



Northeastern Neighborhood Network (NNN)

Monday, November 17, 2014

6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Meeting Summary

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

President Hahs began the meeting at 6:33 p.m. by welcoming NNN members and asking them to introduce themselves.

The following people were in attendance: Thomas Applegate (North River Commission), Jessica Bouboulis (Albany Park Neighbors), Vicki Byard (faculty member and neighborhood resident), Jewel Klein (Hollywood-North Park Community Association), Nick Martinez (NEIU student and IBHE Student Advisory Council representative), Lt. Bill Mullane (Chicago Police, 17th District), John Riordan (39th Ward), Carmen Rodriguez (Von Steuben High School), Janita Tucker (Peterson Pulaski Industry Business Council) and Don Vitullo (HNPCA).

Representing the University were President Sharon Hahs, Mike Dizon (Chief Communications Officer), University Police Chief Jim Lyon, Matt Specht (AVP of Student Affairs), Kris Pierre (Senior Director of Community and Civic Engagement) and Mike Hines (Director of Public Relations).

Those member organizations that were absent included: Telshe Yeshiva, Albany Park Chamber of Commerce, Albany Park Neighborhood Council, Chicago Korean Chamber of Commerce, Volta Elementary School, Peterson School, North Park Neighbors, Northside College Prep, Northside Learning Center, North Park Village Nature Center and Bohemian National Cemetery.

UNIVERSITY INFO

President Hahs provided a few updates from the University.

- Community Garden success
- Education Building and infrastructure
- El Centro ribbon-cutting ceremony in September
- Pedroso Center expansion -- groundbreaking ceremony on Nov. 24
- Ronald Williams Library interior modernization project
- Student housing
 - The University continues to pursue two student housing projects – one on the Bryn Mawr block between Kimball and Bernard, and the other on the current 67 acre campus – which represent the two phases of this project.

- NEIU has modified its original plan to provide 500-bed housing on the Bryn Mawr block and 300-bed housing on the current campus. After listening to community feedback and consulting with local architects, it will now pursue 400-bed housing in each of the two locations.
- Northeastern will work with American Campus Communities (ACC), a national developer of student housing, to design, build and manage the financing of the student residence halls. Jim Curtin, a local architect hired by ACC, shared renderings of previous student housing projects that he, his firm and ACC have overseen.
- President Hahs encouraged members to seek input from their respective organizations that would help the University shape a traffic-impact study that it will commission next year. Feedback and suggestions on this should be directed to Mike Dizon at m-dizon@neiu.edu.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Q: Could there be any scenario in which a lack of demand for housing by students would lead to rooms ultimately being occupied by low-income residents who qualify for Section 8 housing?

A: A feasibility study conducted by the university – along with additional research done by ACC – indicates that there exists a very healthy demand for housing among current and future NEIU students. Residence halls will not be occupied by anyone other than undergraduate, graduate or international students – and that it will likely attract “traditional” and single students as opposed to those who are married or have children and require different types of accommodations.

Q: How many floors will these buildings have, and what kind of retail will occupy its first floor?

Because the university is in the early stages of planning, the University is unable to provide answers regarding size and retail tenants at this time because they have not yet been determined.

Q: Will the design of the residence hall consider the style of the neighborhood?

A: It will play a major part. The intention is to present a design that would enrich the environment, promote great living space and blend into its context. President Hahs said that she does not want a structure that would be in stark contrast to its surroundings – unlike NEIU’s recent El Centro building, which was intentionally designed to be a unique marker along the Kennedy Expressway.

Q: Why would the University build first on the Bryn Mawr block rather than on its current 67 acres?

A: President Hahs said that the block is in need of revitalization and that the University's approach on student housing was intended to tackle the more challenging project first.

Q: If NEIU succeeds in owning the Bryn Mawr block, will it next go after nearby residential housing as a way to expand?

A: The University has no interest in acquiring residential properties. It has made a very intentional decision not to purchase nearby homes and has many times passed up opportunities to purchase ones that have been recently put up for sale. The Bryn Mawr block is of interest to the University because it is one of the closest to the University that is not residential.

NEIGHBORHOOD INFO

- The representative from North Park Neighbors encouraged the group to help support victims of an apartment fire that took place earlier this month and claimed the life of one boy while displacing five families. President Hahs added that NEIU's Foundation has provided a \$2,500 matching gift and has encouraged the university community to donate.
- The representative from PPBIC announced the opening of a new business called ReStore that will open soon at Peterson and Pulaski.

The NNN meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.