

Homewood Community Development Collaborative

July 13th, 2023

Meeting Notes:

Affordable Homeownership Infill Program – David Serbin, daveserbin@gmail.com

- Used to work with the URA. Has done work in the Hill District and East Liberty.
- Plan to bring affordable units to Homewood (80% AMI and under)
 - 25 total houses 2023-2024
 - 2 bedrooms, 1 ½ baths
 - Two stories
- Wants to work with URA and City Planning
- Trying to use vacant URA-owned or City-owned lots to build housing
- Will use a variety of different funding source
- Inexpensive land, replicable design/construction, and an established grant pool
- Price tag of \$195k to \$205k but mortgage will be more like \$110k. Should be around \$800 a month for homebuyer after financing.
- Looking at Frankstown and Collier to put multiple affordable housing units
 - Also Susquehanna
- Similar layout to Hill District Rose Street project

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
Will homeownership be people from Homewood/people that look like the community?	<i>We will be working closely with Reverend Ware. It is important to us that people that haven't had that opportunity to buy a house are prioritized. It is hard to restrict so we'll have to heavily promote this program in the community first. We could put people on a priority list so they are contacted first. Will be looking into financial institutions that have credit repair and counseling, people in those programs look like the community.</i>
Operation Better Block has a list that includes credit recovery applicants.	
How will you make sure people stay in their home and maintain it?	<i>That will be part of the education/credit counseling program. For example, making sure people save money for unexpected repairs or that they maintain their lawns. As well as how to be good citizens and maintain the house as an asset.</i>

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>Developers will need to work with organizations/people in the community to leverage the resources and the work that's already being done. How will you address the social determinants in the community?</p>	
<p>Is this considered a scattered site development?</p>	<p><i>Yes, this is considered a scattered site development. There is more money in one large site but we want to address the blight.</i></p>
<p>Can you give us reassurance that you will keep this at a reasonable price?</p>	<p><i>There is no absolute guarantee but we are trying to address cost efficiencies. The financing being used requires it to be sold at 80% AMI or lower. Looking to only sell at people with lower incomes (work but can't find affordable housing).</i></p>
<p>Are these prefabricated houses? Similar houses have drainage issues. It's cheaper to rehab existing houses, cheaper than a \$198k mortgage. Have you thought about rehabbing houses instead? The land is contaminated. Will community members be employed to build these? What is the square footage?</p>	<p><i>These houses are quality homes with a reputable/experienced builder. They are estimated to be 1100 sq ft homes, 16 ft wide and 34 ft deep. Engineers are being used to check soil. Open to integrating rehabbing housing but they are harder to receive a large amount of funding. Focused mainly on smaller, newly built, starter homes in order to keep them affordable. Working with Reverend Ware to make sure as many residents are employed as possible. Still in the design phase.</i></p>
<p>What are your sustainability goals? There are a lot of flooding issues in Homewood and these houses are wood. How will you incorporate stormwater management?</p>	<p><i>Will be a concrete base at the bottom and laminated wood. The houses will be sealed for energy efficiency. There will be bioswales and green spaces at each unit. Will be using a lot of green landscaping and stormwater collection. Will incorporate City stormwater requirements.</i></p>

- Blight Remediation Project and Black Tech Hub - Shawn Taylor, shawntaylor@taylorconstruct.com
 - Pennsylvania Affordable Housing Corporation, Taylor Development
 - Blight Remediation Project
 - 540 blighted properties in Homewood South. Hamilton Ave. is poster child for blighted properties.
 - Majority owners include Omicelo (70), RFS (70), NB Affordable (300), City owned (100)

- Could reduce blight by 25% if portfolios are acquired
 - New housing is great but we need to focus on the broken teeth in the community
 - Company previously rehabbed Maderia Townhomes – 16 townhomes - \$3 million – 60% MBE participation
 - Wants to bring a multi-community neighborhood zone to the community
 - Wants to build along Homewood’s strong edges
 - Phase #1: 17 Units, Phase #2: 33 units Scattered Sites
 - 80% housing is subsidized, 20% workforce housing
 - It is very hard for those with low-incomes to stay in Homewood without subsidies
 - 11 buildings/72 units in the portfolio to be acquired and turned into affordable housing/workforce housing (Brushton and Tioga, Frankstown, Hamilton, Kelly, Murtland)
 - Want to prevent gentrification. Homewood is in a great location (close to Google and the busway).
 - Timeline: 2023-2026
 - Phase 1: Acquisition – 70 units - 2023
 - Phase 2: Rehab - 37 units – 2024-2025
 - Phase 3: Rehab – 33 units – 2025- 2026
 - Plan to hire local, working with the Trade Institute
- North Homewood Ave Black Tech Project
 - Partnering with Pittsburgh Tech Council and Trade Institute
 - Mixed-use project along Homewood Avenue
 - Rehabilitate URA owned site and go vertical
 - Commercial below and housing up top
 - The community needs jobs and economic opportunities and this project could bring that

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
Who are the investors?	<i>Myself and my firm.</i>
Are you going after any tax credits or government funds?	<i>We will ask the URA for funding.</i>
How can we have a guarantee that these units will be affordable? We will need to have ongoing discussions for this project for accountability with the community.	<i>This is going to be very hard work. When I bought Madeira it was bad as well. With the support of the community and you we can get this done. We are open to suggestions and working with the community.</i>

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>I ran him (Shawn Taylor) through the coals with his other houses. For example, I talked to him about water retention. He made all of the changes that I requested and showed me what he had done. Has even engaged with me after moving people in. I give him my full support.</p>	
<p>What is your plan to modernize houses to meet today's sustainability standards?</p>	<p><i>For our other projects we had to focus a majority of funding on stabilization (adding insulation, fire walls, water retention, all new energy systems). Our tenants are pleased with it. We have another phase planned for the site.</i></p>
<p>What are three challenges you are facing in this community?</p>	<p><i>The costa. We are dealing with very damaged housing stock. It is very expensive to rehab houses that have been damaged from water/aging, etc.</i></p>
<p>You have to come into the community with your own funds and work with other banks. We only have one, Pittsburgh National.</p>	<p><i>It has been a challenge to find partners that do want to help revitalize the community. We appreciate the partners we did find. Blight effects everyone, we tell other communities that if we don't address this now, it will come to their community.</i></p>