

**Shaker Square Alliance**

**January 27<sup>th</sup> at 10 am, 2021**

**Online via Zoom**

**NOTES**

**1. Updates on Shaker Square: Joy Johnson, Executive Director, Burten Bell Carr Development Corporation, Brandon Chrostowski, Founder, EDWINS, Mary Ann Kovach, Board President, SHAD**

Joy Johnson

- BBC was previously working on a project concerning the use of greenspace in the Square, but put this project on hold when the larger financial issues became apparent
- Coral Company is in default with the square, so the ownership is in question
- BBC wants to make sure that the Square ends up in good hands (but not necessarily being owned by BBC since this role does not best fit their expertise)
- BBC is working with CNP and the City of Cleveland to find good owners for the Square

Mary Ann Kovach

- SHAD has advocated for Shaker Square and the surrounding neighborhoods since 1976
- SHAD formerly hosted advocacy events on the Square as well
- SHAD will continue to do whatever possible to promote the Square
- The Quarterly SHAD Connection newspaper covers the Square and surrounding neighborhoods
  - o Working on Spring issue which will go to print in February, including an apartment hunters guide
    - Concerned that few apartment owners are advertising, possibly due to the pandemic
- Additionally, Larchmere mural will be going up across from the site of 121 Larchmere when the weather gets warmer
- SHAD would like to be included in future plans regarding the Square so that they can aid with communications

Joy Johnson

- BBC will be having a meeting with Saint Luke's and City of Cleveland in the beginning of February and will keep us posted
- Shaker Square is a large asset like Playhouse Square that the community needs to come together and save

## *Questions*

- Jennifer Wintner: What is Peter Rubin's current role?
  - o Joy Johnson: Current efforts are in assisting Peter Rubin to stay, but he has wanted to walk away for awhile
    - Coral Co. has less control since the property is in default
- Charles Bromley: Any thoughts from Brandon Chrostowski (EDWINS)?
  - o Brandon Chrostowski: Working on this for the last two months, signs have been pointing towards potential foreclosure for some time
    - EDWINS is working with a realtor and team of attorneys, looking to purchase the Square
      - Tangled up in legal issues right now
      - Peter Rubin has filed an objection to the receivership process
      - John Rothschild Jr. is the current court-appointed receiver
      - Up to 6 months could pass before an offer is entertained and it will take more time if a foreclosure goes through
      - Everyone is working together behind the scenes to make this happen
- Charles Bromley: We could potentially do a petition to call for the square to go to a good buyer
- Susan Rotatori: Would the receiver be responsible for upkeep this spring and summer?
  - o Brandon Chrostowski: John Rothschild's company receives funds from the banks with interest in the Square and they have been responsive to complaints so far
  - o What about painting?
    - Brandon Chrostowski: Not a bad idea, but there is an investment/return calculation being done by the investors
    - Joy Johnson: Safety issues will likely be repaired, but flowers or paint will be a harder sell
- Mary Ann Kovach
  - o Planning to get volunteers together to plant flowers this spring

## **Updates on 2804 South Moreland: Jennifer Wintner Esq. & Rakefet Landes, Property Owner**

### Rakefet Landes

- Believes in offering renovated, safe, affordable housing
- There is a shortage of affordable units that look good, but a large demand
  - o She currently has one vacancy and there is a huge line of applicants
  - o We need to come together to increase the supply
- 2804 S. Moreland was recently awarded state historic tax credits

- Previously awarded federal tax credits and City of Cleveland tax credits from the Housing Trust Fund as well
- Currently working on environmental reviews and permitting, but almost ready to break ground on fully renovating the building
  - Keeping historical features, but new floors, windows, HVAC, etc.
  - Will also be implementing green building features with water and electrical efficiencies

