse down by basic types of structure from the colonial period to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The book doesn't adhere to strict preservation guidelines. The manual doesn't address the exterior only. For interior spaces, the manual gives suggestions for making use of small spaces, mechanical and structural issues. When talking with Project HOME and other CDC's, we found that many new homeowners simply don't know the basics. How often to get heaters checked? When to clean out gutters? The book also offers basic tips on hiring professionals. Gives tips on the best place to hire the best person to do the job. The book emphasis the best way to make their house green. We talk about planting street trees, flower boxes, having energy star appliances, installing rain barrels, and other ways they can make the building as energy efficient as possible. When we were finished, we created PDF on the Philadelphia City Planning Commission's website, so that it is free to download it for any body. We also had 5,000 of the manuals printed. These were mailed to all of the community and civic organizations for people that don't have access to the internet, and also to all branches of the city's libraries. We have received great promotion for the manual. And have been on other websites with links to this manual on our website. At the Old House Fair, which was sponsored by the Preservation Alliance, we had a booth and gave out information on how to reach our website to download the manual. We also see that this manual could be a launching pad to bigger incentives. We researched way too much information that could fit in a 48-page book. We think that maybe this could be placed in a larger web based program to reach more people. There are similar programs in Chicago, Baltimore and Seattle. The website could be a one stop shop that has architecture, neighborhood information, housing information, and agencies, grant and loan information, maintenance, and even house plans into how to renovate a house. We think this is a great way to market our housing stock to people who might think about moving into Philadelphia.

Dr. Barnett asked Ms. Spina if she has talked to our Department of Technology about the web based that you are interested in

Ms. Spina replied no, that she's just starting to do the research to put the proposal together.

Dr. Barnett told her that she needed to talk to Allan Frank, new Director of DOT. He is updating our various websites.

Mr. Altman asked her if she has gone out to other neighborhoods to do forums and workshops.

Ms. Spina replied that she hasn't but the Preservation Alliance Homeownership workshop has. Rachel is starting to do that in Philadelphia in a couple of weeks.

Mr. Altman replied that Gary should reach out to coordinate with the Office of Housing and Community Development. They are going out to the community to talk about home repairs, and their housing programs effort.

Ms. Spina replied that over 8,500 people have downloaded the manual since it was placed on our website.

Mr. Altman thanked her for speaking about this great work.

4) Philadelphia City Planning Commission Staff Presentation: North Delaware Riverfront Rail Station Urban Design Study

Michael Pini, City Planner in the Urban Design Division, gave the presentation on the North Delaware Riverfront Rail Station Urban Design Study. He stated that you can download this study from the Philadelphia City Planning Commission's website. The North Delaware Riverfront Rail Station Urban Design Study was initiated by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission in June 2007. It is one of a series of follow-up studies on the North Delaware Riverfront Plan, which was completed in 2001. It was funded by Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI). The Philadelphia City Planning Commission has been a recipient for a number of TCDI grants, which resulted in Broad Street, Germantown area, and Market Street in West Philadelphia. A team was assembled with strong background in Urban Design, landscape architecture, and transportation. The work has been supported by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission staff. The plan focused on the opportunities and challenges facing 5 stations along the R7 regional rail line. The guiding objective of this project is to transform each station, Bridesburg, Wissinoming (which is currently closed), Tacony, Holmesburg Junction, and Torresdale, into an active community resource that serves the needs of and encourages increased rail ridership by existing and new residents alike. The land uses surrounding each station and their proximity to the North Delaware Riverfront, which promises to change substantially over the coming decades, make these areas attractive for future Transit Oriented Development areas. This could become a model for TOD planning throughout the city. Throughout the process the Philadelphia City Planning Commission has been reporting to members of the Advisory Committee with representatives from City agencies, stakeholders, and neighborhood representatives to guide, support, and ultimately implement the plan recommendations. In November 2007, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission held a series of focus group meetings in each neighborhood to get feedback from the residents. Some of the issues they discussed were the environment, commuting costs and times. Pedestrian mixed-use development is desirable for Transit Oriented Development. The major problem, that was identified, was the visibility on the rail station sites. The second issue was safety, for the short term increased lighting and availability of communication with police in case of emergencies. The third issue was maintenance and station management, the stations are not inviting.

They discussed ways to identify opportunities for mixed-use development around the stations, and construction to be designed as TOD. This study supports that goal.

Mr. Greenberger asked what are the plans for distributing this report.

Mr. Pini replied on our website.

Mr. Greenberger asked have you sent out e-mail notifications that this study is available for downloading.

Mr. Pini replied that we will work on that.

