



COMMUNITY BUILDERS NETWORK OF METRO ST. LOUIS

Civic Capacity Committee Meeting Minutes

December 21, 2016

Park Central Development Corp, 12-1:30pm

Members Present:

- Reggie Scott
- Marissa Cohen
- Brooks Goedekker
- David Desai-Ramirez
- Stephanie Co

CBN Staff Present:

- Constance Siu
- Jenny Connelly-Bowen
- Gary Newcomer
- Brendan East

Guests Present:

- Mike Jones (SLACO)
- Stacy Ross (SLACO)

I. Welcome - 12:00 (5 min)

II. Updates - 12:05 (20 min)

- a. Invest STL
 - b. St. Louis County Strategic Framework
 - c. Vacancy Bond Proposal
 - d. Mayoral Forum
- CBN Staff and involved members gave a brief update on Invest STL. Now that the Leadership Board is established, additional asks are being made for fundraising support. While Invest STL is not yet fully established, it intends to begin capacity builders initiatives in early 2017 that will include a mix of funding for staffing and technical support. Individuals from Invest STL will be reaching out to area CDCs



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soon as they determine gaps in funding that Invest health can address. CBN Staff will continue to update the Civic Capacity Committee as more information becomes available.

- The County is working to align its departments and agencies around indicators in different categories of their strategic plan. They have developed a set of 30 or so for community development. This will shape what policies get focused on first. The County Office of Community Development and the Economic Development Partnership Real Estate/Funding staff are being brought together to explore ways to intentionally work together. Since the last Civic Capacity meeting, 5 CBN County Members met to discuss the indicators and metrics for community development. This group also met with staff at St. Louis County to learn more, give input, and explore future opportunities for ongoing collaboration and comment. CBN will continue to give updates and share opportunities to participate.
- SLACO staff gave an update on the Vacancy Bond proposal. As you may recall, this proposal is a \$40m bond that will fund stabilization of vacant properties for the purpose of security and neighborhood economic development. This will go before the voters in April 2017. The Vacancy Bond Proposal has finalized its signature collection process and it is headed to the Board of Alderman. There is a very small window to amend some of the language in the current proposal via aldermanic committee. Vince Schoemehl was interested in our comments although CBN's Board has not taken a formal stance on the bond. CBN's updated comments with Vince including: 1) Our concern about the language restricting all property (including LIHTC & low-income) to 5 years of tax abatement or less & 2) Re-iterating the importance of aligning the initiative with community-based plans. In the last few weeks, a decision has been made not to include amendments to the language. The purpose of this decision is to prevent the initiative to become politicized via aldermanic committees as they need a large portion of votes for issue to pass. SLACO staff is exploring whether state funding agencies could consider the public money contributed via stabilization in lieu of abatement when funding LIHTC or affordable housing projects. SLACO staff also reiterated the inclusion of a citizen-driven process in how properties will be selected for inclusion in the stabilization program.



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This is being left out of the language purposefully so that aldermen cannot influence the project. They envision a matrix or rating system to determine priority properties.

- CBN is continuing its partnership with Trailnet, For the Sake of All, EHOC, Ready by 21, Social Innovation District, Envision STL, & MCU to put on a Mayoral Forum this winter with a focus on community development. The Nine Network and St. Louis Public Radio have recently joined as partners to help facilitate and broadcast the event as a neutral party. Broadcasts will air at a later date. The Forum will address the 3 themes in the Ferguson Report (Justice For All, Youth at the Center, and Opportunity to Thrive) with racial equity as a theme woven throughout. The Forum will be held on February 22nd at the Sheldon and sponsors are being solicited with success. CBN is serving as the fiscal agent for the event. The event has been made public and invitations to candidates have already gone out. A survey to engage residents and identify potential topic questions will be sent out shortly.

III. **Sales Tax Increase Proposal - 12:25 (20 min)**

- a. Update on role of neighborhood-based planning
 - b. Comments? How should CBN be involved?
- As you may have heard, Mayor Slay advocated for a new sales tax to fund the proposed N-S Metrolink expansion at the Choice Neighborhood announcement. CBN has kept on top of updates as they developed. Currently, Christine Ingrassia introduced two bills at last week's BoA (BB 226 & 227).
 - The first (226) would place a ½ cent increase in the city's sales AND use tax. This would go to a vote by city residents and the proceeds of this would fund:
 - \$10 million - "First alignment" of North-South MetroLink. The goal is to get federal matching funds that would be enough to build to "build out a significant piece of the alignment."
 - \$2.5 million - "Neighborhood revitalization" programs
 - "Mini-Choice Neighborhood" grant to one neighborhood
 - \$2.5 million - Security cameras
 - \$2.5 million - "Workforce development" programs



