



Oakland Planning and Development Corporation

Green Team

Meeting Minutes Thursday, July 20, 2017 6:00 – 7:30 pm

Oakland Career Center

Attendees:

David Zwier, Andrea Boykowycz, Michael Medwed, Jonathon Swiderski, Therese VanArsdale, Robert Harper

As this meeting was very lightly attended, we didn't adhere strictly to the agenda but discussed broadly what future issues we'd like to work on. Andrea Boykowycz will be the new Green Team coordinator as David is leaving OPDC in August. There will be a new push to re-invigorate and perhaps to re-purpose the Green Team, broadening its focus to include stormwater management projects, energy conservation and de-carbonization and environmental sustainability in addition to continuing focus on bike and pedestrian trail planning and public greenspaces and trees.

Here are some of the ideas that were discussed:

1. Stormwater management

- a. What are other cities doing? What kinds of opportunities exist in Oakland, and how can we learn about them? Could we hire a consultant to survey the Bates Street watershed (which includes the vast majority of Central Oakland) and perhaps the old Murphy Street watershed (a stream that follows the path of Robinson Street down through Oak Cliffe to the river) to identify opportunities for stormwater management projects that we could spearhead? Could we invite Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and Pitt to talk about recent rain garden/stormwater capture projects they've completed?
 - b. Storm drains could be coupled with natural catchment pockets – each neighborhood could have a few, these are of a scale that 20 households could collaborate on one.
 - c. Could participating in such a neighbor-driven initiative win concessions or considerations from PWSA on participants' water bills, for example? Are there other incentive structures we could investigate?
 - d. Making meadows cool again: water is slowed tremendously (and percolates into the soil better) where plants are allowed to grow tall. Could we pilot an initiative to make meadows of some front lawns? Could we develop alternatives to the pattern of paving front yards to avoid maintenance – a practice that hugely exacerbates stormwater problems?
 - e. Can we encourage Oakland institutions to install green roofs and rain gardens wherever possible? Noting with appreciation the old Children's Hospital site on Fifth Avenue and new rain garden installed on the grounds of the Cathedral of Learning, both very effective at improving drainage.
2. **Anderson Bridge** closure. It's still not 100% clear if the bridge is to be demolished and rebuilt, or simply repaired – but either way, it's expected to be closed for at least a year starting in 2019.

What do we need to do to advocate effectively for better pedestrian and bike access to Schenley Park and the trails in Junction Hollow, especially viz. detours while the bridge is closed?

3. **Updates** requested on older business:
 - a. Bates St. plantings: what's required now?
 - i. West Side: maintenance – perhaps something that could be volunteer-driven?
There are no additional funds available to support continued improvement on the scale we completed a couple years ago. But invasives removal is an ongoing challenge.
 - ii. East Side: this is a bigger challenge, and will require more professional input to plan.
 - b. Joncaire Steps: project is out to bid, not clear yet what the construction schedule will be. Neil Manganaro of Bruce Kraus's office told David "this fall."
 - c. Bike lane striping on Schenley Drive between Roberto Clemente and Forbes needs to be re-done. Andrea will bring this up at the next Pitt/city planning meeting, next week.
 - d. Junction Hollow bike trail lighting needs to be improved. Andrea will look into this.
4. **Treevitalize** deadline for requesting new street trees is this September. Please consult with your neighbors and let Andrea know where the opportunities are in your neighborhood, we will apply.
5. **NEW MEETING SCHEDULE PROPOSED:** Please let Andrea know your thoughts about the possibility for every SECOND Thursday instead of every THIRD Thursday for Green Team meetings.

Next Meeting: Thursday, August 17 at 6:00

Please send comments and questions to Andrea Boykowycz at aboykowycz@opdc.org. Thanks!