Ms. Olson replied that Councilman Greenlee introduced TOD legislation. She asked if his office has been contacted.

Mr. Pini replied not directly.

Mr. Altman asked did you do an analysis when you looked at zoning for TOD for what the zoning is in the area, and what is suitable for the kind of mixed-use development.

Mr. Pini replied we did look at the zoning for the North Delaware Riverfront.

Mr. Jastrzab replied that some of the recommendations are only conceptual, we didn't look in great detail at exactly what kind of zoning changes might be necessary. This study is open to follow-up work.

Mr. Altman stated that it would be helpful to know what the zoning is for to see what does match and doesn't match, and then we can talk about the TOD legislation how it could be constructed and mapped out for the City at the appropriate time. It could be a helpful baseline of information.

Dr. Barnett asked what is the relationship of this work and the work that Penn Praxis have done along the waterfront.

Mr. Pini replied this is further north than the area they have done. Sarah Thorp, of the Delaware Riverfront Corporation, was on the Advisory Committee. She has done very important work on the green plan for the North Delaware Riverfront plan.

Sarah Thorp, Executive Director of the Delaware Riverfront Corporation, stated that she sat on the advisory committee for this project and worked very closely with the consultant to make sure that this plan was coordinated with her plan. The rail stations are also in her master plan and they touch each other very closely. It is very important, and she supports the plan.

Mr. Altman asked what are the principals for the next step out of this. What do you see to make this go forward?

Mr. Pini replied we need to work with the Streets Department on it.

5) *Information Only: Proposed development for 1213 Walnut Street*

Mr. Greenberger stated that Mr. Blaik is a client of his firm, not on this project but on others.

Omar Blaik, founder and president of u<sup>3</sup> ventures, stated that this is a complicated project than what is normally developed. This site is the parking lot and building next to it.

Team: Enrique Norton, architecture, Ed Driscoll, construction management, Saul Ewing, and Pennoni for transportation and engineering. The project site is between 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> on Walnut Street. His aspirations: mixed uses, work on streetscape, first floor retail, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor cinema theater with 5 screens, and on top off that would be the hotel, and then on top of that would be residential of approximately 280 apartments for rent. Most important is the first floor, creating entrances for retail, cinema and residences. Green roof that is accessible. This site is in the middle of block. It is almost like a Z section building, 65-foot height, and create public portions. The two aspects of zoning are FAR and more parking. There is a 19% FAR increase, and parking not in the plans. Parking study found that they don't need as much parking spaces.

Mr. Syrnick asked if the residential is rental or ownership.

Mr. Blaik replied that it is rental.

Mr. Syrnick asked about their traffic plan.

Mr. Blaik replied that according to the traffic study, if we try to accommodate parking on our side, we will cause traffic congestion.

Mr. Syrnick asked how would it work for cabs to drop off passengers.

Ms. VanBelle stated that there are no deliveries and movers on the plans.

Mr. Blaik replied that the loading dock is in the back on Sansom Street with service lanes and elevators in the back.

Ms. VanBelle asked does it service retail and the residents.

Ms. Olson asked how did the meeting go with Washington West.

Mr. Blaik replied they were great.

Mr. Altman stated this is a great, exciting project. What is your timing?

Mr. Blaik replied in the spring or summer of next year the financing package will be in place.

Mr. Altman asked when do you anticipate going before zoning.

Mr. Blaik replied that is our next step.

6) ZBA Case: Campus Inn Hotel, 40<sup>th</sup> and Pine Streets

Martin Gregorski, Development Planner, stated the City Planning Commission first heard this case on May 20, 2008. The party at interest is Campus Inn. The purpose is for an 11-story, extended stay hotel, with outdoor dining, and accessory signage. It is zoned "R5A". They are keeping the historic mansion with the approval of the Historical Commission. They will need a number of variances:

	Required	Proposed
On-site parking spaces	120	4
Open area	50%	44%
Front yard minimum setback	8 feet	9 feet
Rear yard minimum setback	20 feet	0 feet
Building height limit	35 feet	114 feet
Maximum number of stories	3	11

The Philadelphia city Planning Commission staff has received the traffic study. The developer has made agreements for off-site parking, and this property is located near a confluence of public transit. This site may be considered a transit-oriented development, and the variances requested are consistent with the bulk and density of such a development. The staff believes that the preservation of a historic mansion, the establishment of a café, which will provide an anchor for the end of a commercial strip, which may create synergy for new commercial uses, and that this project will cure this site of a blighting influence, justifies the height and massing of this project. The City Planning Commission staff recommendation is approval.

Mr. Greenberger asked for the status from the Historical Commission.