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- \$2.5 million - Infrastructure improvements for streets, alleys, waterworks, public buildings, and parks
- The 2nd bill (227) would dedicate the **use tax** increase to pay for the proposed soccer stadium. Governor-elect Eric Greitens has opposed the stadium financing bill. If this bill fails to pass by the voters, then the use tax increase would go toward the city's general revenue (pending approval of 226). This \$4m annually could go toward funding community development.
- CBN staff is currently setting up meetings with Ald Christine Ingrassia and Nahuel Fefer (Mayor's staff) to learn more and see how it will impact neighborhood-based planning. CBN will also try to get more details about the proposed "neighborhood revitalization programs" and stay involved in implementation.
- The Civic Capacity Committee identified neighborhood planning as a critical funding need that should be addressed through this new funding. In terms of the \$2.5m allocation for "Neighborhood revitalization" programs, the Committee expressed a need for clarity on intentions and important role leveraging resources should play in determining project recipients. Additionally, the Committee questioned whether the City could utilize the MVA map and allocate funding in concentrated areas over multiple years rather than awarding different neighborhoods ad hoc annually.

IV. Affordable Housing Trust Fund - 12:45 (15 min)

- a. Update - Meeting with Joe Roddy
 - b. What Are the Next Steps?
- Per the Committee's decision in October, CBN has pursued conversations on how to not only legally fund, but increase funding for the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. As you may recall, discussions with the Mayor's staff have been ongoing since this summer. CBN staff have met with aldermen Joe Roddy and Christine Ingrassia about opportunities and challenges facing this effort. Ald Roddy recommended presenting to alders of the HUDZ Committee (but not at the HUDZ Committee) about the Trust Fund locally as well as best practices nationwide before continuing conversations in the new year. Unfortunately, CBN staff were unable to present to the HUDZ Committee between the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Knowing this and keeping in mind opportunities through the



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Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the Committee recommended that CBN set up individual meetings to discuss the issue. **As requested, CBN staff will map out where current Affordable Housing Trust Fund dollars are being spent and research how the administrative process works.**

V. CBN Safety Action Group - Addressing Policy on Illicit Business Activity - 1:00 (20 min)

- a. Update - Goal, Problems, Meetings/Progress
 - b. Should Action Group be absorbed by Civic Capacity?
 - c. If so, next steps?
- CBN continues to facilitate two action groups: Safety & Community Engagement. These are constructive support groups that address issues relating to community engagement or safety. The Safety Action Group has identified illicit activity in neighborhood businesses as a shared action goal. Since September, we have met with the St. Louis City Health Dept. and former alderman as a group. CBN has explored possible solutions with Dan Isom, the Local Progress policy group, and Alderwoman Christine Ingrassia. Conversations with representatives of local law enforcement, circuit attorney's office, and possibly the City Excise Commission will follow before making an action plan. CBN also asked the national Local Progress organizations looking into model ordinances.
 - Unfortunately, our group is down to two members due to staff changes at member organizations and little progress has been made over the last 2 months. The Committee recognized the problem, but suggested that CBN should focus on policies relevant for the upcoming elections (Vacancy, Sales Tax, Mayor, Calls to Action). In the meantime, the Committee recommended that CBN put together a resource manual for organizations hoping to shut down a problem property. **CBN staff will follow up with the Safety Action Group with this plan of attack.**



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VI. Meetings w/ Elected Officials - 1:20 (10 min)

- a. Update on Meetings w/ Aldermen
 - b. Meetings w/ County Council Members
- CBN is still meeting with St. Louis City aldermen to raise awareness about our initiatives and plant the seeds for our policy Calls to Action. With the support of Board member LaTanya Reeves and Civic Capacity member Brooks Goedekker, CBN has collected contact information for St. Louis City aldermen. CBN has met with 4 aldermen already (Ingrassia, Roddy, Barringer, Williamson) and hope to meet with 2-4 aldermen per month to slowly build relationships and trust with our elected officials. Staff is making progress, but not meeting their goals due to the difficulty of setting up meetings. Board Members are highly encouraged to broker conversations.
 - Now that the November elections are over, CBN is working to meet with County Council persons. These meetings are meant to be introductory/exploratory in nature. The Committee suggested initiating discussions with recently-elected Ernie Trakes in South County after he takes office and requesting that Beyond Housing broker meetings with north county councilors.
 - CBN staff will begin compiling a running document of critical questions for elected officials and candidates. This is not meant to structure every conversations but to ensure important policy questions are being asked when appropriate.

VII. Conclude - 1:30

- Thank you for coming. The next Civic Capacity meeting will be Wednesday, Feb 15th from 12-1:30pm.