



Spruce Hill Community Association
257 South 45th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 7:30pm

Meeting location: In Person at SHCA Center 257 S 45th St or remote via Zoom

Attendees: See screenshots and attendance log below (pp. 14-15)

Welcome and Introductions (Sylvia Hamerman-Brown)

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes (November and January) – to do by email

Speakers

- Community Advisory Committee to discuss development of the former USciences campus now owned by Saint Josephs University (SJU)
 - Background – Barry Grossbach – put together a neighborhood group of immediate neighbors, brainstorming sessions.
 - Gilian Tiley –
 - agenda and process, see slides pasted below (beginning p. 5). Design workshop with community advisory committee, a workshopping process without SJU there. Aspirations, guiding principles – what the community wants. A step or two ahead of developers – want to be ahead of the game. Now starting expanded outreach, now coming out and meeting with others, SHCA, Cedar Park, Woodland Cemetery.
 - Who are we? See slide
 - Phase One – what SJU is doing. They are taking buildings off line.
 - Phase Two – see slide – decommissioned buildings mean they are no longer operational
 - Existing zoning – largely industrial because former Breyers ice cream site, likely no matter what will be a re-zoning
 - Topographic – very hilly, like Clark Park bowl – 700 single family houses could fit there!

- Process Overview – see slides
- This process is not master planning or re-zoning (at least at this point). Types of uses and density that might be warranted.
- Draft themes – see slide. Trying to bubble up and synthesize slides.
- Q&A
 - Ultimately the report will be turned over to the selected developer – but will be able to tell, this is what we know so far.
 - Julie Bush – understand currently zoned industrial – is there any chance it could go to somebody industrial – Gilian – that is a potential – we have not heard that from SJU. Community articulation is not for continued industrial use – maybe light – like labs, or life sciences, but have not been hearing that.
 - Q: Intention is to sell the entire package? Yes, that is right. SJU says, intention to sell to one person. Directly adjacent to Clark Park.
 - Barry – zoning on the site – is all over the place, industrial, residential, commercial. Has no streets and no roads. If individual developments. We were interested in creating a master zoning plan for this site, but SJU not interested in doing that. Ultimately, when developed, zoning will be a big issue. There are 4 RCO that are involved. Major development on this site. Asking price and bids considerable. No developer will make a bid on this site if they don't think they can get zoning on this site. The RCO's will have a say, and it is a complicated zoning issue.
 - Is it feasible that one developer would tackle this? Feasible, but due to mixed bag, would be more likely that would have a master developer who will parcel off the property. Their wish is for someone to take this on and parcel it off (SJU would not want to do this).
 - Has it been offered to another university? It was a public offering.
 - Frank Chance: Wouldn't the FOCP also be an RCO that has standing in the campus site – not according to the website. Maybe one of the parcels, but not for the rest – the rest are the Big 4.
 - Chat: About the phase 2 shown earlier in the slide show, has it been fully confirmed that all of the buildings listed will be shut down until a buyer is found? Or is that just a tentative plan? A: this is underway as their larger effort to consolidate programs.
 - Chat Q: Is there anyone in the working group who has interest or expertise in environmental impact? Has the group so far considered environmental issues as part of the plan? A: not so far
 - Is there any possibility of the donation of the Mill Creek Garden to the neighborhood as a dog park (idea has been floating around)? YES!! There is!!