Mr. Gregorski replied they have their approval.

Mr. Syrnick asked if any changes were made since May.

Mr. Gregorski replied there were no changes made.

Dr. Barnett asked what will be the use of the historic structure.

Tom Lussenhop replied the historic mansion will serve as a gate house for the hotel. The porch will be used as a breakfast room, and the upstairs will be used for guest's rooms.

Ms. Ruiz asked if there have been any changes from the letter from the Smart Growth or group alliance.

Mr. Lussenhop replied that the rooms have been reduced as per input by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission.

Mr. Altman asked about the traffic issues and how were

Dick Orth, of Orth Rodgers, replied as for parking, the hotel guests would use guaranteed parking spaces, valet parking or public transportation. It is not a major traffic generator. A shuttle or van service will be available.

Mr. Altman asked how many parking spaces are guaranteed.

Mr. Orth replied 75 spaces have been guaranteed.

Mr. Lee asked about green roofs.

Sam Herschel replied 3 green roofs on this project.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mary Goldman, resident for over 40 years, stated it is not big enough for that size, parking and traffic. This neighborhood has no parking. Can they guarantee the 75 spaces at all times? They have a big elephant next door.

Mary Daniels, resident, stated that she testified previously. She said the height is the major issue; height lead to density and that leads to parking. These will be extended stay use, and there is no guaranteed that this will be extended stay use. Campus Apts remains a multiple use.

Emiliano Rodriguez, representing Lynne Fox, stated they are in support of the project. They represent hotel workers. Herschel Hospitality will be running the hotel.

Dan Deritis, former resident, stated he lived there for 23 years. He currently owns 4 homes. He sees it as a plus because there are no options. University City has grown over the years. He is in full and favorable support of this project.

Jeff Block stated that he and his wife moved to 46<sup>th</sup> and Osage. He is excited about this project.

Melani Lamond, resident since 1970 and a realtor, stated that they rent a carriage house and the renters leave their car in their driveway.

Mary L., resident for 16 years, stated that each development has bought more development to the community. She is supportive of this project.

Marianna Thomas stated that she is a resident and has her office there. She has not seen the traffic study results. They have not had their questions answered. Venture of one of the biggest landlords in the city. She is against this project. They have not had the courtesy to share information with them. She said it is too big a project for too small a lot.

Karen Allen questioned the traffic study and the letter of agreement between the developer and Penn if it is breached.

Glenn Moyer testified at the May 20 meeting. He said none of the testimony for the opposers was listed. It is false testimony. The Historical Commission records are not correct.

This has to go back to the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

Mr. Altman replied some issues that have been raised. The first one is the parking, guaranteed 75 spaces. How is it enforced? The second is planning, the height and transit. The third is use, extended stay. If market changes and the use changes.

Jon Farnham, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, stated they review the application in concept. It is a way for the developer to gain insight. Historical Commission did review and approved in concept. Before the developer can go to License and Inspection, the Historical Commission will see it again. We are merely an advisor.

Mr. Greenberger asked for a preview on the mansion.

Mr. Farnham replied the entire site since the early 1970's, maybe 1972. The Historical Commission does have full jurisdiction on this site.

Mr. Syrnick asked is this the design conceptual approval.

Mr. Farnham replied there are minor changes.

Mr. Syrnick asked what was its previous use.

Mr. Farnham replied this was a convalesce home for many years and has been vacant. Its current condition is deplorable.

Mr. Altman replied this site is an historically significant mansion and the new construction would be built around it.

Mr. Farnham replied that the Commission pondered at great length. The site is in poor condition. The Historical Commission felt if this is the only way to restore this mansion. It was a trade off. This is not in a historic district. We are not charged to preserve streetscape.

Ms. VanBelle asked why do you think this is the only way to restore the mansion.

Mr. Farnham replied this is the only proposal. This may be the last chance to save this building.

Mr. Greenberger stated that he spent a far amount of time this past week looking over the information and the traffic study. He went out to look at it. It is a difficult project. There hasn't been a proposal for decades and there has to be a reason, such as, traffic, historic site, and massing. He read all the traffic studies and he believes it is correct. The parking spaces, it will be 75 spaces. People, who are here for the hospital, will not be using their cars. People, who have business with the University of Pennsylvania, will walk, and the trolley is nearby. If he put himself in Jon's place, he would probably do the same. The ZBA will have to sort out the massing and height the developer puts forth other site, he feels that some are not relevant because they are in the same area. He doesn't believe the image is correct. He was driving in a convertible by St. James and he wasn't even aware of the historic houses. He would like it to be

smaller, but he feels staff recommendation is appropriate. Talk about the economic and hardship of the site.

