

Sharswood/Blumberg Choice Neighborhoods

Housing & Neighborhood Task Force Meeting #5

March 25, 2015

DRAFT Meeting Notes

Questions/Comments:

QUESTION: The way the survey was worded seemed to not focus on the quality of education and career training. There are a number of highly qualified people (professional and graduate degrees) who are underemployed or unemployed.

WRT ANSWER: Quality of education will be addressed in the People Plan. There needs to be a focus on both quality education/career training to prepare young people and job training/skills building for unemployed adults. We encourage you to attend the YAP session on the People Plan flyers were on your chairs.

QUESTION: Is 23rd Street going to be 1-way or 2-way?

PHA ANSWER: PHA is looking at that now. In the plan it's currently set up as a 2-way street, this may change, but the plan shows a 2-way street with a greened island/median.

QUESTION: What about the bus on 23rd Street?

PHA ANSWER: Not sure, in talks with SEPTA now.

QUESTION: In the example of the homeownership units that was just shown, can you explain the \$130,000 cost?

PHA ANSWER: Yes. In that example although that family can only afford a \$135,000 house, we know that in this market it will cost more than \$135,000 to build that 3-bedroom 1,420sf unit. For example it may cost \$300,000 to build the unit and there will need to be a subsidy for the difference between the cost of building the unit and what that low-income family can afford to pay for the unit.

QUESTION: In those affordable housing examples are they building quality housing?

PHA ANSWER: ?

QUESTION: Who will help address blight?

PHA ANSWER: PHA is working out plan to have PHS continue to stabilize and maintain a number of vacant lots.

QUESTION: Who will maintain the built public open spaces- parks, community gardens, plazas?

PHA ANSWER: Still to be determined but potentially neighborhood organizations as well as agreements between development partners. Some will be managed by other groups (i.e., existing Peace Park) There are other options – like a corridor manager to manage green space along Ridge Ave, etc.

QUESTION: If PHA is building approximately 1200 units and you are taking 1200 lots presumably you are not just building one unit on each lot why do you need so many lots?

WRT ANSWER: In addition to housing, the neighborhood redevelopment will include mixed-use development like we described along Ridge Avenue as well as parks, gardens and other amenities to support a vibrant new neighborhood.

QUESTION: How long will it take for PHA and its partners to build all of this housing?

PHA ANSWER: 5 years

QUESTION: The survey findings showed that a large number of residents would like Section 8 voucher's to move? How will PHA honor resident's request for vouchers during relocation?

PHA ANSWER: ?

QUESTION: Who will be relocated first? Will any provisions be made for residents with health condition and special needs?

PHA ANSWER: Yes PHA relocation specialists will meet with each household and develop a plan for that household which includes the needed services.

QUESTION: When will relocation start?

PHA ANSWER: Demo approval has not yet been granted from HUD – (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development), hopefully this should happen in June.

QUESTION: To qualify to come back is there a list of what a resident needs to have prepared? What do you need to have in order to return? What is the timeline?

PHA ANSWER: PHA relocation staff will conduct a relocation assessment for each household.
Stakeholder comment: You need to start today.

QUESTION: Where will market rate vs. affordable housing be located in the neighborhood?

PHA ANSWER: The location of units will be based in part on the market study and in part on the desire of residents (from community input at numerous meetings).

QUESTION: What will you need to qualify for the new market rate housing?

PHA ANSWER: Your credit score and available funds to purchase.

QUESTION: If you are a Sharswood resident (non-PHA tenant) how can you apply for one of these new for sale or rental units?

PHA ANSWER: When the construction process begins PHA will have a trailer with signage where interested residents can sign-up.

QUESTION: What about PHA homeownership units?

PHA ANSWER: As they start construction (after hiring an architect/engineer, etc), PHA will set up an office and sell the homes as they are built.

QUESTION: Which kind of tax credit affordable housing is going to happen in the neighborhood – tax credit subsidized by PHA (you only pay 30% of your income) or tax credit only where the developer can increase rent over time (only a small percentage of units are set aside for subsidies)?