- Outcome of this process? Large enough themes to articulate, and also so people feel consensus (not everyone will agree on smaller details 100%). Given the draft. The council member wants to be a voice on behalf of the community, but needs to hear from everyone. Having everyone have a copy of this document, this is the power and tool – the three advisors as a consultant will be handing to SJU. Can't control what they think but will give it to them. Q: will there be feedback from SJU as far as their reaction to the document. A: they are meeting regularly monthly with SJU, the hope is that there will be transparency and communication, not happening in a vacuum
 - More meetings? Yes, there are 8 through the end of March. Depends on which community groups to which you belong, e.g., Woodlands. If not part of the other organizations, can always email them. Email address is on the sign in sheet. Get email addresses from Barry– can ask questions later. Barry will be a very good conduit. Can talk to Barry as a voice of Spruce Hill.
 - Q: Low income or subsidized housing? A: that was not part of the constituency – but if you want to make sure it is part of the consideration – family housing. Word subsidized low income is used here, but not restricted to this.
 - Q: Rosenberger – still online? A: It is in Clark Park, it is a city building. The lease between the city and SJU expires at some point. When does it end? Barry doesn't know – don't know what the arrangement is. Used to have access to use of it under USciences. Gilian – U3 advisers – expires in 2029.
 - Q: Scroll back to phase 2 map – them not having functions in Rosenberger.
 - Q: why is Griffith Hall in stripes A: keeping some administrative functions there
 - Q: Any chance of a developer working with the Philadelphia school district on adding a K-12 school to the site? (An elementary school used to be on the site). A: nothing is off the table at this point. Neighbors of West Shore voiced this as well. OFC would need the school district at the table.
- Constant Springs Consulting to discuss project updates and fundraising
 - Consultant absent.

Committee Updates

- Executive Committee (Becca Geller-Puchalsky) – nothing to report

- Historical Preservation Committee (Jenine Sanzari) –
 - The HD nomination will be reviewed at the first of two public meetings on April 19
 - We have been asked by PHC to post the notification flyers (printed) on each block by end of week. **Please ask for volunteers to post flyers** (alternatively I can post flyers). We need all volunteers to send a photo of the posted flyer to me for PHC documentation. One per block is the plan. Can find out. Andrew – can you send around the sign up sheet virtually? Andrew will email Sylvia.
 - This notification has been sent to all property owners in quadrant 1, dated Feb 14, 2024, and signifies the official start date for building permit applications to get routed to PHC for review.
 - Decide on whether or not to proceed with photos and inventory Quadrant 2 (northeast – north of Quadrant 1). Julie – this is what Sharon was supposed to talk about. Jenines email said that Sharon was supposed to talk about two things. May need additional info about cost estimates. At a minimum – cots of photography of quadrant is about 2K, prefers it to be in March when there isn't foliage. Barry – the money will be there. Barry will make sure. Motion for 2K for photography. Seconded by Richard. Unanimously approved.
- Zoning (Barry Grossbach)
 - now meeting on the third Tuesday of each Month.
 - Next meeting is 2/20/24 to discuss 4213 Chester Ave and Northern Lib. Partners LLC work with multiple units around 44th and Ludlow
- Safe Streets & Commercial Corridors (Evan Johnstone & Eric Santoro)
 - Evan/Eric met with someone from UCD about the retail survey and will share details at a later date
- Education (Becca Geller-Puchalsky)
 - Missed the SAC meeting yesterday due to illness, but shared updates about the 43/Spruce application via email
- Operations (Tony West)
 - Got us wifi!
 - Cost \$100 for install and ?? monthly?
- Spruce Up Committee (Laura Line) – nothing to report.
- Crosstown Coalition (Vicky) –
 - Tony attended this month's meeting
 - Seems a good time to reach out to the City because Commerce Deputy Director Alba Martinez is interested in outreach
 - Ben at Commerce said they have small grants for businesses
 - Michelle also at Commerce has a role to help people navigate business bureaucracy.

