

City of Takoma Park
Takoma Junction Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 25, 2010

The City of Takoma Park Takoma Junction Task Force met on Monday, October 25, 2010, in the Hydrangea Room, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park.

Members Present: Hailu Aichehi, Lorig Charkoudian, Billy Coulter, Kay Daniels-Cohen, Roz Grigsby, Andy Kelemen, Howard Kohn, Linette Lander, Lorraine Pearsall, Susan Robb, Roger Schlegel, Jennifer Sisane, Jeffrey Trunzo,

Members Absent: James DiLuigi, Steve Dubb, Megan Gallagher, Seth Grimes, Katrina Oprisko, John Salmen, Ellen Zavian

Staff Present: Sara Daines, HCD Director

Others Present: Steve Davis, Takoma Patch

1. Call to Order

A quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. Staff distributed a handout including an agenda, membership roster, and background materials. Sara Daines departed to attend to other matters.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Discussion: Howard Kohn suggested altering the order of the agenda to allow more time for members to get to know each other before discussing goals and the structure of the Task Force.

Action: Consensus to re-order agenda to discuss each member's goals and perspectives on the Junction.

3. General Discussion

Discussion: **Goals:** Members agreed to speak briefly about their goals for the Task Force and the Junction, in turn, around the table.

Howard: Appointed people are smart, we have a clean slate, need to produce actions, deliverable is more than a report, Council should receive periodic updates, community outreach is important.

Andy: Determine what Council wants, proposals must be acceptable, get early buy-in

Hailu: Define priorities, create recommendations, focus on traffic issues, safety, city lot, pedestrians.

Billy: Junction has tremendous unrealized potential.

Roz: This project must make the Junction "work." Priority focus on business, traffic, and pedestrians

Linette: Junction is a community landmark, a destination.

Kay: History of Junction is great, restore the lost vitality, move forward with actions steps now.

Jeff: Rationalize functions, leverage assets, and develop a comprehensive understanding of the issues holding back progress.

Lorraine: Historic Takoma is very close to opening building as an event-oriented community resource. Do no harm to present merchants and infrastructure. Respect the environment, particularly scarce remaining green space. Historic District provides protections and benefits. Residential neighborhood should be cared for. Understand the Co-Ops future plans. Landlords such as Tom Oliff should be engaged cooperatively, but may be challenging. Time is right for the Junction and progress will be easier than expected.

Susan: Resident of Manor Circle for over 20 years. Substantial positive improvements in the residential character of the area. Commercial area lacks pride and respect. Walking in the area presents barriers-need crosswalks-poor access to business for pedestrians and motorists. Too much motor vehicle idling time.

Roger: Affirm previous thoughts, consensus building is very important, we are representing the community. Non-negotiables should be identified early. Need a vision for the future of the area. This is a small town in a city area. Junction is very special. Diversity is part of its strength. Junction deserves an identity. Junction can be a destination. A refuge from the hustle of the metro area.

Jennifer: Recapture the former spirit of the Junction. Develop an understanding of the history of the area. Looking forward to break-out groups. Very positive and encouraging activity.

Lorig: Co-Op seeks to expand, considering expansion to allow for local food production (including a kitchen) and a seating area for community building and prepared food consumption. A \$500,000 reserve fund has been created, with the expectation that additional financing will be acquired.

4. Statement of Goals

Discussion: Howard Kohn summarized the goals discussion and proposed five areas of priority concern:

- Improving vehicle flow and pedestrian movement
- Insuring adequate parking
- Visioning options for the City lot in the short and long-term
- Rejuvenation of the business district
- Environmental sustainability factors

Action: Consensus on these priorities established. Agreement affirmed on another round of comments to refine the issues.

Andy: Act quickly to preserve the temporary firehouse building.

Hailu: Parking issues are very important and should be a separate item.

Billy: Increase/restore parking on City lot. Remove temporary firehouse structure to regain use of the lot. Traffic movement and update cross-walks.

Steve Davis, Public Comment: Resident of Poplar Avenue, very concerned about Sycamore traffic light-intersection worked better as a stop sign.

Jennifer: Unresponsiveness of public officials is a big concern. Petitioned for pothole repairs on Ethan Allen.

Lorig: Agreement with issues. Need short-medium-long-range goals. Identify investments necessary to actualize the plans.

Roz: Keeping the group together for the immediate future is valuable.

Linette: Car is not needed to use the Junction. Emphasize pedestrian issues. Think very big: unique values, green issues, gardens, history. Use an incubator mindset to develop new businesses.

Kay: traffic light and cross-walk configurations are a priority. Why can't SHA help us? Parking meters.

Jeff: Understand the costs of 'free parking' and the consequences of having a mix of paid and free parking spaces that is not rational.

Lorraine: parking is the lifeblood of any successful commercial area. Health of the existing businesses is a big concern.

Susan: Traffic signals, pedestrian access, poor road geometry for cross-walks, run-down store fronts, impact of businesses with concurrent schedules (activities with large numbers of people arriving/departing at the same time), parking conflicts between residents and customers, perceptions of lack of parking may not be founded-reluctance of patrons to use metered spaces.

Roger: Look at big picture on traffic-how does Takoma's gateway configurations affect traffic issues at the core? Sustainability, environmental sensitivity, green construction, power generation potentials of roofs, lots. Rejuvenation which is self-sustaining and durable.

5. Organizational Matters

Discussion: The group discussed and affirmed by consensus that staying together as the large group is constructive for the immediate future (perhaps 2-3 months) prior to establishing individual work groups.

Sarah remarked that data and reports become stale with time, so keep this in perspective when evaluating the relevance of older documents.

Group affirmed that establishing a meeting schedule as soon as possible is highly desirable.

Action Items:

Robert's Rules of Order

Discussion: The group discussed the pros and cons of adopting Robert's Rules. There was no consensus; therefore a proposal was made to operate by the principals of limited rules. Specifically, for votes on action items, there will be four steps: Motion, Second, Discussion, Vote. Majority will rule.

Action: A motion to operate on the limited rules was made, seconded, and discussed. The group agreed to revisit this decision if it was adopted and found to be not productive. Howard called for a vote when the discussion was concluded.

Vote Results: Yes-12, No-1. The motion passed.

Leadership and Officers

Discussion: The group discussed the structure of the Task Force and meeting facilitation. A concern was voiced that no females had self-identified for leadership positions. Discussion affirmed that female leadership is desirable. Many opportunities for leadership will evolve in the coming months for leadership of the break-out groups handling the individual goals. Individuals of either sex will be encouraged to step-up to leadership positions when their skills are needed.

Action: A motion was made for Howard Kohn and Seth Grimes for Co-Chairs, and Roger Schlegel and Jeff Trunzo for Co-Recorders (Secretary). Howard called for a vote when the discussion was concluded.

Vote Results: Yes-13, No-0. The motion passed.

Adoption of Meeting Minutes from October 20, 2010

Discussion: None.

Action: A motion was made for adoption of the submitted minutes.

Vote Results: Yes-13, No-0. The motion passed.

Meeting Frequency & Scheduling

Discussion: The group expressed consensus that meeting every two weeks until mid-December is optimal.

Action: Roger volunteered to construct an electronic matrix tool which would allow the members to indicate their meeting date preferences, and distribute the tool to the group as soon as possible. The next meeting date will be determined utilizing this tool.

Next Topics

Discussion: The group agreed to include the following items on the next agenda:

- Temporary firehouse structure status
- Experimental and inexpensive traffic flow ideas
- Urban Land Institute
- Discuss work plans and the process for their adoption

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned shortly after 9 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Jeff Trunzo, Acting Secretary