

Fort Sanders Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting  
July 29, 2010  
3:30-5:00 pm  
Baker Center for Public Policy

**Meeting Notes:**

**Agenda Item I:**

Welcome and introductions were made and the stakeholders introduced themselves. The purpose and goal of these meetings has been to facilitate communication between various stakeholders and the city was glad to have new attendees.

**Agenda Item II: Cumberland Avenue Corridor Plan Update**

Anne Wallace provided a brief update on the corridor plan including: 1) announcing an on-site utility coordination meeting scheduled for the first week of August to discuss options for electric utilities; 2) an initial draft of hardscape and softscape design has been presented to the city from our landscape architecture consultants; and 3) the engineering consultants have been working with the city on details of the lane transitions along the corridor from 4 lanes to 3 lanes.

**Agenda Item III: KUB Substation Update**

KUB is finalizing the purchase of property at the corner of 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Dale Avenue for a new utility substation to support the future growth and development of Ft. Sanders' neighborhood, the hospitals, the university and industrial properties. This project has been a collaboration between KUB, UT, Historic Ft. Sanders Neighborhood Association, Ft. Sanders Regional Hospital, Children's Hospital, Dow Chemical and the city of Knoxville. There is an online resource available for this project at [www.kub.org](http://www.kub.org) and look for a link to Special Projects.

**Agenda Item IV: Ft. Sanders Hospital Variance Request Presentation**

Lee Apple from Innerface Design out of Atlanta, Georgia provided an overview of the hospital's wayfinding package and the signs that will be presented to the Board of Zoning Appeals for variances. Mr. Apple noted that the campus has grown and shifted since the signs were last updated in 1993. Additionally because the campus is a dynamic environment and typically visitors are in a heightened state of anxiety providing clear directions is important.

The only signs that would be internally illuminated in this request would be the "Emergency" department sign and the "Ambulance" arrival signs. The rest of the signs would be aluminum and where appropriate would have spot or external illumination. There are a total of about 48 signs included in the hospital's package. Some of the signs will be simply a new face for existing signs. One of the goals of Innerface Design and the hospital has been to create consistent nomenclature for each resource to clearly direct visitors.

There was some concern from residents at the number of signs being proposed for the area. Mr. Apple and Darrell Calloway (Ft. Sanders Regional Hospital) said that they have worked from multiple directions into and out of the campus to effectively communicate directions and yet minimize visual clutter. Kim Trent, Knox Heritage, expressed concerns regarding the size of the sign proposed for the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Highland Ave and its impact on existing Victorian houses that are a part of the National Register of Historic Place and the local conservation overlay. This sign is planned at 8 feet tall. Additional discussion centered on the necessary setback for a sign of this scale. Part of the reason for the sign in this location is the anticipated volume of traffic from 17<sup>th</sup> Street. Ms. Trent also asked if the signs will be located in landscaped beds. Mr. Calloway responded that the signs will include some landscaping.

Randall De Ford expressed concerns with regards to the BZA application and the language used to define “hardships” that the hospital has listed for their variance requests. Mr. Calloway responded that Ft. Sanders had worked with the city sign department to determine the hardship language and indicated that a wayfinding package is outside the limits of the existing sign ordinance. Mr. De Ford then expressed a desire that the city, MPC and BZA work together in the future to chart variance requests to establish precedence for legal hardship.

Michael Gilspe, KFD, noted that the signs should show addresses for all destinations for emergency responders. The hospital agreed to make sure destinations were addressed with streets and numbers.

John Craig noted that the issue with the variance is the number of destinations on the wayfinding signs causes them to be larger than what is allowable by code. Mr. Calloway responded that they were trying to assist with helping people reach their destination even if it was not on their campus (i.e. Children’s Hospital and Thompson Cancer Center). Mr. Apple clarified that they were working from the perspective of a first time visitor. Mr. Craig then noted that the listings on the sign were a choice.

Finally, the date, time and location of the BZA meeting was announced, the hospitals requests should be heard on August 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm in the City County Building.

#### **Agenda Item V: Long Range Planning Draft Document Update**

Anne Wallace provided a brief overview of the postponements of the document at the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), this was done in order to allow for additional stakeholders to participate in the process prior to the document being voted on by MPC or City Council. Additionally she noted that there were some changes requested to the draft plan. One change is the designation over the existing Ft. Sanders’ School property which was designated as LMDR and NC-1 overlay. There has been a request to maintain the current designation of Public use so that future partnerships might be pursued between the school and

possibly Children's Hospital. Kim Trent requested that the NC-1 designation be left on the plan so that the existing mid-century modern architectural style might be accommodated in future development on the site.

The other issue of discussion focused around the residential portion of the neighborhood west of 21<sup>st</sup> Street. Anne Wallace mentioned the concerns of the additional property owners (Gallegos, Neely, Haas, Gibson, & Funderlu) that the Low to Medium Density Residential classification on the plan may impact their ability to maintain medium density residential (R-2 zoning) uses in the future. Ms. Trent noted that the state of Tennessee allows for the "grandfathering" of existing land uses. Mike Gallegos stated that the existing R-2 zoning allows up to 24 units to the acre and can be built without review. Their family has purchased existing single family structures and invested in refurbishing them and then provided rental units within these structures. Mr. Gallegos expressed great concerns over the discussion of encouraging owner occupied housing within this section of the neighborhood. The concept of owner occupied housing seems to be in conflict with the business model that the Gallegos family has established.

Mr. De Ford noted that MPC and City Council were looking at new zoning regulations for a district called R-4 that would have additional architectural standards but allow a mix of uses, including office that might be a good fit in the Ft. Sanders neighborhood, especially the former farmer's market area and portions of Clinch Avenue.

Mr. Gallegos made the statement that his family purchased property within the neighborhood more than 20 years ago and that they have no intention of tearing down the existing structures, but have worked hard to maintain and improve the structures authentically. He also noted from personal experience that this was a difficult neighborhood to live in as an owner with a family. Ms. Trent noted that she supported owner occupied housing because it helps to stabilize the area as a resource for the campus and downtown. However, she is not trying to force out renters. Mr. Gallegos noted that there were environmental factors that supported renters and he is concerned about his investments in the neighborhood.

Bob Whetsel noted in summary of the discussion that it is fairly easy to pass a plan but it is more difficult to implement it as has been proven specifically in the Ft. Sanders area. Both sides of the discussion have agreed to continue conversations and to that end the city will request postponement of the plan to the September MPC agenda.

#### **Agenda Item VI: Stakeholder Updates**

Knox Heritage announced a "Green House Open House" for Saturday, August 21<sup>st</sup> from 12:00-5:00pm and more information is available at [www.knoxheritage.org](http://www.knoxheritage.org).

The next Quarterly Stakeholder meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 2, at 3:00pm in the UT Visitors Center. There will likely be an interim meeting to continue discussions about the Long Range Plan.