

## **Development Activities Meeting**

**June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 Minutes**

### **Demolition of Row Houses Located on 3400 Block of Bates Street**

**Presenting: Jon Kamin, Attorney for Walnut Capital**

Walnut Capital has a sales agreement to acquire the Oakland Gateway Ventures site, 3400 Bates. They plan to demolish the 12 row houses and remove the billboard; a Development Activities Meeting (DAM) is required as the demolition must be approved by City Planning Commission. Walnut Capital does not at this time have a plan to redevelop the site. The demolished area will be seeded, leveled, and planted with grass.

Q: What is the timeline of this project?

A: We have applied for a demolition permit from city and are seeking Planning Commission approval at the end of July. Demolition will occur in August.

Q: Will there be coordination of demolition work to not overlap with the return to campus and potential impacts on traffic?

A: The plan for demolition is the first or second week of August. They have an established city contractor to do demolition work. There may be only one lane closure during demolition. Overall, this should be relatively quick.

Q: Can you clarify the plans for the billboards that are facing the Boulevard of the Allies?

A: They will be demolished and removed and they have the rights to do so. They will hopefully complete this in the first half of July.

Q: What are the plans for lighting in the area and the maintenance of the grass once it is completed?

A: There are no plans for lighting. The grass will be cut by Walnut Capital.

Q: How long has this acquisition been in process?

A: They have been working on this for about six months. Plans are open on what will happen to it after demolition.

Q: Is it true that Walnut Capital plans to sell the site to the University of Pittsburgh afterwards?

A: They will sell it to Pitt after demolition and stabilization.

Q: What is timeframe for future uses?

A: That is a long-term discussion for the university.

Q: Will Zulema Street be closed during demolition?

A: The portion that meets with Bates Street may be closed briefly during demolition.

Q: Who is taking on the responsibility of the outstanding court fines tied to the properties?

A: Outstanding fines and tax liens will be payed at the close of the property.

Q: Will litter in the area of the site be removed?

A: Yes, the area will be maintained during demolition.

Q: Will public utilities be affected?

A: No.

Q: If the plan is to sell the site to Pitt, why are they not doing this work?

A: It was a business decision and it was done collaboratively.

Q: Was it Walnut Capital's or Pitt's idea to acquire this property?

A: It is outside of my knowledge, but this has been done collaboratively between the two groups.

Q: Is this site in the Pitt Institutional Master Plan?

A: No.

Q: Why is Walnut acquiring these properties and not Pitt?

A: We cannot give details.

Q: What did Walnut Capital pay in acquisition and paying liens?

A: About \$5.6 million.

Q: Will there be lead testing for the site?

A: They have done environmental testing and there are no issues regarding hazardous materials.

Q: What is the storm water management plan for the site?

A: There is none since it is grass and there are no impervious surfaces.

Q: When will Walnut Capital close a deal with Pitt?

A: Sometime in the fall.

Q: Does anyone at Pitt comment on future plans?

[No comment from Pitt representatives]

Q: Will the contractor provide notice before demolition.

A: They will coordinate with OPDC once a date is formalized to properly update residents.

Q: Will the Zulema parklet be affected?

A: There will be no effect except the adjacent demolition.

Comment from participant: There is extraordinary concern that Walnut Capital can buy properties on speculation with no plan of redevelopment.

Comment from presenter: This is a long-term, opportunistic business decision for future plans.

Q: What is square footage of the site?

A: About 4/10ths of an acre (more than 18,500 square feet).

Q: Does Pitt have comment on this project? There is large concern from the community about the future plans on this site?

[No comment]

Comment from OPDC: OPDC will make sure that there are conversations on future plans for potential redevelopment.

Comment from presenter: Future project proposals will require meetings with community.

Q: Will the sidewalks be repaired near the site?

A: Any damaged sidewalks will be repaired and replaced.

Q: What is the amount that Pitt will pay for this?

A: They will reimburse Walnut Capital for the purchase and associated costs from demolition.

Comment from participants: Oakland residents will not welcome Pitt's expansion. There is a large amount of concern about this project.

Comment from Pitt representative: We will connect with community members offline about concerns with future redevelopment plans.

Comment from presenter: They understand the concern, but demolition is a good first step overall.

Comment from presenter: July 27<sup>th</sup> is planning commission hearing, in which the public can attend and offer testimony. There will be a briefing beforehand on July 13<sup>th</sup>. The briefing is public but does not include testimony.