Mr. Lussenhop introduced David Adelman and Terry O'Leary.

Mr. Adelman replied in regards to the economic, the 120 rooms now has 15 operations, the amenities will be the same.

Mr. O'Leary replied at first we were under the impression that we were going to demolish it, but as time went on we found out it was not going to happen. We found 120 rooms are appropriate for a small hotel. Now we are down to 115 rooms. We cannot go lower. They feel good about the green elements.

Mr. Greenberger asked what do other flags feel about this.

Mr. O'Leary replied the Marriott, etc. all have the same amenities.

Mr. Greenberger asked what did you say to people in the community about it staying an extended-stay hotel.

Mr. O'Leary replied we will sign a 20-year agreement. The Marriott Residents Inn is the only extended stay hotel in the city. It will stand on its own.

Mr. Greenberger asked what makes this an extended-stay hotel.

Mr. O'Leary replied the studio apartments and full-sized kitchen.

Mr. Greenberger asked does it come with a price.

Mr. O'Leary replied if they stay longer, they will pay less.

Mr. Adelman replied \$45 to \$50 million, for an average \$175 to 180 a night to generate \$5,000 a month. Studio apartments would not pay \$5,000 a month.

Mr. Altman asked you are going to the ZBA for a request of a variance, would it only be for extended-stay hotel. What would make sure it doesn't change?

Carl Primavera replied tied in to specific approval, such as non-conforming structure and use student housing facilities. We have that use in demand and site that is in no demand. The only used that has been identified is an extended use hotel.

The attorney representing the group is against it.

Mr. Primavera replied the parking would be a proviso and would be willing to file a deed restriction with the Law Department.

Mr. Greenberger asked did you go to City Council for approval with Plan of Development. The various provisos, do they have the same effect?

Mr. Primavera replied yes.

David Fineman, opposition attorney, replied you will approve a hotel, the ZBA will approve a hotel, and you will not in essence approve an extended-stay hotel. The premier hotel "AKA", they will rent for 1 or 2 nights if the rooms are available. When the extended-stay rooms are available, they will be rented.

Mr. Primavera replied we want to commit to the model to build it as an extended-stay hotel.

Mr. Greenberger replied that we are only giving the recommendation to the ZBA, not the approval.

Mr. Syrnick replied this is very difficult. The design is good for café, and the mansion, but the mass and height are bad. Traffic and parking are not significant issues.

Ms. VanBelle feels the same about parking. Her issue is the site is overbearing.

Mr. Eiding replied the issue is there is a building here that will be here until it is demolished. There is an issue of the height. He doesn't think parking and traffic is a problem.

Ms. Ruiz replied that looking at the picture of what is there now and this is a mess. She agrees the design of the hotel is overbearing.

Ms. Olson replied the economic impact analysis, parking spaces, agreements that are happening, we don't have many criteria. Is the Philadelphia City Planning Commission providing the developers and the community with criteria?

Mr. Jastrzab replied the staff is trying to consider each project on its merits, appropriateness, or consistency on the plan. Staff recommendation is approval, but it is a tradeoff for the economic development and community for the height and mass.

Mr. Altman replied it is a hard decision. What the Philadelphia City Planning Commission staff has tried to do here with height, treatment of different buildings. Is there some policy plans? Interesting pictures, but how will it be developed? What are the policy levels and enforcement levels? Looking at policy, tradeoffs, how long has this site been sitting there? He is supporting staff recommendation as well.

Upon motion by Mr. Eiding, seconded by Dr. Barnett, the City Planning Commission approved the ZBA Case for Campus Inn Hotel at 40<sup>th</sup> and Pine Streets with the provisos for the dedicated parking spaces and the use is for extended-stay hotel.

Mr. Altman adjourned the City Planning Commission Meeting of September 16, 2008 at 3:19pm.

## SUMMARY

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- 1) Minutes of the Meeting of 8-19-08 Approved
- 2) Executive Director's Update
- 3) PCPC Staff Presentation:  
Presentation  
Rowhouse Manual (Laura Spina)
- 4) PCPC Staff Presentation: Presentation  
N. Delaware Riverfront Rail  
Station Urban Design Study  
(Michael Pini)
- 5) Information Only: Proposed Presentation  
Development for 1213 Walnut St.  
(u<sup>3</sup> ventures – Omar Blaik)
- 6) ZBA Case: Campus Inn Hotel, Approved  
40<sup>th</sup> & Pine Sts. (Martin Gregorski) w/provisos  
parking spaces  
& use as an  
extended-stay hotel.