

PHDC GERMANTOWN/MT. AIRY REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Community Meetings #3

[Meeting Recording](#). July 16, 2022 | 12:30pm

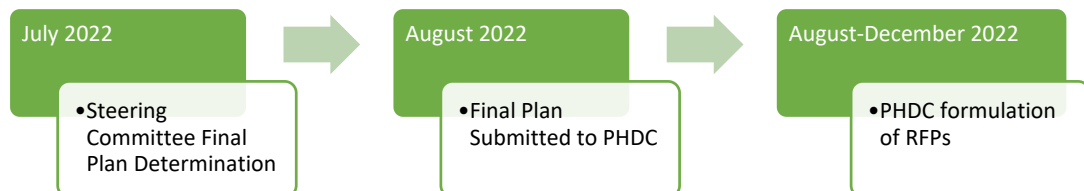
Stay Up to Date!

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | Email Address: lowergermantown@gmail.com | Phone: 215-419-7362

Table of Contents

- I. Timeline
 - II. Introduction
 - III. Key Takeaways from the Community
 - IV. Breakout Group Suggestions
 - V. Questions + Answers
 - VI. Attendees List
-

I. Timeline



II. Introduction

After obtaining feedback from the community about what they felt was important to consider for the redevelopment, Maple Corporation proceeded to group each given input into categories to facilitate the review and assessment process when meeting with the Steering Committee which were held on June 20 and 24.

The resulting categories (affordable housing, homeownership opportunities, developer options, historical elements, and green spaces) were presented during meeting #3, held on July 16, with the purpose of obtaining the community's final feedback about them.

PHDC GERMANTOWN/MT. AIRY REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

III. Key Takeaways from the Community

1. Properties should remain affordable.
2. A definition of low-income households should be provided.
3. Promote and support homeownership. Prioritize current/ former residents who have been displaced and non-profits from the community.
4. Offer training for homeownership.
5. Renovation over demolition.
6. Property manager or developer should maintain the green spaces.

IV. Breakout Group Suggestions

1. Affordable Housing:

a. In person - Group 1:

- Owner occupants who rent their property should be accommodated since they're providing a needed service.
- City should maintain ownership.
- Current residents should have the right to buy the property they occupy with a potential loan for repairs (plus usual financial reviews).
- Larger, multi-unit properties should remain affordable (with option to buy).
- Explore creative alternatives to living arrangements (multi-generational, co-housing, students and seniors, etc.).

b. In person - Group 2:

- Reserve spaces/properties for affordable housing.
- How much of the city property will be set aside for this? 25%.
- Can we make repairs to homes already occupied in need due to senior income deficiency?
- Who decides where the boundary lines are placed? West Oak Lane has funding for multifamily dwellings; theater dilapidated?

c. In person - Group 3:

- Homeownership as opposed to renting.
- Third party should manage the properties where trash removal is twice weekly.
- The properties on Lena St. flood during heavy rains. They should be redeveloped with proper drainage.
- Strict guidelines regarding parking and public nuisance ordinance enforced.

PHDC GERMANTOWN/MT. AIRY REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

d. In person - Group 4:

- Prioritize renting for Germantown people.
- Want it to be well managed. One person mentioned flooding and trash on the Collom Street development near Lena St.
- Developer to be associated with, or partnered with, non-profits for services in some cases.
- Affordability should be based on census tract data instead of Philadelphia Region AMI number; more relevant data.
- Who will be enforcing deed restrictions and how? Is there a budget for that?
- Low-income housing needed most. Developers don't have trouble accessing properties for higher rental rates (80%+ AMI) and they don't need these PHDC properties.
- Can PHDC work with reputable affordable housing developers to prioritize the RFP process? Especially Germantown-based. I'm a property manager for Rigby Properties/Rigby Housing. Feel free to contact me. Lindsay.Stolkey@gmail.com, rigbyrentals@gmail.com, 734-250-2218.
- PHDC should ask RFP questions about how tenants are found; how do they handle late rent? In other words, do their policies and track records show that they support lower income tenants and have a good system for having them be successful long-term tenants?

e. Zoom - Group 1:

- The group wants to keep the areas affordable, but wanted to make sure that it was done in a thoughtful way.
- The properties in question should be available to people at all different AMI options. We don't want to only focus on the lowest income level, we want to have all levels represented in the properties.
- There was support among the team leaving options for people on the lower level of the AMI scale.

f. Zoom - Group 2:

- People wanted to know what definition of low-income or affordable housing was being used. An attendee explained to the group the difference between "project based" housing such as Section 8, where someone pays a percentage of income with a cap, and the other type (name escapes me) where a building is designated for a certain type of person (seniors, disabled, etc.) with minimum and maximum income requirements based on a specific standard (i.e. federal poverty level). The group seemed to like both of these options.
- Concern was expressed for older single women who have retired or will be retiring soon.