#### *Discussion*

- Charles Bromley: This project goes back to activism led by Mary Boyle to address vacant E. 130<sup>th</sup> & Drexmore buildings; after multiple court hearings, Cleveland's Housing Court established Community Control
- Bob Render: Historically, in this area's heyday, most apartments on the North side stayed relatively stable and maintained, but buildings on the South side, between Buckeye and Griffin, began to change hands frequently and they deteriorated. Concern that there are currently many pockets of neglected buildings in the area.
  - Rakefet Landes: There are many tenants with bad living conditions but there are no new places to go that are affordable
    - Additionally, EDEN and Section 8 refuse to rent even \$30 above their stated rates
  - Susan Rotatori can take a list of troubled buildings from Rakafet and pursue remedies from the housing court. It is difficult for tenants to take up these issues on their own
    - Organizing tenants may be a good approach to take on this issue at a larger scale!
- Jay Westbrook: Rakefet Landes paid \$100,000 in back taxes when she purchased the property, and this money went to the Shaker School System

#### **Community Updates: Councilperson Blaine A. Griffin**

- Shaker Square
  - Encourages patience
  - CNP and others are working with BBC to ensure Shaker Square ends up in the right hands
- Buckeye Plaza
  - Recent [article](#) published in The Land is very good
  - New owner, Adam Lubkin with Ibis Development Group is renovating the properties
    - New security group
    - Repaved the lot and added drainage

- Simons has seen 30% increase in business since ownership changes, also looking to add new tenants
- Buckeye Rd. Refresh
  - Meeting last week, encourages all of us to participate
  - Wants Buckeye to be the next biggest thing in Cleveland
  - Working to tear down deteriorated properties and preserve the properties in better shape
  - Streetscaping project coming next year, will be taking lessons from the past to not disturb businesses as has happened in the past
- Larchmere
  - Worked with motor vehicle maintenance group to address bumps in the road, hoping to receive a grant
  - Goal is to calm traffic, also working on Mayfield Rd.
- Woodhill Estates/Morris Black
  - Last time our grant proposal to renovate the housing was rejected after getting to the finals
    - Many successful applicants have had to apply 5 to 6 times
    - Feedback on our last application emphasized strengthening the housing plan and ensuring a diversity of housing
      - We need to add some market-rate housing to the plan since the new HUD projects aim to deconcentrate poverty
  - Organizers are working to find a new location for Bumper Crop Farm which would be displaced by the new housing
    - Although the farm is great, we need to deal with the issue of the antiquated housing at Woodhill Estates/Morris Black
- Historic signs
  - Money was in the budget last year for historic signs
  - Have been given assurances that the signs have been made, but waiting on more details
  - The signs will have double poles, single pole versions are no longer being made
  - Project was deprioritized due to COVID, but is still in progress
- Post Office
  - Susan Rotatori: The manager from the Shaker Post Office said that the Buckeye office was going to be remodeled, but no timeline yet
  - Councilperson Blaine Griffin: The congresswoman is leaving to become the HUD secretary and he has not received any info from her. Will continue to reach out to our federal partners.

## **121 Larchmere Project: Tony Smith & Bethany Grunenwald, First Interstate Properties**

Tony Smith, Development Manager with First Interstate Properties

- Windows are in and they are starting to lay brick on the elevations
- 4 stories, residential and office space
- In-unit laundry, fitness and wellness center, lounge, pet parlor, and other amenities
- There have been no delays and the safety plan has been updated to meet state standards
- Not yet accepting lease applications, but they have begun to engage potential renters

Bethany Gruenwald, Future Property Manager for the 121 Building

- Looking to have first residents move in June 1<sup>st</sup>, releasing applications in March
  - o Good reception from the community so far, have 140 prospects on the list, mostly local people
- Offering studios, 1 bed, 1 bed plus den, 2 bed
- The exact rent numbers are unreleased and not approved yet, will be similar to market rate for downtown and University Circle rents

