

Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) Interest Group Meeting
April 4, 2008

Participants

Don Edwards, Washington Regional Equity Network,
don@washingtonregionalequity.net
Patsy Fletcher, DC Historic Preservation Office, patsy.fletcher@dc.gov
Jason Hercules, PB World, Hercules@pbworld.com
Mary Jacksteit, Collaboration DC, mary.jacksteit@gmail.com
Sam Jordan, Ward 7 Development Advisory Committee,
samunomas@msn.com
Matt Larsen, Washington Regional Equity Network,
matt@washingtonregionalequity.net
Dominick Moulden, ONE DC, dmoulden@onedconline.org
Parag Khandhar, law student, WCL CED clinic, parag.khandhar@gmail.com
Danny Ortiz, danielortiz@gmail.com
Martha Ross, Brookings Greater Washington mross@brookings.edu
Bill Schechter, Collaboration DC, bill.schechter@verizon.net
Dave Sobelsohn, ANC6D02, anc6d02@yahoo.com
Karla Walter, Good Jobs First, karla@goodjobsfirst.org
Jackie Ward, ANC 8a06, 8a06@anc.dc.gov

Notes

Don Edwards (Meeting Facilitator): We've called this meeting to have a discussion on how to use community benefits agreements to build regional equity throughout the region. I'm hoping that what we will do is having a round robin discussion about what attracted you.

Martha Ross: I'm with Brookings Greater Washington. This seemed like an interesting project related to the other issues in our research portfolio.

David Sobelsohn: I'm an ANC commissioner in the part of the city with at least 25% of the building permits in the city.

Sam Jordan: I'm here as the convener of the Ward 7 Development Advisory Committee. As with so many other organizations concerned with development in their communities, we began with the Central Northeast Civic Association with concerns about displacement. Displacement has been the only promise that developers kept. It was fear of displacement that led the civic association to authorize us to train the residents of the community

1920 L Street NW, Suite 500 ↻ Washington, DC 20036

Visit Us at www.washingtonregionalequity.net

(Ward 7 and East of the River) to become confident and capable of assessing, monitoring, and influencing the path of development. It requires a great deal of information and training – to build confidence – so people just don't fear development. We've worked with the Deputy Mayor, Office of Planning, Councilmembers and ANCs. We need to build a regulatory scheme where developers engage the community in development projects. We also want to use the experiences of other groups. We consider ourselves a loose alliance with ONE DC. The idea is to maximize the role of community residents to have a clear approach that requires city agencies guaranteeing jobs, housing, workforce readiness training. I'm here because we would like to see a broader impact on the city council to make it a lot easier not to just have one-off projects, but to have something we can enforce and monitor.

Bill Schechter – Coordinator of Collaboration DC – we've helped the city and DCPS organize and facilitate community meetings. Part of our older history is working on equitable development.

Mary Jacksteit – I'm a senior associate with Collaboration DC. I'm here because my experience is that starting with David's group in SW, neighborhoods facing development have the challenges that Sam faced. We trained people how to be a negotiator and our experience was that transferring knowledge and confidence was very important. Recently Sam and people in Ward 5 have contacted me looking for knowledge on how to do this. I raised the issue about whether we could be more intentional about getting funding resources. Jim Robinson at the Neighborhood College would have been there if they could. He's interested in being an active participant.

Patsy Fletcher – In my work with the DC HPO, we consider neighborhood heritage projects to be a community benefit. Because of all the development, CBA's would work very well for neighborhood history groups looking for funding.

Dominic Moulden – ONE DC focuses on organizing residents on their rights for housing, public land development, and jobs. We focus on people first.

Karla Walters, Good Jobs First – We have a manual about CBA's and a conference coming up.

Daniel Ortiz – I'm a student at American University. We have a relationship with FLY in Barry Farms. James Pearlstein sends his regards. We are interested in CBA's.

1920 L Street NW, Suite 500 ↻ Washington, DC 20036

Visit Us at www.washingtonregionalequity.net

Parag Khandhar – Like Daniel I'm a 3rd year law student at AU law school and am interested in the different partnerships that are coming together. I want to see how I can be an ally.

Jason Hercules – PB Placemaking. We are working with a community in West Baltimore (West Baltimore Coalition on the MARC station project) and there has been a lot of neglect. We are trying to build in community benefits. I want some info for me and for the community.

Don Edwards – Let's start with Mary and Bill. I want to specifically thank James and you guys from FLY. As I go around the city, we have to move beyond talking about getting young folks involved. From my standpoint, a lot of the implementation that people are talking about – the primary beneficiaries are people in those demographics.

