McCoy and Askew – Phase II Meeting

Tuesday, August 23, 2011
St. Paul School of Theology
5:30 -7:30pm
14 participants

The following is a summary of the discussion/feedback from the Phase II meeting for the McCoy and Askew closed school sites.

RECAP OF SITE TOUR FEEDBACK
During the site tour, the district received great feedback about community needs and reuses that could address community needs. Key things that the district has noted from the site tour discussion:

Askew
- Feeling that it is a "forgotten neighborhood" which is a challenge for redevelopment
- Concerns that the district will sell the building to the highest bidder and then the site not be redeveloped in a way that benefits the community
- Desire for the district to focus on someone who can really make it happen with a plan
- Variety of reuse options identified: senior housing, community center (one-stop services), non-profit offices, shops

McCoy
- Site used to serve as a center of community activity
- Want reassurance that organization that acquires the site will have resources to make project work long term
- Desire for the district to focus on someone who can really make it happen with a plan
- Variety of reuse options identified: senior housing, charter school, community center, day care, demolition of building and rebuild new housing

The participants confirmed that this was a good summary of the site tour feedback.

REUSE FEEDBACK
Askew and McCoy have received little to no interest to date from potential buyers/tenants. As such, the participants discussed and provided feedback on general reuse categories:

Community feedback on **Residential Use:**

- Participants were supportive of residential reuse of both Askew and McCoy for senior living or for a mixed-income project. They were not supportive, however, for a redevelopment that was solely affordable. The group indicated that there were already several affordable multi-family developments in the area and they were concerned about concentrating additional units in the area.

Community feedback on **Community Use:**

- Participants were very supportive of reuse of the sites as facilities that benefited the community, such as a community center/multi-purpose/one stop shop that served as a public space and provided services to the community. Participants indicated that a center that provided services/training to the community was much more important and desirable than a recreational center.

Community feedback on **Commercial Use:**

- While the technical assessment has indicated that neither site is a strong candidate for traditional office/retail use, one participant expressed interest in providing retail services at the sites in combination with other uses.
- In general, the participants feedback was mixed about whether commercial uses such as office/retail/grocery store would be a good fit at these sites. They expressed concerns about traffic and access since both sites are surrounded by single family homes. They also were concern about whether the buildings could effectively accommodate retail with their existing layouts.

SOLICITATION PROCESS
The district has a few options available to it when it disposes of surplus property:

- Choose to sell or lease
- Use one of three methods to sell/lease (as required by state statute):
    - Market a property through a broker
    - Formal bidding process (award to highest bidder)
    - Negotiate directly with a community group/governmental agency

During the meeting, participants were asked to provide their feedback on the solicitation process. The following summarizes their feedback/comments.

Community feedback on the **Solicitation Process**:
- Participants saw benefits to both a sale and lease scenario: a sale would establish stability, where as a lease would enable the district to maintain ownership for possible reuse
- Due to the lack of interest in Askew and McCoy, the group agreed that the best option going forward would be to list the sites with a broker so that they could be better marketed and gain wider exposure.
- The participants expressed a desire to review and provide feedback on proposals that are submitted to the brokerage team/district. Participants expressed a desire for the district to obtain proposals and then contact the Blue Valley Neighborhood Association, which would coordinate with the local residents/businesses to provide feedback on the proposals. The Neighborhood Association will reach out to the Truman Rd Corridor Association for their feedback on McCoy
- Jackie Ross should be the point of contact for McCoy; Arnold Shelby for Askew

INTERIM REUSES/ACTIONS
In the event the district doesn't receive viable proposals for McCoy or Askew, or if it takes several years, the district solicited feedback from the community on interim actions/activities.

Community feedback on **Interim Uses**:
- Some participants indicated that a community garden might be a good use of the grounds at McCoy. There was also an inquiry as to whether the district could allow the neighborhood association to use part of the buildings as a community resource center. The major question/concern is how would the utility costs be covered.
- The participants also discussed that the district might need to take additional steps to secure the windows/doors to prevent break-ins. The merits/issues associated with boarding up/bricking up the windows were discussed, but the group did not identify what steps should be taken.

DEMOLITION
For every site, the district is gathering community feedback on the possible demolition of the building.

Community feedback on **Demolition**:
- Participants indicated that their priority is to find a reuse for the structures, not to tear them down as part of a redevelopment project (note: while demolition was discussed as an option during the site tour, the participants of the Phase II meeting were not interested in actively pursuing demolition)
- The participants did indicate, however, that if the sites were vacant for some time and there was significant deterioration that would impact the neighborhood, then demolition should be considered