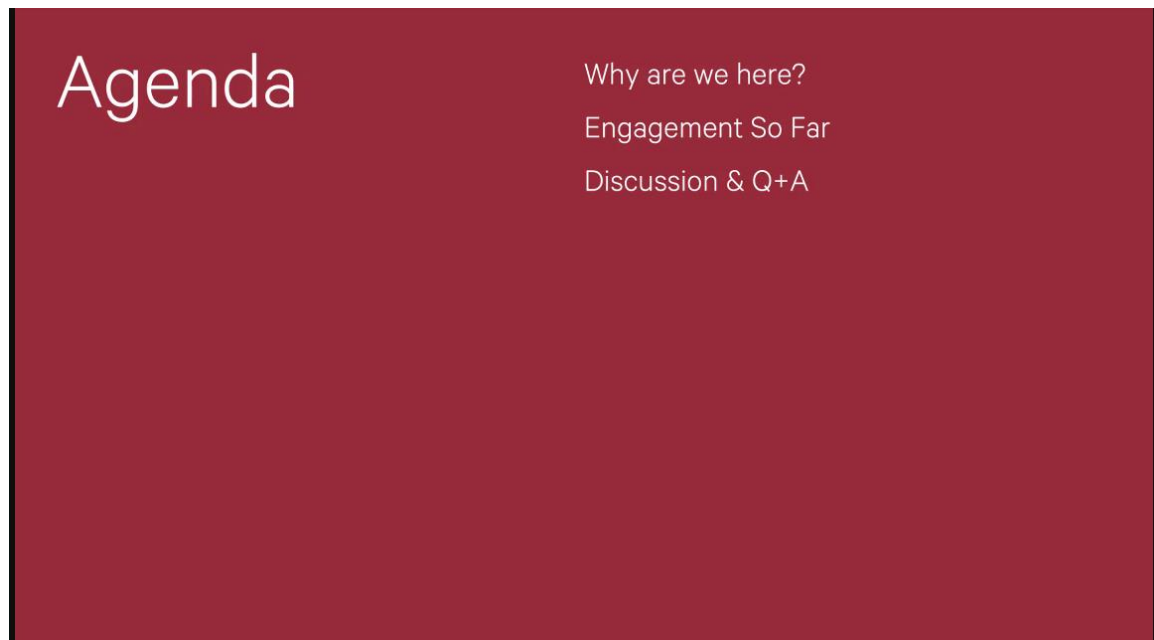
- May Fair (Monica/Evan)
 - committee launching activities in full force and need all board members on deck.
 - First meeting Tuesday Feb 20th at 7:30p via zoom – all invited.
 - Please review the pre-Fair planning document to see where you can sign up. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1VFcW5LSBYfOTb6t1cpJpvE-McLMI90bpRfbdItBeLvc/edit?usp=sharing>
 - Volunteers: Neighbor Otto Smith (they/them otto_smith@outlook.com) would like to be added to the volunteers and shared information about where/when

All Other Business

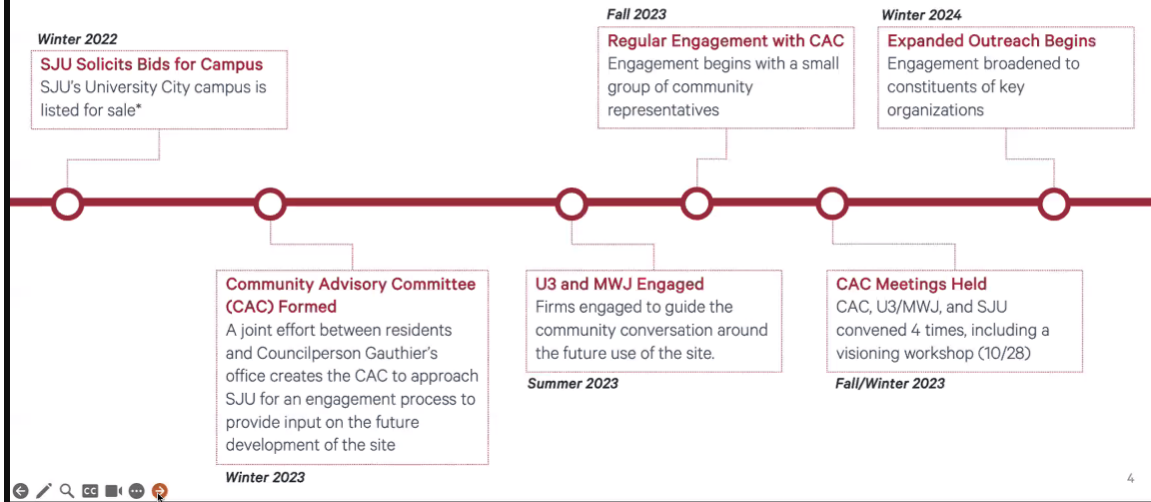
- **Plotland** – Monica – has a colleague who previously managed it. The current manager is stepping down and they are looking for someone to take over. Bridgette will check with West Philly Pollinators.

Next Meeting Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Meeting Adjourned – 8:53pm



How did we get here?



Who are we?



U3 ADVISORS

Overview:

We help institutions and their surrounding communities identify shared values and take action to realize their development goals.

