

Meeting Notes
Tenley-Janney PPP Taskforce
18 June 2007

In attendance: Sherry Ettleson; Dan Carozza; Anne Sullivan; Jessica Millman; Stephen Hicks; Archie Williams; Marvin Tievsky; Jane Waldmann; Doug Wonderlic; Mary Alice Levine; Melissa Bird; Abby Frankson; Elizabeth Vaden; Jonathan Bender; Scott Cartland; Susan Linsky; Allison Feeney; Cathy Wiss; Susan Banta; Mary Cheh; Armond Spikell

1. Community Representative Feedback

CM Cheh began the meeting by inviting each representative to express feedback from their respective organizations on the general proposals as discussed at the previous meeting of the Taskforce.

Sole Source vs. RFP. Marvin Tievsky asked how the DC government would decide between a sole-source contract and an RFP. Archie Williams explained that a sole source would require some unique benefit that an RFP would not provide. Speed could be one such benefit.

Soccer Field. Anne Sullivan read an ANC constituent's letter expressing concern about the proposed soccer field being moved to a position adjacent to the single-family homes on 42nd street, and the possibility that late-night use of the field would be detrimental. Scott Cartland said that there is currently the same problem with the playground equipment that is currently in the same location, so he did not see this as a change that would be caused by moving the field. In addition, the current soccer field is fenced, so if the new field is also fenced it may prevent late-night use of that part of the property.

Scott Cartland also expressed concern, however, about moving the soccer field if it meant losing the playground equipment in place now – it is fairly new and well used by the students. He would like grass and some pavement for the playground, and doesn't want the biggest field possible given the site. He thinks the current field is large enough. Mary Alice Levine suggested that a nicer field might attract Stoddert Soccer; however, Scott said that the current field has no league play on it now, and if the current size was replicated for the new field, that would be unlikely.

Library Community Response. Marvin Tievsky said it was important to the Tenley community that the Library construction not be delayed as a result of a PPP. Jane Waldmann remembered Ginnie Cooper's statement at a previous meeting that in her experience a PPP will slow things down. Archie Williams responded while it is not certain, as a rule the fewer hands that touch a project, the speedier it will be. Allison Feeney reminded the group that the Library was supposed to have been built four years ago, and it remains fenced. Sherry Ettleson suggested that the recent decoupling of the four DCPL library projects will mean that our project will not be hindered by what

happens at the other three.

Armond Spikell reminded the group that in all likelihood the timeline will slow in any case given environmental concerns on the site, which is labeled a “hot spot” – probably due to fuel oil from a tank buried in the soil. The library will need a plan for remediation if soil is contaminated, and this takes time (as an example, he cited the Hechinger’s site, which took an additional 2 years to complete for this reason). Armond said that adding an underground garage in this case could actually speed up the project, as the contaminated soil could be removed from the site and disposed-of properly, without the remediation plan. He suggested that given the likelihood of a slow-down regardless of the decision on a PPP, this might not be a reason to forego the opportunity.

Jessica Millman said that some delay would be worth it if there were a more efficient use of taxpayer dollars. An additional benefit would be a more activated Wisconsin Avenue, with more life on the street and therefore more eyes on crime.

Jon Bender reminded the group that DCPL had already spent \$600,000 on the interim library, and he feels we should leverage that investment to make the permanent library project the best we can. He echoed Jessica Millman’s opinion that some delay may be worth it. He also suggested that the library timeline shouldn’t drive the entire decision, as the whole city will benefit from the project should it move forward. He recommended that we think holistically about the project, not parochially.

Sherry Ettleson reminded the group that Ginnie Cooper has said the same thing. While a PPP may delay the project or increase costs, the community should decide how to weigh the benefits and the costs of the decision, and DCPL and its Board would be guided by that.

Steve Hicks also agreed that it is important to make sure the timeline does not drive the whole decision. He felt that it was a great opportunity, and opined that a competitive process would be the best way to insure maximum benefit.

Janney Community Response. Allison Feeny said that the biggest attraction to a PPP for the Janney community is the ability to have a much quicker modernization for the school. Janney support for the PPP hinges on the modernization project being moved-up. She added that DCPS’s plans call for a 40K s.f. addition to Janney, which would substantially reduce the green space and play space on the Janney site -- this is not what the community wants. The PPP, by putting school parking underground, frees-up the current parking lot, which will provide usable green space, and also eliminate the presence of cars on the site, a public safety improvement.

