

American University Campus Plan Task Force Meeting Notes
September 7, 2010
7:00-9:00 p.m.
Mary Graydon Center, Rooms 5 & 6

Meeting Agenda

7:00 pm Welcome

7:05 pm Introduction of Justice & Sustainability Associates

David Taylor
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Don Edwards

Are there other available sites for new buildings.

If the Nebraska parking lot is developed, will the parking spaces be replaced?

Trust:

Is there trust between the community and AU?

At what point does the community begin to trust AU?

There is very little response from AU which is why we feel we're not being heard

Traffic:

The traffic study is incomplete. Where are the results?

We need to think about overall traffic – not just AU. We are naïve to think that whether or not student buildings are built that we have solved the traffic problem. There will be more autos pushed onto the road by DHS. There are concerns that the community wouldn't have much influence on their plans.

DHS is working on several options. We should see their options this fall. Ward Circle is the most dangerous place for cars in the area and this situation needs to be taken into consideration.

Periphery versus Core:

Is it fair to impose that on the neighbors? If AU does, can it be done in ways that will be

Don asked Jorge to address whether it is AU's policy that housing be built on the periphery. Jorge described the early plan for the AU campus with a quad in the center and housing built around it. "Essentially that is where the space was and is today," he said, adding that to a degree, the university is limited today by what its predecessors did. Don pondered out loud if

Don: Can a rational person agree to trade-off having a residence near AU in order to benefit from the university's relationship with the neighborhood? What you sell this university on has to be measurable in the future. What is the issue with the student conduct code? Is it the building or is it the students?"

David: "The university has recently 'widened the umbrella' with changes in the Student Conduct Code that allow the university to act on complaints about off-campus student behavior."

"While there are issues with cars parking and noise, the thing that hasn't been explored is how the university contributes in a positive way. Things have been enhanced and have value for the community."

Don then turned to David and Jorge: "You are getting some cues about how to parse these issues out. I hear some areas of possible agreement."

Participants then discussed student behavior and AU's related policies and practices:

The Greenbriar is now about 40% students. Many of them are disrespectful of other residents. Many residents have instituted a policy that we now call the police."

David then introduced Michelle Espinosa, AU's new associate dean of students at AU, (who started in her job on Aug. 23). Michelle described the university's commitment to having its students be good neighbors and to be responsive to neighbors' concerns. David added that a new committee now meets regularly regarding students living off campus. David then gave the phone numbers to the group for Public Safety: 885-2527 (non-emergency) and 885-3636 (emergency).

Returning to the periphery issue, Don stated his observation from similar development projects that Task Force members might consider that if AU's policy is to bring students back to campus, it actually makes sense for them to build on the periphery first rather than put pressure on their core. That is because wherever growth occurs, you preserve the highest value land for as long as possible. That is AU's core. When all is built out on the periphery, then AU will have no choice but to go to its core. Consider that they maybe making tradeoffs now for what they will have to do 30 years from now.

Don asked participants to engage in a final exercise by answering the following question: "What's the evidence you are looking for from AU to earn your trust and to stay at the table?"

Participants' comments:

Don then suggested, "Trust is the thing that keeps you in the conversation. Does it mean getting what you want?"

Keep all neighborhoods informed

Show evidence that there is no other space on campus.

Trust is a two-way street. Some credit should be given to the moves and changes that AU has made, even if people felt they were not enough.

Demonstrate what a planted berm would look like in the parking lot

Offer drawings at the next meeting so we can see how the pieces can be moved around.

Don thanked participants and asked them to fill out the comment sheets which had been distributed. He expected the meeting summary to be available within a week

David announced that the next meeting will be on Tuesday, Sept. 28 at 7 p.m. in Mary Graydon Center, Rooms 2 & 3. He further stated that a date for filing the new campus plan was still to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned.

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