

Allegheny County Council

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Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 30, 2007

5:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Economic Development & Housing

Brenda Frazier, Chair; Jim Burn, Joan Cleary, John DeFazio, Matt Drozd, Dave Fawcett, Mike Finnerty, Bob Macey, and Jan Rea - Members

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 5:01.*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Dennis Davin, Director, Economic Development

Summary: *Invited Guests or designees Present: Todd Reidbord (Walnut Capital), Robert Rubenstein (URA), Susheela Nemani Stanger (URA), Don Kortland (URA Executive Director), Maurice Strul, Mike Pehur, Mr. Uber, and Mr. Flynn*

Council Staff Present: Mr. Barker and Ms. Liptak

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Chair Brenda Frazier, Matt Drozd, Michael Finnerty, Bob Macey, and Council Member William Robinson

Absent: Jim Burn, Joan Cleary, John DeFazio, Dave Fawcett, and Jan Rea

III. Approval of Minutes

3386-07 Motion to approve the minutes of the June 27, and June 28, 2007 Economic Development & Housing Committee Meetings.

Summary:

Action: **A motion was made by Macey, seconded by Finnerty, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried unanimously.**

IV. Agenda Items

Resolution

3347-07 A Resolution of the County of Allegheny adopting the Bakery Square Tax Increment Financing Plan presented by the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, and authorizing related agreements.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *The Chair gave a summary of the bill and deferred to the Department of Economic Development & URA.*

Mr. Kortland described efforts of the URA and Walnut Capital in reaching a proposal for reusing the old Nabisco site, and gave an overview of the anticipated results and benefits of the project. He also discussed the use of over \$2 million for infrastructure in the community, including Penn Circle.

Mr. Rubenstein noted that school district and city have not yet approved, but have indicated their intent to do so. He then gave an overview of the project and discussed the potential new tax revenues from the project.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked about the uses for the parking spaces in the proposed development, and Mr. Reidbord indicated that parking is primarily for office tenants, and Walnut Capital is trying to make the development as accessible to public transportation as possible.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked about how the 1200 projected jobs break down, and Mr. Reidbord said about half are office, many of which will be in university-related research (primarily medical).

Mr. Finnerty asked about summary of job creation during construction, and received clarification from Mr. Reidbord.

Mr. Macey asked how many tenants are committed, and Mr. Reidbord said Walnut has almost 50% of the retail space committed, and about 35% of the office space is in the proposal phase (although not yet committed).

Mr. Reidbord gave an overview of the traffic improvement plans.

Mr. Drozd expressed his enthusiasm about the project and asked about the organization of Walnut Capital, which Mr. Reidbord discussed.

Mr. Robinson asked about impact on areas adjacent to the TIF District, and Mr. Rubenstein indicated that this was part of the impact study, which found that both the office and retail proposals were nice compliments to what's already in the area.

Mr. Robinson asked if there are written agreements between LDI and Walnut, and Mr. Reidbord indicated that there are not.

Mr. Robinson asked about money for job readiness, whether its offered as part of a signed agreement, and Mr. Rubenstein noted that it is spelled out as part of the TIF Plan. Mr. Reidbord noted that these moneys are from the developer, not TIF proceeds.

Mr. Robinson expressed some concerns about the extent of involvement by community based organizations, and Mr. Rubenstein explained that the Pittsburgh Partnership and Three Rivers Workforce Development were chosen because of their relationships with the state and federal governments and ability to leverage other government money, but they both also talk with community based organizations.

Mr. Robinson asked about other community group involvement, and Mr. Reidbord described who Walnut has met with.

Mr. Robinson asked whether there are any other benefits to the community apart from jobs and physical improvements that do not appear in the plan as it sits today, and Mr. Rubenstein talked about green nature of development (for which LEED certification is pending) and new tax revenues.

Mr. Fitzgerald noted that a huge benefit is the continuation of the development/improvement of the area and remediation of a brownfield site.

Ms. Frazier asked about outreach to businesses already in the area, and Mr. Reidbord discussed preliminary talks with East Liberty Chamber of Commerce and LDI, but indicated that he expects those sorts of efforts to pick up as construction nears conclusion and noted that Walnut does not want to poach tenants from other developments.

Mr. Drozd asked about job generation, and Mr. Reidbord noted that there were only 400-500 jobs there when Nabisco had the site.

Mr. Robinson distributed a draft amendment for members to consider for the next meeting.

The Chair noted that there is another meeting for this discussion.

Action: **Held in Committee**

V. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting was adjourned at 5:50.*