Doug Wonderlic said that the community still needs answers to questions about what the school needs in terms of space, the size and configuration of an addition, etc. Allison Feeny and Susan Banta both said that a feasibility study by DCPS would be the first step to determining those needs – but requires that a decision be made to proceed with a quicker timeline for the Janney modernization. DCPS has said in other meetings,

however, that Janney will get what it needs in terms of an addition and other modernization features regardless of whether it occurs in 2013, 2015 or much sooner. Scott Cartland expressed the opinion that the later Janney is modernized, the bigger the risk that less money will be available for a full modernization given cost overruns at Deal and elsewhere already.

Sherry Ettleson said that five years ago there was significant opposition to a PPP for Janney, but that now it is just the opposite – there is very little or no opposition, and many of the same people who opposed the original proposal are now strong supporters. Mary Alice Levine said that she has heard from her neighbors that they are in favor of Janney modernization, but are worried about losing the soccer field. She added that people she spoke to were unsure about the library and condo building, and have concerns about public safety (i.e., more traffic), and that the library may be too small, as more people will be living in the neighborhood. She finished by saying that the Janney site is historic, and any renovation or additional will be reviewed as such.

2. Strategy for Generating and Disseminating Community Response

CM Cheh said she would like the Taskforce to yield a meaningful response from the community on the PPP opportunity before us. She asked that members provide their recommendations on how best to do this.

Anne Sullivan announced that ANC 3E will hold a broad community meeting on 25 June at 7:00 p.m. in the St. Columbas Great Hall. She invited everyone to attend. Melissa Bird of OP asked how the ANC would formally respond to the PPP proposal. Anne said that the meeting on the 25th will be their opportunity to sum-up their finding and discuss what they have learned. They will not take a stand at the meeting, just inform the community. She said that assessing the community support will come later. The ANC has invited Armond to give a brief summary of the project. He will try to incorporate a 40K s.f. addition for Janney before then, but may not be ready. In addition, want to show how a bigger footprint for the library could be incorporated, as well as the possibility of a public space on the corner and other improvements. Jessica Millman recommended that they prepare boards for review by community at the meeting.

CM Cheh asked for recommendations on how best to express our reaction to the proposal. Jon Bender recommended an on-line forum or website for those who can't get to meetings. Mary Alice Levine suggested a survey conducted by the ANC. Jessica Millman thought it was important to focus on what our taskforce could do, and suggested either a “sense of the taskforce” resolution of some type, or that at a minimum the group agree on certain principals that can be used by all of our organizations to shape our responses. Marvin Tievsky agreed we need to go back to our organizations before weighing in with recommendations.

Doug Wonderlic suggested that FAQs on a web site with answers to questions as they become available would be a benefit. Elizabeth Vaden agreed. CM Cheh suggested that

we could structure the web site to provide information on the Library plans as a stand-alone project, the Janney plans as a stand-alone project to the extent that they are known, and Roadside's plans, including different metrics such as timeline, financial and other benefits or disadvantages in a concise way. Following that, we could provide answers to questions posed by the community. This could be the taskforce's contribution.

Sherry Ettleson said that the Janney website already has this type of content, and they are currently editing it with the new information generated by the community and taskforce meetings. Anne Sullivan reminded the group that the minutes of the ANC special committee are posted on their website, and that these have a lot of answers to questions.

All agreed that they would advertise the meeting on 25 June to generate broad community attendance. At the same time, Susan Banta agreed to identify someone to design a web page and will work to provide content for the description of the projects and the FAQ. She will email the content to taskforce members for feedback before it is posted. CM Cheh stressed that at some point a resolution must be reached by the community about how to respond to the proposal.

3. D.C. Government Response

Susan Banta then summarized briefly a DC government meeting held 14 June during which issues being raised by community were addressed. The most significant outcome of the meeting was the assignment of a Project Manager within the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development to lead the government inquiry into the proposal. The Project Manager will be involved in bringing DCPS and DCPL together, will develop a project plan for evaluating the project, is working closely with the Office of Planning, and has begun working with the OAG to determine the legally required steps and timeline for such a project. He will also facilitate the question of how to distribute the public benefit of the PPP and whether a sole source or RFP process will be followed should the project move forward.

The Deputy Mayor also said that his office would work closely with the Chancellor and Allen Lew to push-up school modernization timeline if the project moves forward.

The question of how to incorporate a PUD process into the plan was also discussed at the meeting, and it was determined that it could be started with an MOU between the schools, library and developer so that the PUD process could begin during the early phases of the project.