Mary Jacksteit – I want to start out saying that we want to test an idea. We have a chart that describes a range of activities by level of initiative and proactive action by community. They may or may not get to a formal negotiation. There are a lot of ways in which residents are under pressure to get residents mobilized. Some is a formal negotiation, some is not. They still need to know how to be powerful, how to be informed, how to leverage, what you should be aiming for. You can aim too low – like getting lights on the basketball court. If they go leader by leader, they can offer things that don't amount to anything. Together, people can talk about how they can make development dollars make the neighborhood into what they want it to be. I want to commend David in getting people together, getting stadium job for neighborhood residents, etc. Thinking about youth, the Earth Conservation Corps brought a lot of young people to a panel on community benefits and were active participants. I want to reinforce the fact that that is powerful. An anecdote: the head of DOES was there saying that the future of employment was that everyone needed to go to college to be employed. A woman there called her down saying that they were training people for jobs that didn't require college degrees, because not everyone is going to college.

Bill Schechter: In the West End, a lot of money has changed hands, without a lot of transparency. There are requirements to PUD's, but who is in charge of the accountability for that? OP is not staffed for that.

Sam Jordan: At the level of the city government, we needed them to do something, and be responsible with respect to agencies to coordinate them. They impact on key elements: workforce training. Who is monitoring that program? No one is satisfied with that program. We don't get it down in the

1920 L Street NW, Suite 500 ☞ Washington, DC 20036

Visit Us at www.washingtonregionalequity.net

communities where we see the impact. We now have a developer benefit system, not a community benefit system. We for example talked with Josh Williams and the Labor Council because they should be actors. We've talked with Karla, and John Goldstein in Milwaukee. There they did a single piece of legislation for the county council. We want to look at that to see if it can be modified for here. We don't want the government to displace the community at the table.

Don Edwards – I have some questions. One of the things that occurs to me is that one of the challenges is “what do you want your neighborhood to look like?” This is the whole issue of getting people to engage in a deeper examination. Since home rule, it's been about the government acting on behalf of the citizens. In one sense it is big government and the government being responsive. Can we do a both/and approach? But there is not a lot of infrastructure for the “and” part. I see in the paper a reference to ANC's. What are the infrastructure pieces that are there, and could be developed, or are not there. The training that OP did, it was so hard for them to do, and it was a small thing. But for them it was a big thing and they haven't followed up. What can we do? We have to encourage people in the community to participate in the conversation about what they want in the community.

Bill Schechter - we did the comp plan, but we don't have a history of neighborhood plans. Will OP do these?

Dominic Moulden – we hear that poverty is endemic because people in government don't see the people in poverty as being the people who can solve the issue. We've created an organizing institute because the first step is to organize people. We've been asked to partner with the Barry Farm coalition and for the Radio One site. We are out there to organize people but the government doesn't like it. Neil Albert says he believes in resident-led development. We've got to go out there with people and resources. When we went out to Anacostia, 300 people said they didn't want a soccer stadium. No one listened to them earlier. We even showed them our conflicts – desiring a hospital, good jobs, day care, but also a Wal-Mart. One DC wants to critique that. I spent most of my childhood in public housing in East Baltimore, and my parents are from West Baltimore. If I didn't believe in the people... You have to hang in with the people. If you don't organize people...

Where we differ with Mary, is that we say it has to be a detailed legal document. We train the people on legal precedents on this.

1920 L Street NW, Suite 500 ↻ Washington, DC 20036

Visit Us at www.washingtonregionalequity.net

Matt Larsen – In response to Bill’s comment, the Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans (SNAPS) are an example of neighborhood planning.

Bill Schechter – How many of the SNAPS have provided a basis for CBA agreements?

Don Edwards- Most people didn’t know what to do with that process. It’s not to say the city doesn’t know what to do with that process. Patsy, I know that there are a series of grants that the Humanities Council can award for community heritage projects. If there was a coordinated application, it could produce something for lasting value. I think we should talk about a strategy that addresses this infrastructure question.

Patsy Fletcher – You were talking about the limited influence of the SNAPS. The people who were community leaders almost always brought out the SNAPS. That process served to educate a few people. My interest is from a less complex situation than jobs or controlling buildings. Our way of organizing is getting people interested in their communities, falling in love with their neighborhoods and communicating about it. It’s a long process to educate people about their communities so they can articulate the value of those communities – such as when a project like Poplar Point comes together. A community book that Deanwood did has served to educate community and developer folks. Now people know the history, all because of that small project.

Mary Jacksteit – What strikes me is that there are several building blocks – it is more than just learning the technicalities of TIFs. Another thing that got me fired up was meeting someone who was developing the privately-funded Community Benefits Academy – regarding the development in downtown Atlanta. Ray Rawls did the mediation. It seemed to pull together private resources and to use a multi-disciplinary approach. They have a powerpoint which we can post to the Web site. Also, there is existing infrastructure of the ANC’s. In SW/SE, the ANC originally wanted to be the exclusive voice. It has been a journey for them to have others lead as well. We saw this in the Neighborhood College as well where ANCs felt organizing and developing for community benefits were their job.

David Sobelsohn – There is going to be a turf problem. You need to make sure ANCs and any civic associations are brought in as early as possible so that any new efforts aren’t seen as competing.

Don Edwards – The idea of organizing is that there is never enough for what is needed. The both/and approach is that we have tools, techniques and

1920 L Street NW, Suite 500 ↻ Washington, DC 20036

Visit Us at www.washingtonregionalequity.net

bodies to play to different strengths. Do you think that works in the real world? What is the role that ANC's potentially play in helping people to understand the CBA process, and getting people to understand what they want? One view is that the ANC's are civic, and the other view is that they are part of government.