Expertise:

- University real estate and campus planning
- Community partnerships
- Anchor Strategy

Neighborhood Experience:

- 40th Street Corridor Revitalization
- Company's home base (40th & Ludlow)
- Residents of the community



MWJ CONSULTING LLC

Overview:

We combine design, architecture, community planning, and consulting to create equitable spaces for residents in and around Philadelphia.

Expertise:

- Community planning
- Affordable housing
- Inclusive design

Neighborhood Experience:

- Mill Creek Redevelopment
- Paschall Village (Cobbs Creek)
- Residents of the community

University City Campus Footprint: What do we know now?

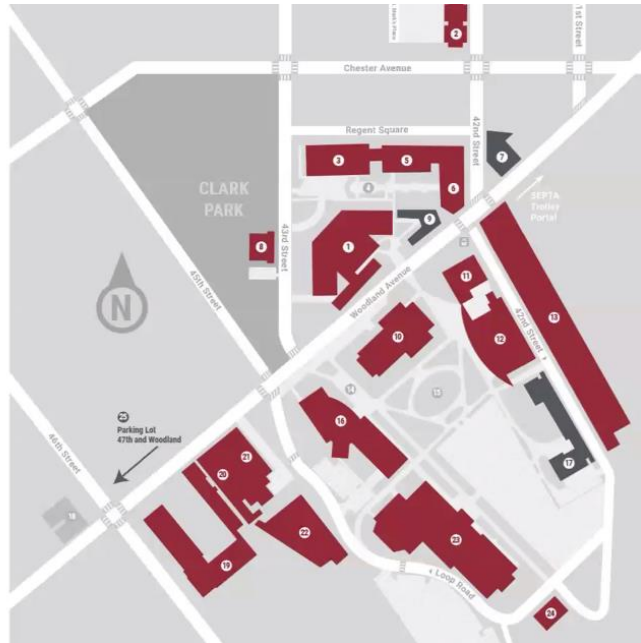


Phase One

Fully operational campus through the 2022-23 academic year with both undergraduate and graduate students and programs.

- 7 East Building
- 9 Kline Hall
- 17 Goodman Hall
- 25 47th and Woodland Lot

The buildings listed above are currently or will soon be vacant or underutilized.



Phase Two

All undergraduate students, programs and living move to City Avenue Campus beginning in the academic year 2023/2024. A graduate health professions campus remains in UCity.

- 1 Griffith Hall
- 2 Osol Hall
- 3 Whitecar Hall
- 8 Rosenberger Hall*
- 10 Alumni Hall
- 11 Joseph England Library
- 12 Wilson Student Center
- 13 4140 Warehouse

The buildings listed above [highlighted in gray] will be vacant leaving the buildings in red as SJU's graduate/research health professions complex.

* Owned by City of Philadelphia, lease through 2029



What do we know now?

Existing Zoning

The site is not uniformly zoned, instead consisting of 7* different zoning classifications that range from open space to residential to institutional to industrial uses.

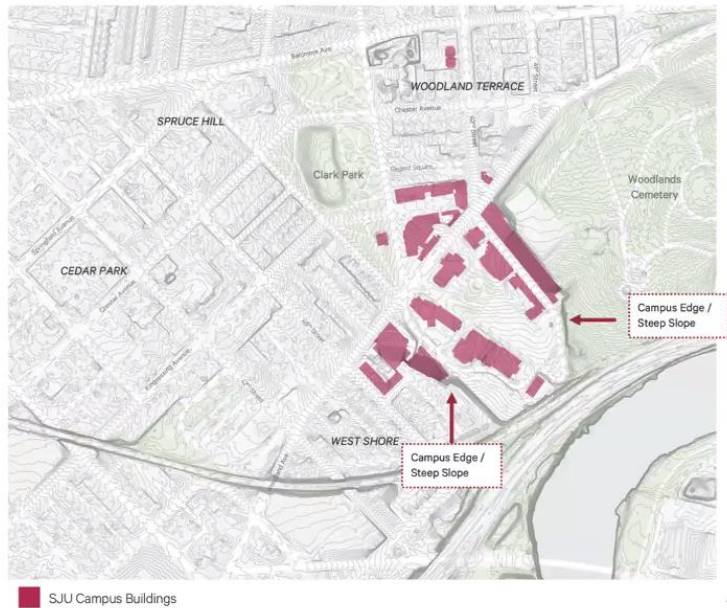


*Note: The Wilson Student Center is zoned for both RSA-5 (Residential) and I-2 (Industrial) uses

What do we know now?