PHA ANSWER: There will be a mix of both types of development. The first 57 units are going to be tax credit subsidized by PHA with a 30 year tail, but there will be a mix of other types in the neighborhood. We haven't decided who the developers will be. There is a concern that new development will all be like Sharswood I, run by Michaels Development, where rent is going up even though income has remained the same.

QUESTION: I am a Sharswood I/II Michaels Low Income Housing Tax Credit development tenant and my income has been going down as I get older but my rent has been going up! How will you ensure that this does not happen to others?

PHA ANSWER: ?

QUESTION: How do Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) work?

ANSWER: Investors get a tax break (a dollar for dollar reduction in the tax payer's federal taxes) earned in the initial ten years following when the units are placed in service. The federal government funds the LIHTC program and requires that LIHTC-funded housing stays affordable for at least 30 years. The program is administered by the PHFA – *Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency*. For more information:
<http://www.phfa.org/developers/developer/lihtc.aspx>

<http://www.enterprisecommunity.com/financing-and-development/low-income-housing-tax-credits/how-low-income-housing-tax-credits-work>

QUESTION: Do LIHTC rents increase?

PHA ANSWER: ?

QUESTION: Are there two different types of LIHTC - PHA and non PHA?

PHA ANSWER: Yes there are PHA supported and non PHA supported LIHTC units. PHA provides additional subsidies. The first phase 57-unit Blumberg townhomes are all LIHTC PHA supported units.

QUESTION: What will the percentage of PHA supported Tax Credits be?

PHA ANSWER: We don't know at this time.

COMMENT: When Sharswood I and II were built a small number were PHA supported units.

QUESTION: PHA is acquiring this land and giving it to private developers to develop. How will the developers be selected? Do you already have developers in mind?

PHA ANSWER: We do not have any developers in mind, but we've had a number of developers reach out to us. The RFP – Request for Proposal process will be advertised in local papers and developers will have a chance to respond with their qualifications and a winning bid will be selected. In the RFP PHA will describe exactly what they are looking for the developers to do for example x number of homeownership, rental or market rate units. PHA has also done developers roundtables/breakfasts and that maybe a possibility for this process.

QUESTION: Can the RFPs be posted on the Sharswood/Blumberg project website?

PHA ANSWER: That may be a possibility as long as procurement policies are followed and no bidder gets an unfair advantage.

QUESTION: What is the mechanism for public participation? Will community residents be involved in the process to select developers?

PHA ANSWER:

QUESTION: Where will the new gardens be located?

PHA ANSWER: Until the acquisition process is completed PHA will not know for sure what lots they will own but there will be new parks and open spaces integrated into the neighborhood to address the needs of the community.

QUESTION: What will the design of the parks and gardens look like?

WRT ANSWER: When the open spaces are being developed there may be additional opportunities for public input in the design of the spaces. This planning effort will provide the vision but will not get into detailed design for all spaces.

QUESTION: Is there a plan for individual apartments in the Senior Tower?

PHA ANSWER: Yes, they will be renovated in a later phase. The first phase is the ground floor/common areas and separation of utilities. Then there will be an assessment of individual units to determine what needs to be done and what residents would like to have done. Central air and new elevators will also be installed.

QUESTION: When will the Senior Building rehab start?

PHA ANSWER: Separation of utilities is starting now and construction is going out for bid. PHA is in the process of procuring a consultant to meet with each senior building tenant and conduct individual assessments of each unit. Bids are out now for the first floor rehab.

QUESTION: How will you determine where market rate housing will occur?

PHA ANSWER: This will be based on a number of things including what parcels PHA is able to consolidate, market study findings, what's next to those sites...

QUESTION: What is PHA's attitude on senior safety and security? PHA removed the security guard and put in an electronic system that is not working. We are a vulnerable population. What will PHA do about this? We keep bringing this up but get the run around. This is a life and death issue.

PHA ANSWER:

Other questions:

- Can homeownership be duplexes? (additional income to help residents afford mortgage payments)
- Will there be student housing?
- Will there be larger units like 4-bedrooms?
- Will there be off-street parking?

WRAP UP

Remember, there's another Housing Task Force Meeting on April 14th from 6pm – 7:30pm (location to be determined) Make sure to sign-in with your contact information so that you get a meeting invite and reminder.