David Sobelsohn – The problem that sometimes arises is the problem of turf and power and role. The ANCs have statutory power – automatic representation at the agencies like the zoning commission that do have power.

Jackie Ward – I'm in the process of negotiating CBAs with New Communities and Poplar Point. With New Communities I've had to educate my voters about CBAs. We had to conclude an asset study. I worked with the community first, and I asked the community what they wanted. The thing about our ANC is that we are very active. Our benefit is not just for my Single Member District, but we try to benefit the entire ANC and give the opportunity to other Single Member Districts. I've had very good luck, because most of the stuff I've asked for I've got. I've known some other people like Dee Hunter in NW and people around Columbia Heights. I've asked Dee to give me info on how they got development. In Columbia Heights they didn't negotiate.

David Sobelsohn – We had a great success a year ago when our chair suggested that the community benefits coordinating committee organize some roundtable work sessions to determine the priority for our neighborhoods. We produced a report and we are using it as a source document to negotiate with developers. Some of the developers have taken the report seriously.

Jackie Ward – The ANC's need to work more closely with the communities to do a more detailed asset mapping study.

Patsy Fletcher – Sam, when you talked about government, did you mean ANC's?

Sam Jordan – We know we need resources at the level of organizing. I'm reluctant to classify the ANCs as either government or civic. I want to direct the resources to whoever is active on behalf of community interests. As a group, I'm hoping that we will have a seminar or meeting with council members, agencies, and the mayor's office, so that we are on the same page. When the communities begin organizing, the agencies realize what they have and haven't done. We need to bring together the Council

1920 L Street NW, Suite 500 ↻ Washington, DC 20036

Visit Us at www.washingtonregionalequity.net

members to sensitize them. With the ANC's, we're not asking you to circle the wagons. At the same time, we do know that we need to challenge the groups that represent the community. Do you know your community? We need the council directing the agencies to fund us.

Jackie Ward – We have just finished in my ANC something similar. What we are doing in Ward 8 is we have done studies to make sure that the issues you bring up are being addressed. We are looking to bring in green jobs. We are also negotiating a CBA to look at the needs of the community, especially our seniors. We told the developer about our senior housing needs. We looked at the needs of our children – what they would need both for college and vocational. We do very detailed needs assessments.

Martha Ross – I'm new to this field and just listening.

Jason Hercules – I'm listening as well.

Karla Walter – We need to be careful what we call a CBA. If everything becomes a CBA, then we don't have clarity about what we have. Partnership for Working Families has a list serv. It functions as a tool to ask people what they think.

Mary Jacksteit – Are they the ones that put out the Community Benefits e-update?

Karla Walter – Also, I'm wondering if there have been conflicting voices in some of these projects. I'm curious about past experiences with ANCs and success stories about getting to one voice.

Dominic Moulden- We had a situation on our current CBA. We have a law firm working with us, on Parcel 42 at 7th and R. We have an ANC ally who has made people uncomfortable. In the middle of the negotiations, he went to the city and said the city already had enough affordable housing. He has alienated 50 people in the neighborhood by going public without discussing or negotiating with the community first. There are cultural issues – our meetings are open. But some people say they want Shaw to become the new Dupont Circle. What do we do with members or meeting participants who want other things than our signed agreements – the new members can vote some of us out.

Mary Jacksteit – I don't want to redefine community benefits. I just want to make sure we aren't only talking about the agreements. I want to talk

1920 L Street NW, Suite 500 ☞ Washington, DC 20036

Visit Us at www.washingtonregionalequity.net

about the whole range of things. We need a whole range of things. One piece is the enforceable agreements.

Jackie Ward – Did you talk about Kwame Brown’s work about monitoring and enforcement of community benefits?

Don Edwards – I want to get an agreement about the next meeting. I heard people talk about us being at a point where getting more people to understand CBA’s will help share prosperity. I’d like to think that this extends to the Washington region. I also heard that we do have the ability to share recent past experience to talk about the going forward steps, both project by project and also to create a larger infrastructure. The third thing is that there are upcoming opportunities, like the Good Jobs First conference, the Good Jobs First manual, and Kwame Brown’s legislation, for people to be conversant. We also shared Mary and Bill’s draft document. Those are some of the things I took away. The last thing I would say is that I think we have a big test case in the development of the Anacostia Waterfront. There are multiple projects with community components. It will take up a tremendous amount of the government’s attention. Mostly we have been looking at this at a one-off basis. When we look globally, it adds urgency to bring people together in a training academy to have a lot more people have info in a systematic way. There is going to be a launch soon of the waterfront implementation process with big ticket items and lots of money. We ought to be aware of that.

Bill Schechter I think the time is right for potential funders to put together some seed money. The sooner the better. www.collaborationdc.net has some resources on it.

1920 L Street NW, Suite 500 ☞ Washington, DC 20036

Visit Us at www.washingtonregionalequity.net