

Minutes

BOA Steering Committee #6/ EPA Task Force Meeting

October 16, 2024, 4:00–5:00 pm

Heritage Center, 123 Grand St.

Attendees:

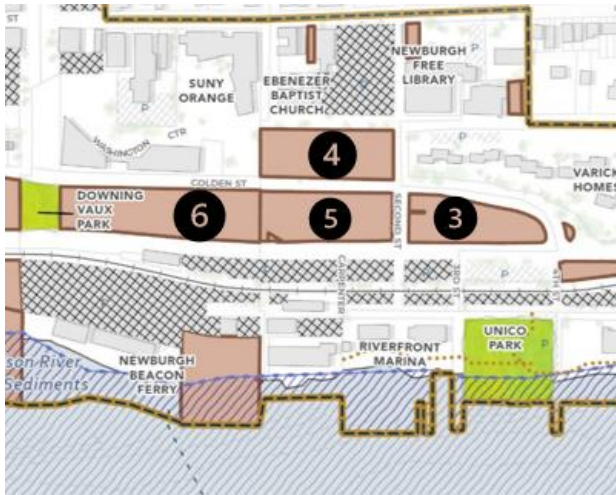
- William Barham
- Steven Gross
- Omari Shakur
- NAACP proxy: Thomas Dodd
- SUNY Orange proxy: Likkia Moody
- Bishop Jeffrey Woody
- Ali Church
- Susan Landfriend, DOS
- Lisa Nagle, EDR
- Laura Lourenco, EDR
- Mark Wright, HRP Associates
- Cassandra George, HRP Associates

4:10

Welcome

Environmental assessment updates – HRP + Committee and Public Q&A

- 10 strategic sites identified with the committee, some parcels grouped together based on common use history
- Phase 1 desktop investigations were conducted for strategic sites:
 - Found no industrial history, more commercial and retail uses, minimizes concern
- Phase 2 investigations (digging) conducted on hillside sites 3,5,6 to test desktop theories:



- (1) Ground-penetrating radar provided imaging of what under the surface
- (2) electromagnetic survey (giant metal detector) to pinpoint areas to focus samples
- (3) soil samples taken with:
 - soil borings - core of soil from surface to “refusal” where drill won’t penetrate (could have hit bedrock, or possibly very solid clay, building foundations)
 - test pits – digging up an area
- **Findings:**
 - **Some contamination**, widespread throughout hillside sites, that would require clean-up to meet safety standards for redevelopment for people to use. In the top 2 feet of soil, unsafe levels of:
 - Metals – lead, mercury, arsenic
 - Fuel oil residue
 - **The soil/fill is unstable** - air pockets, rubble, not compacted properly when demolished, unstable base to build on
 - Matched expectations, of buried foundations of homes and businesses
 - Takeaway:
 - Very possible to redevelop the sites, no surprises or major challenges.
 - Expect contamination limited to fill. Some additional investigation would be needed before redevelopment (but not before BOA nomination submitted), e.g., DEC requires borings hit bedrock or water.
 - **Would need to clean up contaminated soil – remove and replace with clean fill, compact the soil and/or remove debris to provide stable base for buildings – common techniques, not overly expensive**
- **Enough contamination to qualify for funding from govt programs:**
 - **NYS Brownfield Cleanup** – tax incentive (get a check), reimbursable, targeted more toward private developers, need to be taxpayer in NYS. Can claim up to 50% costs of remediation of site + up to 50% cost of tangible redevelopment (i.e., building new buildings), total reimbursement capped at 3x clean-up costs.

- **U.S. EPA brownfield cleanup** – grants, municipal or non-profit entities eligible, have to own the site. Cannot be the entity responsible for the contamination, therefore the City cannot get an EPA grant, would have to transfer ownership to an eligible entity to qualify for grant clean-up funds (e.g., community land trust).
- ***NYS DEC Environmental Remediation Program***- provides funding for municipalities, but has not been funded in years, don't expect it to be
- **Next Steps**
 - Submit BOA nomination study
 - Recommend Phase 2s on all strategic sites, could potentially be funded by another EPA grant
 - Q/A: SHPO would be involved in the full clean-up phase to oversee any historical/archaeological considerations

4:35 Recommendation updates

- Have refined a list of draft recommendations for the BOA. Based on all the committee and public feedback received and inventory findings. Next Steps:
 - Committee Review list and comment
 - Meeting with Corey Allen's homeownership/urban renewal group next week to review
 - Public meeting November 14 for public to review and comment
- Recommendations organized by theme. Begins with recommendations to (1) fund a community planning process to identify policies specific to Newburgh that support restitution for urban renewal descendants, equitable development, and wealth-building; (2) Conduct a Housing and Community Needs Assessment for the Hillside BOA and (3) then Prepare a Master Plan for the Hillside/Urban Renewal Areas.
 - This work would build on public input and research conducted during the BOA process, which would be included in the nomination study, including a list of different restitution/wealth-building models (e.g.,Portland) and studies (e.g., Tulsa, OK) compiled by the project team.
 - *A plan recommending more planning?* - Sort of - Studies being recommended go beyond scope of BOA process – deserve their own in-depth process to identify policies and recommendations for Newburgh (BOA and city).
 - Newburgh not your typical BOA
 - other BOAs focus on former industrial/manufacturing sites, often private properties, easier to make specific recommendations for redevelopment, including conceptual master plans for select sites
 - Newburgh BOA is vacant urban renewal land, former neighborhood, publicly owned. Community has expressed desire for more in-depth policy and planning discussions before any master planning of hillside BOA done, even conceptually

- Have a lot of consensus on types of redevelopment, look of redevelopment (e.g., Leyland charette), can include those findings in BOA study, but keep recommendations at a higher level (e.g., no master plan concepts saying ‘put this there’ yet)
 - Other, more specific recommendations/actions included where there is consensus – e.g. on connectivity, clean-up needs, etc.
- **Discussion**
 - Councilor Shakur: Community that was there is gone, many people left after their future here was taken, thinking about how can we go forward? Have people here in need now. Need to ensure history doesn’t repeat itself, rebuild, something to benefit the community going forward. Shared own story as a descendant, not looking for a check personally, but descendants need to be a part of what is there in the future.
 - Bishop Woody: Building on those ideas, trying to trace back descendants is a tricky task, but way forward can consider how to involve them in the rebuilding process. Should be inclusive, transparent, provide ownership/agency to the community.
 - Need jobs, housing, to “Light Newburgh up” for the people who were there and who are here now
 - T Dodd: mitigate risks of getting caught up in lengthy litigation, want to keep momentum
 - Partnerships will be very important, city the gatekeeper, need community on board with a plan before open Hudson River hillside area up to private developers. Negative perception could discourage some? - C. Shakur – responsibility of City to take action against that, make it happen
 - S Gross – on wording/recommendations – desire for sites to maximize economic development opportunities, while enabling mixed-use
 - *Need to add “economic development” section to the recommendations

5:07 Next Steps

1. Project Team circulate notes and recommendations list
2. Committee Review list and comment – working session Oct 24, 4:00 pm
3. Meeting with Corey Allen’s homeownership/urban renewal group next week
4. Public meeting November 14 for public to review and comment:
 - a. Drop in Open House, with 15 min presentation. 2 sessions: 2:00pm and 6:00 pm
5. Will poll committee on availability in coming months to update meeting schedule