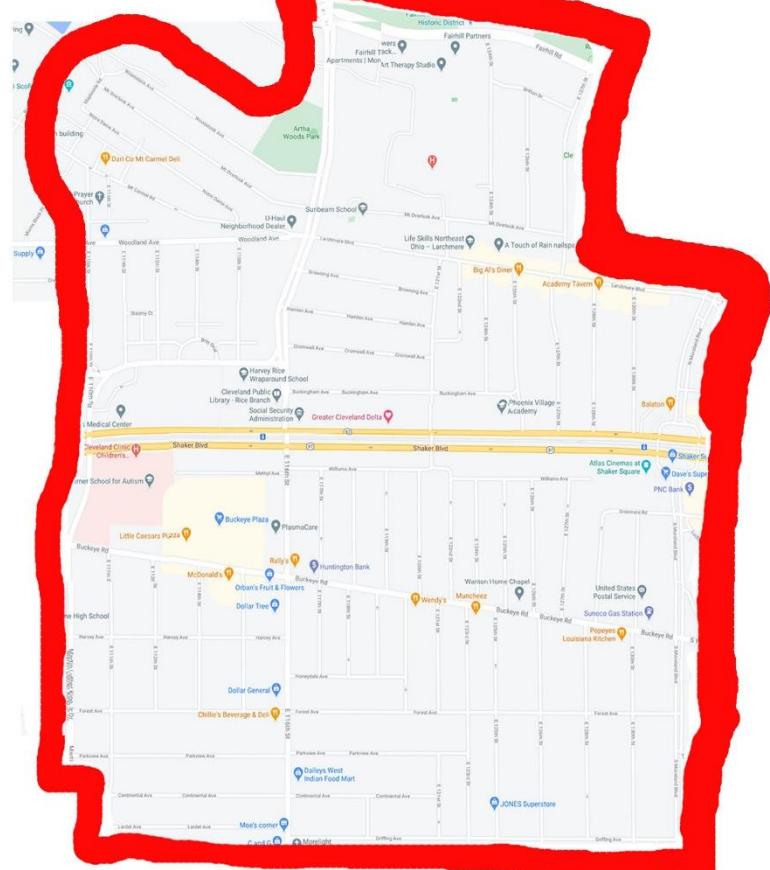
### *Questions*

- Councilperson Blaine A. Griffin:
  - o Can you respond to some resident concerns about the initial impacts of this project?
    - There are resident concerns about the parking on Larchmere
      - Parking in ushers parking lot or other locations such as the building behind the water tower?
    - Anticipated work needed on 121<sup>st</sup> St. will require temporary shutdown
  - o Bethany Gruenwald (response)
    - The building does have parking for tenants, hoping to not need additional parking
      - Building has a 1-for-1 parking ratio currently
      - Usually see a 0.8 parking ratio at other buildings First Interstate has built in Cleveland so should be sufficient
    - They are currently asking people working on the construction not to use prime spots for local businesses
    - They have found a commercial tenant for the first-floor business space, looking at lots nearby and other rental spots for employees
      - 25 full time employees

## Several Project Updates: Bob Render, President of the East 128th Street Block Club Association, Inc. and Precinct Committeeman Ward 6-T

- Larry Manno Memorial project
  - o Working with David Wilson with LAND and BBC as a fiscal agent
  - o Received funding from Cleveland Foundation, GUND Foundation, Saint Luke's, and CNP
  - o Landscaping and bench with Larry's name and an inscription is being implemented
  - o Should be finished by the summer
    - There will be a ribbon cutting with a reception
- Mural project on E. 128<sup>th</sup> St.
  - o 11 panel, 6 feet mural on 128<sup>th</sup> Street near Passport
  - o Will describe the journey of African Americans from Africa through slavery and the civil rights movement and present
  - o Will be teaming up with the E. 130<sup>th</sup> St. mural project and work together on funding
- Security Committee
  - o Concerned citizens in Buckeye and surrounding areas have teamed together to work on security
  - o Two committees are being set up:
    - Budget & Finance Committee for the expanded Private Security Patrol Initiative
      - Co-Chairs, Dr. Stephanie Fallcreek, R. L. Render III, Martha Woodruff
    - Budget & Finance Committee for a special targeted installation of Amazon Ring Video Surveillance Camera System

### Larchmere/ Buckeye Security Map



- Co-Chairs, Charles “Chip” Bromley, Johnnie Spates-Green, Toni Johnson,
- Currently at the stage of establishing funding
- Anyone is welcome to join. Reach Bob Render at [rrender@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rrender@sbcglobal.net)
- Proposed boundaries:

