



**City of Madison**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Royster Clark Neighborhood**  
**Planning Team Meeting**

City of Madison  
Madison, WI 53703  
www.cityofmadison.com

Wednesday, May 28, 2008

6:30 PM

Pinney Branch Library  
204 Cottage Grove Road

**1. Welcome, Introductions and Approval of Minutes**

**Royster Clark Neighborhood Planning Team Members Present:**

*Neighborhood Representatives:*

Sheila Guilfoyle, Chair RCNPT, Neighborhood Resident-at-large  
John Martens, Vice Chair, Neighborhood Resident-at-large  
Kathy Soukup, Eastmorland Neighborhood Alternate  
BJ Obermeyer, Lake Edge Neighborhood Alternate  
Jacky DaWalt, Lake Edge Neighborhood Representative

*Business Representatives:*

Dennis Ruskin, MG&E Representative Alternate  
Ken Bowers, Bower Family Chiropractic

*Elected Officials*

Tom Stoebig, County Board Supervisor

**City Planning Staff:**

Michael Waidelich, Planning Division  
Heather Stouder, Planning Division

**Additional Attendees:**

Dave Porterfield  
Bob Narf  
Helen Fruth  
Rhonda Moore  
Elizabeth (last name?)

**On a motion by Tom Stoebig, seconded by BJ Obermeyer, the meeting minutes from the April 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting were approved by unanimous consent.**

**Public Comment Period**

*Concern with Capitol Warehousing idea*

- Several neighborhood residents in attendance voiced concern and opposition to the redevelopment scenario discussed by Capitol Warehousing at the previous meeting involving the storage of coal, salt, and development of additional warehouse functions on the Royster Clark site. Many felt that this scenario would not be an improvement over the previous use, and cited concerns with truck/rail traffic and potential pollution from coal storage.
- A petition with 170 signatures was presented to the RCNPT and City staff in opposition to future development of the site for low-end industrial uses.
- Sheila Guilfoyle summarized the 4/23 presentation by Paul Tessmer (see 4/23 minutes), noting that RCNPT members had made it clear at that time and in subsequent interviews with the local press that they were unsupportive of this type of use at the site.
- City staff noted that other potential developers have expressed interest in the site for a variety of uses, either to project staff or to other City staff. The extent and current status of all of these inquiries is not known, but some prospective purchasers appear to be

further along in developing their concept and investigating the property than was Capitol Warehousing, and have had at least preliminary discussions with Agrium.

#### *Concern with rail car storage*

- Team members and visitors shared frustration regarding the storage of rail cars on the rail line just north of the property, noting safety and aesthetic issues. It was suggested that perhaps the RCNPT should formally contact the Mayor and Alder Palm to suggest that the rail cars be moved.
- City staff noted that the rail cars are on a siding within the railroad right-of-way and not on the Royster-Clark site spurs; and the City has little jurisdiction. It may be quite difficult to convince Wisconsin & Southern to move them, but perhaps the recent change in Rail Commission leadership would present an opportunity for new dialogue on the issue.

### **Staff Updates/Discussion**

#### *Overview of City role in Development Review-*

- With its current M1 and M2 zoning, many types of uses, including industrial uses, would be permitted on the Royster-Clark site without the need for any approvals from the City Plan Commission or Common Council. However, Plan Commission approval is required for demolitions, and the Plan Commission may take into account the proposed future use and its consistency with City plans, as part of the demolition approval review. This is a reason that there has been some concern with allowing the old plant to be removed without knowing what will replace it, or having City review of any alternative future uses. On the other hand, it is difficult to argue against the fact that the existing plant should come down. There is also the question of the extent of potential site contamination under the floor of the plant, which can't be fully determined without demolishing the facility.
- While the current market does not appear especially promising for some uses, in the longer term, the site is potentially interesting for a variety of urban reuses---employment, housing, mixed use, etc.---that would be more in line with the desires of the neighborhood than a quasi-industrial use such as warehousing and storage. The challenge for the planning process is to come up with an achievable land use plan and design goals that the neighborhood can support, but which take account of market realities and other constraints.
- The City would have more opportunities to influence the redevelopment of the property if the redevelopment concept included subdivision of the property, extension of public streets through the site, rezoning, or the use of City financial assistance, for example, since these activities require City review and approval.
- Because a development might be proposed for the site before the Royster-Clark special area planning process is complete, and/or that might not be exactly what the neighborhood would hope to see happen on the site, the RCNPT, and the City should be prepared to look for opportunities to work with prospective developers to influence the development and help make their proposed project more compatible with neighborhood objectives and neighborhood-friendly.

#### *Market Feasibility Report-*

- The report has been completed in draft form and is currently being reviewed by City staff. The draft report will be distributed to RCNPT members for review after any revisions suggested by staff are incorporated. John Stockham will be invited to the next RCNPT meeting to present the report.

- Preliminary findings indicate that the current market for residential uses is discouraging, but market support for flex space and light industrial uses that could be more compatible with surrounding neighborhood (than the existing use) is stronger.
- Staff noted that managers in the Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development recognize the potential for both urban redevelopment and employment uses on the site. The Department Director and several staff from the Office of Business Resources will be meeting with project staff and John Stockham next week to discuss the draft market feasibility report.

