



Public Comment

Name: Megan Confer-Hammond

Board Agenda Item(s): 7c and 5a

Comment:

My name is Megan Confer-Hammond, I am the executive director of the Fair Housing Partnership. Let me start by saying thank you to Greg Flisram, Diamonte Walker, and the URA for uplifting President Biden's January 26, 2021 memo to HUD that supported the Fair Housing Act and the need for government to address its historical decisions that embedded systemic racism within modern day housing. I look forward to what we can accomplish in 2021.

Regarding agenda item 7c which is additional funds for the Flats on Forward. We understand that Pittsburgh has both a need for affordable housing and that Pittsburgh is racially segregated. Flats on Forward is composed of 1 and 2 bedroom units and has a disability preference. The Squirrel Hill neighborhood has at least 3 similar properties. The need for more units remains. However, no affordable family sized units currently exist in Squirrel Hill. Family sized units are 3 and 4 bedrooms. From a fair housing perspective, pre-existing racial segregation is entrenched when the only allowable affordable housing in white majority areas are for disabled and senior populations. Squirrel Hill has a 4.0% Black alone population in a City that has a 23.2% Black alone population. I am asking that a lens of racial equity is applied and in the ask for additional monies for phase 2 of Flats on Forward is made provisional on a good faith effort to pursue an allowance with the project's other funding to reconfigure the layout to include even two 3 bedroom units. I understand that 3-4 bedroom single family homes and townhouses are under development in other City neighborhoods. However, single family homes and townhouses are inherently not accessible. As a result, low-income families who have a member with a disability are forced to choose between accessibility or overcrowding because of the lack of accessible 3-4 bedroom units. Additionally, Flats on Forward is located next to a high performing public school. Regarding agenda item 5a which is the RFP for the HOF Legal Assistance Program, that the RFP allows for legal assistance for low-income tenants whose evictions include non-payment of rent, not evictions that are solely due to the non-payment of rent, to best serve the City's low-income residents who are facing homelessness through no fault of their own. Thank you for listening.

Name: Anne Wright

Agenda Item: Legal Assistance Program for tenants

Comment:

The Legal Assistance Program for tenants should not be limited as presently proposed in the Program Guidelines. Rather than limiting funding for representation to cases involving only nonpayment, habitability or security deposits, funding should be available to provide representation in all eviction cases, except for those particular categories of cases where the URA explicitly does not wish to provide funding for representation. Here is the basic revision that we believe should be made to the Program guidelines: Full Legal Representation: Full Legal Representation Program Administrators will be responsible for providing one-time, full legal representation through the entirety of the legal proceedings (including appeals) as it pertains to eviction cases, except that funds may not be used in cases where the tenant has: · engaged in violent or drug-related criminal activity while on the premises; · threatened the health or safety of other residents; · significantly damaged or posed an immediate and significant risk of damage to property; or · violated an applicable building code, health ordinance, or similar regulation relating to health and safety. This, essentially, tracks the exception language in the CDC eviction moratorium. Thank you for working towards providing this program. It will help many residents to stay in their homes.

Name: Felicity Williams, Esq., Programs & Policy Manager, Hill CDC

Comment:

Please see the attached public comment and update to the URA Board and Staff with regard to Lower Hill Block G1 and Block G4.

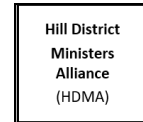
[Letter attached]

Name: Lance Harrell, CCIP Project Administrator, Lower Hill EMC

Comment:

Please accept the Executive Management Committee January/February progress report.

[Letter attached]



February 11, 2021

URA Board Members:

Chair Sam Williamson
Rep. Ed Gainey
Councilmen Daniel Lavelle
Lindsay Powell
Jodi Hirsch

URA Executive Staff:

Greg Flisram, Director
Diamonte Walker, Deputy Director

Via email: daniel.lavelle@pittsburghpa.gov; lindsay.powell@pittsburghpa.gov;
jodi@sequalconsulting.com; egainey@pahouse.net; swilliamson@seiu32bj.org;
gflisram@ura.org; dwalker@ura.org; publiccomment@ura.org

RE: Lower Hill Block G1 Status of Non-Compliance with CCIP and GHDMF

Dear URA Board and Executive Staff:

On behalf of the Hill District's Development Review Panel (DRP) and the Hill Community Development Corporation (Hill CDC) as the RCO for the Greater Hill District, we offer this update letter of the **status of non-compliance** for the Lower Hill Block G1 Development proposal with regard to the Greater Hill District Master Plan (GHDMF) and the Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan (CCIP).

The Role of the Hill CDC, DRP, and RCO:

The mission of the Hill CDC is to work in partnership with residents and stakeholders to create, promote, and implement strategies and programs that connect plans, policies, and people to drive compelling community development opportunities in the Greater Hill District. The Hill CDC is responsible for facilitating the implementation of the Greater Hill District Master Plan, specifically addressing any community concerns regarding redevelopment and economic opportunities in the area.

The DRP is the Hill District's unified and comprehensive community review process that gives every Hill District resident a voice in the redevelopment of their neighborhood. It is a partnership with six (6) Hill District Community Based Organizations: Hill Community Development Corporation (Hill CDC), Hill District Education Council (HDEC), Hill District Ministers Alliance (HDMA), Uptown Partners, Hill District Consensus Group (HDCG) and the Center that Cares that streamlines community level review while assuring transparency and sufficient community feedback. This process is facilitated by the Hill CDC Programs and Policy Manager.