Topographic Change

The site includes areas of sharp topographic change. Notably, steep inclines exist adjacent to the IPEX building and bordering the cemetery.

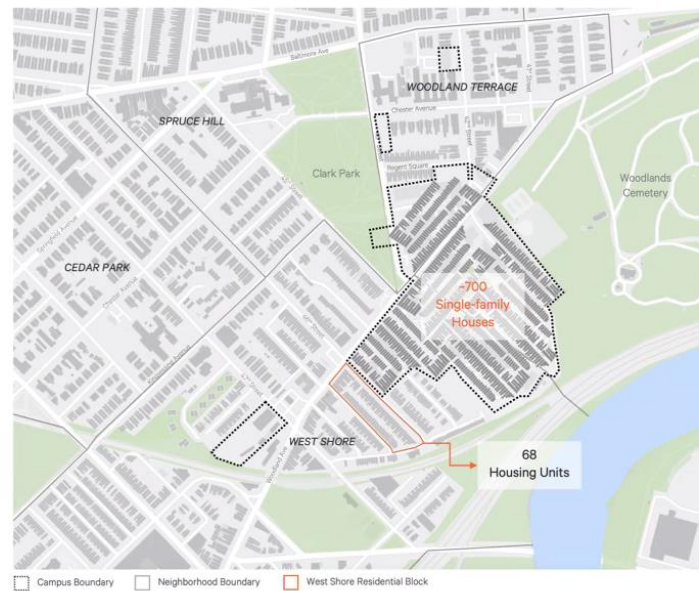


10

What do we know now?

Examining Site Capacity

The site can accommodate just over 10 blocks of West Shore-type neighborhood housing density, amounting to ~700 single-family houses. Even greater density could be accommodated with multi-family residential units.

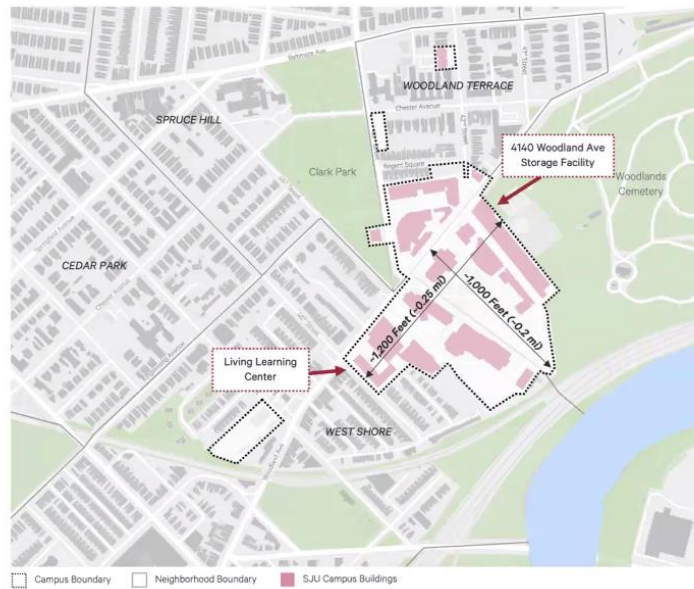


11

What do we know now?

Examining Site Depth

The SJU site is sizable, measuring ~1,000 feet (~0.2 miles) from Woodland Ave to the railway and ~1,200 feet (~0.25 miles) from the 4140 Woodland Avenue storage facility to the Living Learning Center.



Process Overview

The future developer of the site will be charged with the physical and programmatic development of the campus. This process will help the developer to understand the community's desired use and density for the site and will be critical to inform and guide their development process as they seek entitlements.