#### **E. 130<sup>th</sup> St. Mural Project: Josiah Britt, Community Artist, Founder, CollectivExpress**

- Shaker Towers Mural project on E. 130<sup>th</sup> St.
  - 45,000 square feet
  - You cannot usually change the identity of a street by installing one mural, but this project has the potential to make a big change
- Will bring Buckeye, Shaker Square, and E 130<sup>th</sup> St. together
- Working with 6<sup>th</sup>--8<sup>th</sup> grade students, will be starting art sessions soon

#### **13000 Buckeye: Jay Westbrook, E. 130<sup>th</sup> St. Working Group**

- Building at 13000 Buckeye is finally turning the corner
- Housing court enforcement was lacking for a long time and the building was flipped several times before this
- GIG6 the current owner, is being held responsible to bring the property into code compliance by Judge Scott
- Our petition drive was presented as evidence to the court along with testimony by attendees. GIG6 owners were found guilty of neglect and were ordered to bring the building into full compliance; the building was placed under Community Control sanctions which include a provision that the property cannot be sold without approval of the court. There are also regular reporting requirements.
- Community pressure and persistence led to this outcome!

#### **Neglected Buildings on South Moreland: Susan Rotatori, Ludlow Community Association**

- From MLK to E. 116<sup>th</sup> on Shaker, the Land Conservancy has made significant improvements and it is now pleasant and safe to walk there
- Forest Building
  - Sent issues to housing department
  - Has been boarded up, discussing putting up a fence
  - Supposed to be cleaning up the trash; Susan has been trying to pick up trash, but there is too much

- There are other buildings to add to the South Moreland list of buildings that need to be watched and taken care of.

### **Planning Group: Charles Bromley, Director, Shaker Square Alliance**

- Establishing planning group for Alliance agendas
- Reach out to Chip if you would like to participate on a planning committee for our agendas, [bromleycharles@yahoo.com](mailto:bromleycharles@yahoo.com)

### **Community updates from attendees**

- Bella, Preterm Clinic
  - o The preterm clinic is starting a diaper bank
  - o Survey for community need – looking to hear from parents who can weigh in on what diaper need looks like in Cleveland
    - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DiaperNeeds>
- Bianca Butts
  - o BBC is hosting a neighborhood services survey closing at end of week
  - o Respond if you haven't yet:
    - [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSelwqdFyhTPoCWJt4nd2t28Xl\\_1nxEYWpwRsXI\\_mZONPXJFjg/viewform?usp=send\\_form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSelwqdFyhTPoCWJt4nd2t28Xl_1nxEYWpwRsXI_mZONPXJFjg/viewform?usp=send_form)
  - o There is a targeted marketing campaign to highlight food-based businesses in Larchmere coming soon!
- Mary Ann Kovach
  - o We should be advocating for more inspectors, why have inspections declined so much and what can we do to bolster inspections?
  - o Dawn Mayes: Maybe invite leader of inspections to the next SSA meeting to discuss these issues
- Councilperson Blaine A. Griffin
  - o Buckeye Homes 2
    - Folks who were lease-purchasing homes in Buckeye/Larchmere area footprint expected that their investments were going towards home ownership, but paperwork was lost, putting their homes in danger
    - Hosted a meeting and working with administration, BBC, and CHN, believe there is a solution for the homeowners in progress
    - Meeting will be held virtually with the homeowners soon
  - o Lead-Safe certifications start 3/31
    - Starting with 44120 and 44135 zip codes (including us)

- If someone has a rental property, when they file paperwork for rental, they will have to show that they have had a 3<sup>rd</sup> party inspection demonstrating that there are no lead hazards
  - Training RRP certified folks to bring properties into compliance as well
- Bob Render: Why has there historically been a pushback on point-of-sale inspections in Cleveland?
  - Jay: There has been a realistic feeling that the weight of point-of-sale inspections would fall on homeowners who lack resources to maintain their homes
- Julien Khan (via chat)
  - Buckeye Road Refresh is a transportation planning project for Buckeye Road between Woodhill Road and South Moreland Boulevard. If you haven't already, take a moment to participate in our Buckeye Road Survey:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/buckeyeroad>