Q: How does this parcel have relevance to Walnut Capital's holdings on McKee Place?

A: There is geographical proximity, but no other relevance.

Q: Is there a written signed agreement with Pitt?

A: Yes, but there is no comment on terms.

Q: Does this site have any relevance to Walnut Capital property acquisitions on Halket?

A: No

Q: Is there a waste management plan for materials from demolition? Can anything be reused?

A: No. Due to the condition of houses, there will likely be nothing salvageable.

Comment from OPDC: Based on comments from community members during this meeting, there is a clear and present concern about the future of this site and the university's involvement.

### Comments from Zoom Chat:

- 17:46:24 From OPDC : Hi -we'll get started around 6pm
- 17:50:38 From OPDC : Hi everyone - we'll get started in about 10 minutes
- 17:58:00 From OPDC : Hi everyone - we'll get started in about 5 minutes or so. Unless you are up to present, please keep your video and mics off - thanks!
- 17:59:23 From OPDC to wanda wilson(Direct Message) : we are live on facebook
- 17:59:53 From wanda wilson to OPDC(Direct Message) : ok. thanks
- 18:05:27 From Millie-Oakcliffe : What are Walnut Capital's plans???
- 18:05:37 From Mavis Rainey, Oakland TMA : Would there be any lighting added to light up this new grassy area?
- 18:05:52 From Millie-Oakcliffe : What did he say about the billboards???
- 18:06:10 From Andrea Boykowycz : Jon Kamin said the billboards would be removed. How long has Walnut Capital been planning acquisition of this site? And with what intent?
- 18:06:13 From Millie-Oakcliffe : We have read that WC planned to sell to Pitt — true or not??
- 18:06:15 From Mavis Rainey, Oakland TMA : Who would maintain that the grass is cut?
- 18:06:24 From Andrea Lavin Kossis : Do you have a timeframe for making proposals about future uses for the site?
- 18:07:00 From Millie-Oakcliffe : Will Zulema be closed?
- 18:07:31 From Lizabeth Gray : Who is taking on the responsibility of the outstanding court fines tied to the property? Also, how soon can you get someone there to cut the grass and clean up litter.
- 18:07:46 From Timothy Parenti : Is it true that these parcels have been, or are in the process of being, acquired from Walnut Capital by Pitt? <https://triblive.com/local/pitt-purchases-2-oakland-properties-for-25-million-expanding-campus-footprint/>
- 18:07:49 From Mavis Rainey, Oakland TMA : Would any public utilities be impacted during demolition?
- 18:09:26 From Lizabeth Gray : What about until the demo? Who will cut grass in the meantime?
- 18:10:23 From Andrea Boykowycz : Was acquisition of the property Walnut Capital's idea, or Pitt's?
- 18:10:31 From Millie-Oakcliffe : is this in Pitt's IMP???
- 18:11:33 From Millie-Oakcliffe : why doesn't Pitt do the demolishing themselves???
- 18:11:43 From Andrea Boykowycz : Did Walnut Capital acquire this property in collaboration with, or at the request of, the university?
- 18:12:03 From Elena Zaitsoff : I see Marybeth McGrew is here from Pitt. Why did Pitt not buy it directly? It seems Walnut Capital is just a pass through.
- 18:12:09 From Andrea Boykowycz : What did Walnut Capital pay for acquisition of the property and clearing the liens?
- 18:13:20 From Lizabeth Gray : Any lead testing being done?
- 18:13:57 From Timothy Parenti : @Millie: This site appears to be outside the geographical boundary which is required to be covered by Pitt's IMP.
- 18:15:20 From Andrea Boykowycz : What is "a very long time"?

18:16:22 From Andrea Boykowycz : The back yards of the row houses were formerly a stream, and are primarily fill; is there any stormwater capture planned for the site once it's demolished?

18:16:44 From Andrea Boykowycz : grass is not stormwater management.

18:17:11 From Lizabeth Gray : When do you expect too close with Pitt?

18:17:41 From Andrea Boykowycz : Would anyone from the university like to comment on their plans for this site?

18:17:59 From Mavis Rainey, Oakland TMA : Will your contractor provide notice prior to start of demolition?

18:19:11 From Millie-Oakcliffe : Oakcliffe needs to know

18:19:20 From Millie-Oakcliffe : We use Bates and Zulema a lot

18:19:55 From zoe : Will demolition affect the parklet?

18:21:26 From Andrea Boykowycz : It's extraordinary that Walnut Capital would buy this parcel on spec with no plan.