#### *Site Environmental Issues-*

- Heather Stouder reviewed site contamination issues (see 4/23/08 minutes). The Environmental Assessment (a thorough investigation of soil and groundwater contamination across the site) was completed in late 2007, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is now awaiting an environmental remediation plan from Agrium, which will likely be submitted this summer by BT2, their environmental consultants.
- In areas with remaining high concentrations of nitrogen in the soil, clean up could involve more soil excavation and removal, or perhaps some "capping" with clay or asphalt in especially contaminated areas, although DNR staff have indicated a preference for removal if feasible. At this time, City and State staff are unsure what will be proposed by BT2.
- Several team members noted that in a 2007 meeting, Agrium's representative assured the group that they would assume full responsibility for cleaning up the site. Members expressed concern that a "clean up" involving capping rather than removal of contaminated soils might simply pave the way for redevelopment with industrial uses.

#### *City Role in Redevelopment-*

- Dave Porterfield recommended that City staff take a proactive role in the process by working toward a special area plan that reflects neighborhood preferences for reuse of the site, and which recommends that the City be willing to commit City resources to help implement the that recommended plan. City staff were asked to prepare a list of potential City assistance tools, such as Tax Increment Financing, City help in getting state and federal assistance, infrastructure improvements, etc.
- Given current economic conditions, and the potential site clean-up and demolition costs, it was not unlikely that potential redevelopers will seek some type of public assistance/support. On the other hand, some costs should be the responsibility of Agrium and/or the price for the property should reflect the additional extra costs that will be required to make it ready for redevelopment.

#### *Planning Strategies/Responses to Development Strategies*

- Staff noted that some potential developers inquiring about the property since Urban Solutions/Silverstone Partners withdrew their interest have been considering primarily non-residential uses, particularly light industrial uses, warehousing and flex space.
- The Royster-Clark Special Area Plan will contain goals, objectives, and recommended land use alternatives, as well as recommended infrastructure improvements. It will be adopted as a City plan.
- Sheila Guilfoyle mentioned the importance of referring to the Comprehensive Plan's recommendation for the Royster-Clark site in the Special Area Plan

### Neighborhood Planning Team Member Updates

- Kathy Soukup noted that results from the “open ended” questions on the neighborhood survey could likely be shared at the next meeting.

### General Discussion of Royster-Clark Site Preferences and Possibilities

As a wrap up to the previous discussion at the meeting, Team members and others in attendance were invited to share their thoughts on what they would like to see on the Royster Clark site in the future, based on what they had learned thus far. Observations included the following ideas:

- A “research park”- type development on the site would be located much closer to much of the local labor force than existing similar developments in the city. Tenants could include a mix of University-affiliated research and community outreach/ education facilities, and perhaps “clean” light manufacturing.
- With the research park idea, the City could take a more active leadership role
- It is important to enhance the site’s location as a “gateway” to east side neighborhoods. This site should be pleasing to look at, and well designed---particularly at the intersection of Dempsey and Cottage Grove Road.
- It is important to reference and build upon the success of the Stoughton Road Revitalization Plan (SRRP), which will be presented to the Common Council for adoption June 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- \$5 per gallon gasoline makes this inner location much more valuable, even if it is still a very complicated site to redevelop. If a “research park” or flex-space employment uses are developed on part of the site, important to complement the nearby labor force. Along with affordable housing stock, this could be a very positive reuse of the site, but would likely require significant city role.
- Despite the current market as reflected in the market study, this is a very special area in which a lot of positive development can be accomplished.
- Elderly housing would be a great addition at this site. Anecdotally, many older neighbors, and some that have moved away in recent years, would like a different type of housing (than single-family) to be available so that they can stay in/return to the neighborhood.
- This neighborhood has very easy access to amenities in all directions
- The property is so large that in the current market, it seems best for multiple entities to develop different portions of it. Public streets, stormwater management areas, and open space can be utilized to “break up” the site into multiple components.
- City staff should look into funding sources for the site that may be available only to municipalities. If City were to purchase the site, what financial assistance might it be able to obtain that is not otherwise available to private entities?

### Discussion Regarding Improvements Elsewhere in the Planning Area

Staff presented some observations and ideas about potential enhancements to other portions of the planning area for consideration and comment by the RCNPT”

- Lots on Cottage Grove Rd. are relatively shallow, which limits the types of improvements that could be made either within public right-of-way (by widening the area for landscaping within the right-of-way, for example) or on the private parcels (where space for additional landscaping or parking improvements is often also limited).

- Overhead utility lines along the north side of Cottage Grove Rd are unattractive. It might be possible to soften and partially screen the visibility of these facilities by planting low trees that would not interfere with the wires in the right-of-way, as well as encouraging taller plantings on private property behind the poles.
- Cottage Grove Road is considered unfriendly to pedestrians---especially between the intersection of Cottage Grove Rd. and Dempsey and the Pinney Branch Library. The addition of more lighting (and pedestrian-scale lights?) would be a benefit along Cottage Grove Rd.
- Staff noted that there are no plans to widen Cottage Grove Road to accommodate more traffic. This would be counter-productive, since Monona Drive and Atwood Avenue are already near capacity and would then become bottlenecks.

### **Next Meeting Scheduling / Future Meeting Scheduling**

A special meeting of the RCNPT was scheduled for Wednesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 pm at the Pinney Branch Library Meeting Room. The main agenda item will be presentation and discussion of the draft market feasibility report. BJ Obermeyer will serve as Chair for this meeting. The June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting will be canceled because the project staff is unavailable due to a scheduling conflict with other public meetings.

Additional future meetings have been tentatively scheduled for:

July 2, 6:30 pm, Pinney Branch Library

July 23, 6:30 pm, Pinney Branch Library

**Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.**