

Germantown Forward:

Updating the Germantown Master Plan (1989)

Germantown Community Advisory Committee

Thursday, October 9, 2007

Upcoming events:

1. The Planning Board worksession is scheduled for Thursday, October 18, at 7 p.m.
2. Marilyn Balcombe pointed out that the Governor's proposed budget includes no transit budget from 2008 to 2013—an important issue for Germantown and the CCT. The public can comment on Thursday at a hearing in the County Office Building. Info is online on the Maryland Department of Transportation site. Sign up to speak through the County Delegation.
3. M-83 alternatives will be discussed on October 25—there are eleven alternative alignments to be considered. Margaret Schoap reminded CAC members that Dayspring is a silent retreat center, committed to conserving the land. She suggests that the M-83 project manager be invited to speak to the CAC.

Preview of the presentation to the Planning Board:

4. How Germantown fits within the I-270 Corridor/MD 355 Study.
5. Scenarios that will be used for testing of transportation, school capacity, environmental effect, etc.
6. The public outreach efforts, to date.
7. The staff report will be available on Friday, October 12, 2007 (staff will post on the Germantown Forward web site).
8. No public testimony was taken on the White Flint presentation—no one currently knows if the PB will hear public testimony on Germantown on Oct 18.

Meeting notes from the September 11 meeting:

9. Are they useful?
10. Use them as a checklist?
11. If the committee has a priority, how will that be captured? For example, if the CCT alignment or stops move, will the committee know? Will the answer be in the report on Friday? [No, the report will reflect the conceptual info that has already been presented to the committee.]
12. Create an ongoing list that is cumulative—arrange it by topic and date.
13. Be able to see the priorities.
14. Use letters or numbers so that we can refer to the items in the meeting notes.

15. List action items. There's a lot of stuff and staff and the CAC can't answer it all.
16. Number the list and create a priority list that carries forward.

Follow up from the September 11 meeting discussion on scenarios:

17. The two scenarios didn't capture everything the CAC wanted, so a midrange option was added. Alternative 1—imagine a 4-5 story place. Alternative 2—imagine 8-10 stories along I-270, with housing added on the west only; this alternative is the hybrid developed from the last meeting. Alternative 3—imagine 8-10 stories and housing along both sides of I-270. The graph covers the 1989 plan, the study area likely buildout, the existing development, and the three alternatives.
18. Are existing jobs and houses included in the alternatives? [yes] Can't tell from the chart what is existing and what is new. [Staff will reformat graph.]
19. Is there a conversation—is one DU = one job? [No]
20. What drove the current level of development? The CCT has no funding and is at least 10 years away. Why is that area being targeted by this plan rather than the redevelopment of the Town Center? [The plan will strengthen the TC while also supporting the significant public investment that has already been made in the CCT. About 75-80% of the land is dedication, in reservation, or is in the existing ROW along the length of the CCT. The State Environmental Impact Statement is looking at the west side to Dorsey Mill Road. The CAC's previous question about using the CSX alignment is being reviewed, but there are funding issues. DOE (Department of Energy) has not been in touch lately.]
21. Make a better graphic than the bar chart distributed at the meeting.
22. Service the existing Town Center and MARC Station. DOE is outside of walking distance. The current alignment bypasses the TC.
23. Density should be at the CCT stops.
24. Density should be in the TC—look at the Design Study (1992)
25. Density belongs in the Employment Corridor

Germantown as the Upcounty Cultural Center:

Presentation by Nancy Petrisko of BlackRock Center for the Arts followed by a discussion with Nancy and Stephanie Weishaar on behalf of the Germantown Library.

26. BlackRock was built as a visual arts center, but the primary use has been for performance. As it exists now, it doesn't have a space for large audiences. A larger one could be built, but it would have to replace parking or the outside stage.
27. Use the high school auditorium
28. How would a potential arena impact BlackRock?
29. Would a Birchmere-sized venue be appropriate?
30. History—the community and BlackRock always envisioned a 700 to 750 seat venue in the future, but the original facility was built with 210 seats because of financial constraints.

31. The size of a theater dictates the kind of performances it can offer. Presenting a big name costs about \$100k, a smaller name costs about \$25k, and with 210 seats, \$4-6k is about what is possible.
32. The audience wants a larger space—a small space is out of proportion to the size of the community.
33. Discussing a Germantown world culture event with BlackRock and the Germantown Library—offer multiple venues. What facilities would complement the library and BlackRock? Discussing an annual festival that would celebrate culture, literature, performances.
34. What is the potential for film? AFI reviewed BlackRock’s facilities—it would be very expensive to retrofit it for film. Perhaps outdoors. A whole TC film event with a multitude of offerings?
35. Collaborate with restaurants and TC businesses.
36. College has a 500-seat theater and summer Chautauqua—there are lots of opportunities.
37. They are considering a literary series at the library that could connect to the college.
38. BlackRock is bringing school classes in for matinees.
39. The library is programming for all ages. Storytime is the most popular. The playroom books up three weeks in advance. There are new programs for 6th grade through high school students, such as Dance Dance Revolution, Air Guitar, and book clubs for teens.
40. Maybe a coffee shop can be added in the foyer.
41. ESOL clubs meet about 4-6 times per month, with 10-15 people each meeting.
42. The library is creating Spanish and Chinese collections of books.
43. People are asking for Wednesday morning and Sunday hours.
44. For Town Center libraries, they’re discussing “Urban Library” concepts, including Friday and Saturday night hours, when people are in the TC. May need to hire staff for night hours.
45. The library is like the UN. They have 20-25 ethnic groups every day, and the library is receiving requests from these groups.
46. People come to the library from Germantown, Clarksburg, and Montgomery Village. A lot of people come to just hang out.
47. Last week, a Workforce Engineering Forum was held in the library conference room. Tomorrow, the State DED will have lunch at the library and look at BlackRock.

Next meetings, anticipated schedule, wrap-up:

48. CAC on November 13 and December 11, unless the group decides otherwise. [No, keep both meetings.]
49. Remember October 18 for the Planning Board—check the website to confirm time.
50. Staff anticipates modeling and analysis should be completed around the end of November. The Planning Board might hear those results before or after the holiday break in December.
51. Possibly discuss zoning on November 13. Use the December CAC meeting to review analysis. Don’t delay—schedule another PB session in December right away. No, before going to the Board, bring it to the CAC—give the committee an outline.

52. What happened to the small committee assignments? Start those meetings—use people’s strengths, use their time wisely.
53. Have landowners give a 10-minute presentation about their plans on December 11.
54. Are the bullets/minutes going to be included in the PB presentation on the 18th?

Action Items:

- A. Revise bar graph depicting land use alternatives.
- B. Number or letter meeting notes. Create a cumulative list of questions and recommendations.
- C. Convene working group to evaluate potential changes to the CCT alignment.
- D. Schedule other working group meetings as needed.
- E. Invite M-83 project manager to speak to CAC; also invite the major property owners to speak.
- F. Seek more information about the proposed Upcounty Arena.
- G. Connect MP to TC Retail Advisory Board organized by Nona Watson, Upcounty Services Center.
- H. Schedule zoning discussion for November 13 meeting.
- I. Set additional meeting dates: December 11, January 8, and February 12.