18:21:34 From Millie-Oakcliffe : and what if Pitt decides not to buy

18:22:08 From Timothy Parenti : Given that the pending sale to Pitt is known, it seems entirely relevant to this project to have comment from them at this time.

18:22:23 From Millie-Oakcliffe : yes. where is Pitt tonight??

18:22:35 From Andrea Boykowycz : \$5.5 million is a lot to pay for a parcel of grass.

18:22:37 From Timothy Parenti : They are here, but so far silent.

18:22:37 From OPDC to wanda wilson(Direct Message) : question from facebook: what is the square footage of this space?

18:22:56 From Millie-Oakcliffe : seems to me that they may not be interested in purchasing it

18:23:58 From Millie-Oakcliffe : Anybody from Pitt willing to say that Pitt is truly interested in purchasing and has plans to do that??? tonight. now??

18:23:59 From Andrea Boykowycz : looks like 18,484 feet

18:24:11 From Andrea Boykowycz : 0.4243 acres

18:24:44 From Lizabeth Gray : Will Walnut repair and or replace all the surrounding sidewalks after demolition?

18:25:06 From Timothy Parenti : And known that Pitt is here, but silent.

18:25:12 From Millie-Oakcliffe : thank you Wanda

18:25:34 From OPDC to wanda wilson(Direct Message) : FB question: how much will Pitt pay for it?

18:25:38 From zoe : As to the concern....we are concerned!

18:26:10 From Alex Toner : Hey all, I can't speak to any future plans for the site, but I am here and I hear you all!

18:26:15 From Andrea Boykowycz : I am not aware of any Oakland resident who would welcome expansion of Pitt's campus to the south end of Central Oakland.

18:26:20 From Millie-Oakcliffe : but our "standing" will always be challenged

18:26:42 From Millie-Oakcliffe : it will affect everybody coming too and from Oakland, so everybody should have standing.

18:26:44 From Elena Zaitsoff : So Pitt, don't wonder why there is distrust... this is a perfect example of what fosters it.

18:27:20 From Timothy Parenti : Amen, Elena. Perfect opportunity for them to share anything. Instead, silence. This smells rotten.

18:27:20 From zoe : Why wouldn't Pitt make the purchase from the previous owner's group? We is Walnut in the middle?

18:28:11 From Elena Zaitsoff : Perhaps Pitt needed a "holder" so it didn't have to be in the IMP.

18:28:38 From Millie-Oakcliffe : not nice Alex, Jamie

18:28:44 From Timothy Parenti : @Elena: It's outside the geographic boundary where the IMP is required anyway.

18:29:08 From Timothy Parenti : Really unconscionable that Pitt is allowed to be silent at this meeting, frankly.

18:29:17 From Millie-Oakcliffe : yes

18:31:38 From Millie-Oakcliffe : is there a written signed agreement with Pitt already?

18:31:48 From Millie-Oakcliffe : If not - what if Pitt backs out??

18:32:05 From Andrea Boykowycz : Does this parcel have any relevance to Walnut's holdings on McKee?

18:32:55 From Timothy Parenti : The university will "seek approval for construction of a suitable building" at a future committee meeting, DeJong said.

The Bates Street site, which consists of more than 18,500 square feet, "sits at an important and highly visible juncture for the university," DeJong said, explaining that "acquisition will enhance a key campus gateway."

18:32:56 From Timothy Parenti : Pitt will pay \$5.6 million for the land, plus \$399,125 in reimbursable costs, demolition expenses and transactional costs for the Bates Street site, DeJong said.

18:33:05 From Timothy Parenti : ^ From the Trib

18:34:01 From Delaney, Zachary : Not sure if this was addressed earlier, I popped in midway through, but is there a plan for sustainable waste management throughout the demolition i.e. material recycling et cet

18:34:09 From Andrea Boykowycz : Walnut Capital's professed ignorance about the future plans for this site is certainly convenient for the university in this context. None of this is going unnoticed.

18:35:01 From zoe : yes

18:35:38 From Alex Toner : Myself and the CGR team are more than happy to make ourselves available to talk more about this topic offline to anyone who wants to discuss. Please reach out to me or Jamie or the team!

18:35:48 From Timothy Parenti : Just clear that Pitt \*does\* have plans. And that that should be read into the record, despite their disappointing choice to be silent here today.

19:50:43 From zoe: Why offline?????

19:50:50 From Millie-Oakcliffe: yes. should be online