The Hill CDC is also the Registered Community Organization (RCO) for the Greater Hill District, the boundaries of which are defined by the GHDMF. This project is included in that geographic boundary. **§ 178E.07 RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS** of the RCO Ordinance,

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requires the RCO to establish both “orderly and democratic means for forming representative public input” and a “clear method for reporting to the city, actions which accurately reflect the community’s position.” **The Hill District community has already established both of these requirements in our community review process and has integrated it with the RCO regulatory requirements.** The Hill CDC, in fact, included the DRP process in our RCO application and have communicated to our community that this is the process we would follow to ensure transparency and sufficient implementation of community vision and goals.

DRP Project Status:

In April 2020, **Block G1 received failing scores against both the GHDMP and the CCIP.** With regard to the GHDMP the project received a **75% - C** and with regard to the CCIP the project received a **68% - D**. As you all are well aware by now, a passing score in the Hill District is a minimum 80% - B as we want to ensure that there is **high quality development** in our community that is in **sufficient alignment** with our community’s vision as articulated in our guiding documents. In May 2020, the DRP Committee met with Buccini Pollin Group and Pittsburgh Arena Real Estate Redevelopment/Penguins (Development Team) and gave guidance on the areas of the proposal that the plan scored poorly in, as well as their concerns about the project. The DRP Committee then requested documents to demonstrate progress in these areas prior to presenting again. **Unfortunately, in June 2020 what the Development Team submitted failed to meet the DRP’s requests.** The DRP Committee did extend the invitation to attend the July 2020 DRP Committee meeting to discuss what barriers and challenges the Development Team had to meeting those requests. However, the Development Team declined to attend and instead stated they would do their “best to keep in touch as events progress.”

The Development Team did not reengage the DRP process until November 2020 at which time the DRP Committee reiterated the unmet requests. **In January 2021, the Development Team once again submitted a response that failed to meet the DRP’s requests. The DRP Committee unanimously voted (1 member was absent, but also has a conflict) that the documentation provided to demonstrate progress in the areas of the GHDMP and CCIP where the proposal scored poorly did not evidence sufficient improvement. As such, the project is not prepared for a second presentation that would result in anything other than another failed score.** The DRP Committee once again extended the invitation to attend the February 2021 DRP meeting to discuss what barriers and challenges the Development Team had to meeting those requests. This time, the Development Team agreed to attend and met with the DRP Committee Members. Unfortunately, the Development Team spent little to no time explaining their barriers and challenges. **Instead, the meeting was spent with the DRP Committee members reiterating their requests for a third time.**

The DRP Committee is still awaiting complete response from the Development Team to determine if the project is prepared to present again. As such, progress is stalled.

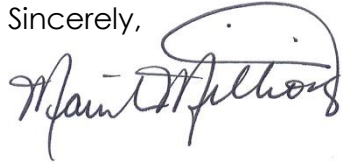
RCO Project Status:

Despite the lack of progress at the DRP level, The Development Team made a request on January 29, 2021 to have a Development Activities Meeting (DAM) for both Block G1 and Block G4. I want to note that a proposal for Block G4 has not yet been submitted to the DRP. **After**

explaining the integration of our process as enumerated above and the lack of progress at the DRP level, the Development Team is insisting on pushing forward with a DAM. I want to be clear that the scheduling of this DAM will be at the objection of the Hill CDC, the RCO as well as the DRP Committee due to the lack of compliance with our community plan and the community benefits agreement for the Lower Hill site.

I thank you for your time and consideration of the following status update and information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marimba Milliones". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "M" and a cursive "Milliones".

Marimba Milliones
President and CEO

Cc:

Daniel Gilman, Mayor's Office
State Representative Jake Wheatley

LOWER HILL EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MEMO

Date: February 11th, 2021

To: URA

From: Lower Hill Executive Management Committee (EMC)

Subject: January Progress Report

During these challenging times of COVID, the EMC board is working diligently with all Lower Hill stakeholders and the community to achieve the goals of the CCIP. At this time, unfortunately, best efforts have not been demonstrated. Here are some of the Lower Hill project and EMC's challenges.

EMC Board Vacancy

Recently an EMC Board member had to step down from the board. Currently, the board is waiting for the Mayor to appoint a new member to the board. Whoever the new appointee may be, it's vital for the appointee to have a clear understanding of the historical site and the importance of advancing the CCIP. Please note that the Hill CDC, on behalf of development stakeholders, has asked that the Mayor work in partnership to make an appointment that is appropriate for the duty ahead. There has been no agreement to partner on that appointment.

Workforce Center

PAR and the URA committed to funding a Workforce Center to support Hill District residents for the Lower Hill site employment opportunities. The Hill House main building was marked as the Workforce Center location. Due to funding delays, talks have shifted to possibly moving the Workforce Center from the Hill House to Ebenezer Baptist Church / CVS Workforce Center. Discussion of the possible partnership did not seek the input of the EMC.

Lower Hill Census Tract

The Lower Hill census tract changed this month from downtown to the Middle Hill District. Since the census tract is proposed to be changed, the Lower Hill project now qualifies for the Opportunity Zone tax credits. At every EMC bi-weekly board meeting, it is standard to ask for Lower Hill updates related to the CCIP from the SEA, URA, Mayor's Office, Councilman Lavelle, and PAR. The EMC heard about the census tract change from a Pittsburgh Business Times news article published yesterday. It is imperative for the advancement of the CCIP that the EMC board is notified of all talks that will impact the CCIP so significantly.

The EMC is committed to assuring the implementation of the CCIP and full disclosure to the Urban Redevelopment Authority staff and board of directors such that thoughtful and informed decisions that support our end goal can be made.

Please direct all inquiries to Lance Harrell, CCIP Project Administrator, for the Lower Hill EMC at lharell@hilldistrict.org or by phone at 412-589-5154