
**STRATEGIC REVITALIZATION PLAN FOR
WEST MAPLE NEIGHBORHOOD
CAMDEN, MERCHANTVILLE & PENNSAUKEN
MINUTES**

Task Force Meeting #3
February 10, 2011, 10am
Merchantville Borough Hall

Attendees:

Charles MacAdams, Property Owner	Wayne Bauer, Merchantville Police Chief
Marvin Gaskill, Resident	Richard DePetro, Property Owner
Denise Brouse, Clerk	Gina DePetro, Property Owner
Bill Watson, Merchantville Zoning Officer	John Adams, Pennsauken Zoning Officer
Joe Garbarino, Masonry Pres. Group	Maz Radwan, RE Broker for 606
Andrew Levecchia, CCIA	Mike Wisnosky, RDG
Charles Chelotti, PB Engineer	Owen McCabe, RDG
Mara Wuebker, RDG	

1. Organizational Framework and Structure

- a. Task Force Members – Joe Garbarino from Masonry Preservation Group has been appointed as a Task Force Member for Merchantville. Flyers have been posted in Pennsauken and Camden seeking task force members. Goal is to create a partnership between residents, businesses, and municipal personnel of the 3 communities in order to achieve long-term change in the neighborhood.
- b. Stakeholders – RDG sent recent e-mail status update to all stakeholders identified at last meeting. RDG will get Pennsauken’s remaining stakeholder contact information. The Task Force is trying to develop broad participation and gain momentum for the organization. Pennsauken published article in newsletter about the Task Force meetings and flyers were posted on Merchantville and Pennsauken websites.

2. Actions Items to Launch the Project

- a. Base Data Collection –
 - i. The group reviewed the zoning districts in the study area. RDG will revise zoning map. RDG will speak to Pennsauken about field cards for parcels along Maple Avenue and John will review map.
- b. Neighborhood Survey-
 - i. The group discussed Draft 3 of the survey. It had been revised to reflect comments made at last meeting, a map was added, and the form was shortened. A Task Force member suggested keeping question about public transportation, recreation needs of teenage residents, remove references to ‘police,’ remove comment section in question 6/7 to save room, add heading to all pages, and remove RDG footers from subsequent pages. There was a discussion about concerns of basketball

courts in residential areas (trash, foul language, late night hangouts, headaches for police and other municipal departments).

- ii. The group discussed distribution and collection of surveys. Denise talked to 4 block captains who are willing to help out who can cover: Lafayette, Poplar, West End, and Hamilton Streets. Goal is to reach property owners and residents and to get a high response rate. We may need to do a hybrid of mailing and hand delivery. RDG, municipal staff, and volunteers would need to assist with the hand-distribution of the survey. Concern about cold weather. Masonry Preservation Group volunteered to have a drop off box at their location.

c. Public Workshop-

- i. RDG will talk to Pennsauken about availability of media room at library for Thursday in late march for upcoming evening public workshop. The goal of the workshop is to get public involved and for the residents/business to discuss challenges and convey ideas for improving the area.
- ii. RDG will work on flyer and press release for the workshop. There will be notice as part of Neighborhood Survey, provided it goes out before the workshop.

3. Neighborhood Planning

a. Existing Neighborhood Activities

- i. Rich DePetro, the contract purchaser of 606 West Maple Ave, provided an overview of his past projects and described what he would like to achieve at Wellwood Manor. He believes it is in good condition structurally, but the heating and water systems need work. He is troubled by the existing living conditions. He would like to restore it to its original English Tudor style. He needs a parking area to bring in a more balanced mix of tenants. One possibility is for municipality to acquire property for parking and he could lease parking spaces from the municipality, rather than spending a large capital outlay in acquiring additional properties for parking.
- ii. Charles MacAdams, the owner of 614 and 616 West Maple Ave, provided an overview of his property, which has two storefronts and apartments above. He has one commercial tenant, Hairbrush/Airbrush salon, but still looking to fill other space. 625 sq ft each. He's making internal cosmetic improvements. His concerns are lack of parking, the area not being visually appealing, and the speed of the cars traveling along Maple Avenue. On-street parking is limited to 15 min. He suggests reducing sidewalk area and creating diagonal parking in front of

storefronts. The group also discussed bumpouts as means of also slowing traffic.

- iii. Joe Garbarino of Masonry Preservation Group introduced himself. MPG recently purchased 710 West Maple Avenue (former Sprinkler company bldg) for adjunct office area. 14 employees park directly behind buildings. They get early morning deliveries that do not interfere with on-street parking and circulation.

b. Review aerial maps-

- i. The group began discussing the gateway into the neighborhood - Route 130 and Maple Avenue. Former Kowasaki building is in bad condition and is up for sale for \$60-70,000. RDG discussed the possibility of demolishing the building and reusing the site as green gateway with landscaping/signage as a more aesthetically appealing entrance into the neighborhood. There may be environmental concerns because of the former use. It may've been a gas station at one point. Demolishing the building would also improve the sight distance for cars entering onto Route 130 northbound from the neighborhood, which is currently a difficult transition. It was suggested that DOT Bike and Ped group be contacted and brought in as it impacts DOT r.o.w. and they are a group that is easy to deal with and gets things done.
- ii. There was a brief discussion about the possibility of adding diagonal parking by Wellwood park and cutting minimally into Wellwood Park to provide more on-street parking in that area, if needed. Park is under green acres.

4. Next Meeting and Upcoming Deadlines

- a. Timesheets- The 3 municipalities should submit timesheets for period ending in January to RDG.