

**Portage Creek Corridor Reuse Plan
Steering Committee Meeting Notes
May 15, 2008, 1:00 p.m.
Goodwill Industries**

Attendees:

Name	Organization
Matt Robbie	E-Squared
Miranda Maupin	E-Squared
Bruce Merchant	City of Kalamazoo
Larry Strange	Corradino Group
Keith Hernandez	City of Kalamazoo
Gary Wager	Kalamazoo River Cleanup Coalition
Andrea Augustine	City of Kalamazoo
Mike Tackett	The Corradino Group
Guy A Corradino	The Corradino Group
Kelly Smallegan-Maas	Lambert, Edwards & Assoc.
Andrea Clark	Lambert, Edwards & Assoc.
Burt Deutsch	The Corradino Group
Bill Hughes	Environmental Concerns Committee
Ken Horton	Milwood Neighborhood Watch
Tammy Barnard	Edison Neighborhood Association
Mark Ducharme	MDEQ
Jamie Kneen	Heritage Community
Jack Mekemson	Goodwill Industries
Sonja Dean	LISC
Mary Brown	Coalition for Urban Redevelopment
Jeff Spoelstra	Kalamazoo River Watershed Council
Steve Kimm	Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber

Purpose:

To “kick off” the Portage Creek Corridor Reuse Plan, introduce the consultant team, and get initial input from the stakeholders.

Discussion

Introductions:

The people attending the meeting introduced themselves and their organization. Andrea Augustine spoke about the study, the study area (Portage, Stockbridge, Cork and Burdick) and the objective of the effort. She stressed that this was not a redevelopment plan, rather a land use or reuse plan. The plan ultimately should reflect the community vision and be a basis upon which zoning and related planning commission actions can be taken regarding the corridor. She also said that the plan would reflect a reality-based understanding of the environmental conditions in the area and, based on a market analysis, result in recommendations that were feasible given the understanding of the market.

Discussion:

Andrea introduced Larry Strange of The Corradino Group. Larry started that the upcoming schedule had a public meeting scheduled for June 24, 2008 and the second stakeholder meeting on June 26, 2008. He then asked that the participants on a rotating basis to provide their thoughts on the corridor. Following is a summary of the input that ensued.

- Bruce Merchant of the City of Kalamazoo said improvements to infrastructure and services would be needed to enhance reuse in the corridor. He mentioned that an existing trailway development plan called for a recreational ribbon of green space that could/should be coupled with vibrant neighborhoods and Portage Road redevelopment efforts. He also mentioned that the Kalamazoo well field is ½ mile from the Allied site.
- Jeff Spoelstra stated that the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council had an interest in this project from the standpoint of clean up as well as creating both land and water trails in the corridor, particularly connections south. He referenced other plans including the Portage Creek/Axtel Creek Plan.
- Gary Wager of the Kalamazoo River Cleanup Coalition stated that their group formed as a 501(c)3 to oppose the EPA plan to truck in contaminants. He said there should be public oversight in the corridor. Would like to see all PCB's removed. There will likely be a range of options for reuse. He noted there could be some opportunity for piggy-backing with the rail road corridor that exists in terms of reuse. He said that the Allied site would likely be open space with light industrial in the center and mixed use to the north.
- Kelly Smallegan-Mass said she represents Millenium and wanted to make sure there was an adequate public information process with no miscommunications.
- Mary Brown stated that there were a number of projects, i.e., points of opportunity, that need to be recognized in this plan. She noted that there should be no more east-west streets. She identified the possibility of commercial, housing, and possibly some light industrial uses in the area. Other thoughts were recognizing the Coalition for Urban Redevelopment, planning for sustainability, and not banking on immediate changes in property values.
- Jack Mekemson of Goodwill stated that there should be more retail in the immediate area of the Goodwill building as there are 200 employees in or using the building. He would like to see a more visually attractive area and enhancement of the non-motorized trail network. He said it is important to create jobs in areas where people live and commended the City on its work on the streetscape on Burdick.
- Mark Ducharme said he has no role in planning but rather is a technical resource on environmental issues. He discussed green remediation techniques and stormwater management.
- Jeff Spoelstra mentioned that there is a plan to coordinate the state bond/locally to pay for environmental cleanup.
- Keith Hernandez stated that as a planner he has no preconceived notion for the area.
- Tammy Barnard would like any development to be family friendly.
- Ken Horton of the Milwood neighborhood would like to see Allied site contaminants pushed to higher ground and also thought the Homecrest neighborhood should be included in the study and public outreach. He said it is good to look at future options but,

the superfund process takes so long how much will change? The study needs to be cognizant of the superfund status.

- Bill Hughes noted that the city needs to be greener. He stated we should begin promoting additional mixed use in the area but less retail and more low density residential. Everything should be as natural as possible.
- Steve Kimm discussed the fact that the plan would be risk-based, with the costs to clean up factoring in ultimate development. There will not be enough money to completely clean up the entire area.
- Mary pointed out some additional planning considerations, including the Farmer's Market at the city market as well as various housing and retail developments.

A general discussion followed with the emphasis being on the possibility of the area being more or less supportive of various types of residential and retail. From an overall standpoint, it is fairly clear that most members of the committee have a fairly established notion of some type of community enhancing green or open space but less a notion of the residential, commercial, retail, and industrial potentials in the area.

Larry then briefly presented Corradino's proposal for the project, and summarized the upcoming schedule (public meeting June 24 and steering committee meeting June 26). Mike Tackett briefed the group on the environmental meetings that had been held with FTC&H and the EPA. Burt Deutsch briefly discussed the market analysis. Following closing discussion and thank yous, the meeting was adjourned.