Goals

- Determine the community's desired use and density of the site
- Finalize a set of guiding principles to inform SJU and the selected developer
- Build trust between SJU and the West Philadelphia community

What this process is **NOT**

Master Planning

Master planning efforts take a significant amount of time (18-24 months) and resources to execute. This engagement will endeavor to provide recommendations around use and density. This process is not a master planning exercise, instead, it should be considered a primer for any future master planning effort.

Re-Zoning

A reminder that zoning can dictate general categorical uses for the site (such as residential versus commercial versus industrial) and the density of the site, however, it cannot specifically determine future tenants or operators of the site such as locating a grocery store, restaurant, etc. This process will provide guidance on use and density, not specific zoning recommendations.

Workshop Overview

On **October 28th**, the Community Advisory Committee shared ideas and worked together to shape their **vision for the site's future development**. Using a to-scale aerial map and blocks representing different uses, heights, and densities, the exercise involved three separate groups facilitated by three different individuals.

Attendees Included:

- Faith Boose, Southwest Philadelphia District Services
- Andrew Bowers, Friends of Clark Park
- Marty Cabry, Regent Square
- Andrew Goodman, Councilmember Jamie Gauthier's Office
- Barry Grossbach, Spruce Hill
- Kevin Horne, Southwest Philadelphia District Services
- Renee Howard, 48th & Woodland Playground Advisory Council
- Carol Jenkins, Friends of Clark Park
- Shawn Markovich, Clark Park Neighbors
- Cameron O'Grady, Friends of Clark Park
- Jacquelyn Owens, West Shore
- Robin Sturdivant, 47th Street Block Captain
- Michael Ross, Southwest Philadelphia District
- Fred Watkins, Resident
- Earl Woods, Resident
- Matt Wolfe, 27th Ward Republican RCO

Workshop Overview

























































































18

Workshop Overview – **DRAFT** Themes

- ***Capitalizing on Borders and Topography*** – Every group factored in existing borders and topography into their visions for the site in ways that help promote density while minimizing disruption
- ***Connectivity and Accessibility*** – Every group prioritized maintaining community access to the site and layered in requests for connectivity ranging from simple measures such as maintaining existing green spaces to more involved measures such as creating and/or re-routing streets to match the existing grid
- ***Intentional Residential Development*** – Each group emphasized that the preferred residential development complements the existing neighborhood fabric, helps serve underrepresented segments of the community (e.g., senior, low-income folks, etc.), and includes some limited amenities that are accessible to the public
- ***Gaps in Commercial Activity*** – While recognizing they cannot dictate which commercial or institutional uses come to the site, every group included high-level aspirations for uses that explicitly serve and improve the well-being of neighbors (e.g., a grocery store, school, laundromat, recreation center, etc.).

Discussion / Q+A

- What questions do you have about the process thus far? The process to come?
- What are your reactions to the draft themes developed in the visioning workshop?
- What is missing that you would like communicated to SJU and the selected developer?

-  Monica E Calkins (me)  
-  Spruce Hill (Host)  
-  Gillian Tiley   
-  Alice Wells  
-  Andrew Richman  
-  Arneatha Tapper  
-  Barry Grossbach  
-  Becca Geller-Puchalsky  
-  Benjamin's iPhone  
-  Carrie  
-  craigsantoro  
-  Deanna's iPhone  
-  Evan Johnstone  
-  Frank Chance  
-  Jamie Vann  
-  Julie Bush [More ▾](#)
-  Linda Cook  
-  marty  
-  Pat Lavelle [More ▾](#)
-  Patrick Bayer (he/him)  
-  Theresa Tsai  
-  Vicki McGarvey  
-  Vincent Kornacki  
-  Yoni Brook  
-  Mary McGettigan 
-  Michael Artuso  
-  Mike Lyons  
-  Minesh Shah  
-  Nanda's iPhone  
-  Nicole O (She/Her)  

Sign in

Tom West

Bridget Lessner

Rich Guffanti

Pamela Seida

David Brubaker

Otto Smith

Joy Wittenburg

Nicole Guwel

Rick Wesner

Marne Smith, U3 Advisors

Dobby Roof

Suzantha Stathis

Tom Lusserhop, U3 Advisors, tom1@U3advisors.com

Michael Johns, MAJ Consulting

Sylvia Hamerman-Brown

Laura Line

Richard Moore