PHDC GERMANTOWN/MT. AIRY REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

g. Zoom - Group 3:

- Turnover to PHA to manage the properties to provide low-income housing to Philadelphia residents.
- Provide properties to organizations that support Germantown low-income housing initiatives.
- Look at whether low-income housing (as it is measured today) is truly accessible to low-income residents; define low income.
- Collaborate with Habitat for Humanity.
- How do we expedite this process?
- Assessment to determine who is homeless and at risk.
- Using all or some of the properties to specifically designate to low-income seniors.

2. Homeownership Opportunities:

a. In person - Group 1:

- Allow occupants to buy their homes at 0% interest loans.
- Better balance between owner occupant rental providers and offsite landlords.
- Offer training (i.e., educational/construction trades, skills for renters in exchange for housing); – they fix it, live in it and rent to own.

b. In person - Group 2:

- Criteria for loans: interest rate low for loan, is it a credit score based..., does time in residence take money sent for rental go towards buying?
- Criteria for “bids” to city contract: who decides? What companies can homeowners expect to “use” (private vs associated with city)?

c. In person - Group 3:

- N/A

d. In person - Group 4:

- N/A

e. Zoom - Group 1:

- Can we get FHA inspectors to help create scopes of work as well as do inspections for work done on existing homes?
- Our group thought the long deed restriction hurt peoples’ ability to create wealth and should be reduced.
- Need to have a program for homeowners to get them more prepared for ownership. Maybe a certification that once accomplished gave potential homeowners a small grant.

PHDC GERMANTOWN/MT. AIRY REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- It would be good if the city could do education at the community level; possibly, RCO's showing them what is required of builders and developers in the city.
- Find a way to make deals stronger; unlike community benefit agreements that are created and then not followed.

f. Zoom - Group 2:

- There was strong support for current residents (and former residents) to get priority in housing and assistance with purchasing a home, perhaps their current residence. This was discussed in terms of both purchasing in advance and doing renovations themselves or purchasing after rehab is done.
- There should be an aggressive effort to let people in Germantown (including current and past residents) know about the availability of these properties during RFP circulation and also after the redevelopment is completed. Current feeling that the existence of these properties and future availability is not broadly known.
- Two tenants living in houses were in the group (albeit one has a basement apartment in their house and finds that situation unacceptable). Both expressed interest in purchasing and indicated inadequate communications with PHDC or consultants concerning their future options and said all the reaching out has come from their part.

g. Zoom - Group 3:

- N/A

3. Developer Options:

a. In person - Group 1:

- Enough already!

b. In person - Group 2:

- IRS files an abatement for penalties and interest.
- Who gets the contract?
- How are the contractors vetted?
- Does the city get any money from contractors?

c. In person - Group 3:

- N/A

PHDC GERMANTOWN/MT. AIRY REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

d. In person - Group 4:

- Would like to see the properties saved where possible. At whose discretion? Concern that this is too loose. If PHDC already assessed properties, don't they know that the properties are savable?
- Concern about relying too much on the RCOs because some are not actually very representative of, or responsible to, the community.
- Can PHDC sell at a lower price based on how affordable the developers rent prices will be? For example, to a developer like Women's Community Revitalization Project. (Not that they want to buy existing property, but just thinking about their reputation for affordability).

e. Zoom - Group 1:

- Everyone wants more renovations.

f. Zoom - Group 2:

- Some people felt that individuals or groups of people or non-profits from the community should have purchase options. They strongly supported local (not outside of Philadelphia) developers. Interested in the incorporation of jobs/job training for Germantown youth and residents.
- Can the Housing Trust Fund be utilized with these properties?
- People want to know when the RFP will go out and what the deadline will be for submission and for the decisions. Discussion about whether there would be separate RFPs for the various properties so small developers would have a shot (like those who participate with Jumpstart Germantown and others).
- If the process becomes competitive – for example two or more qualified developers for a site like Hamill Mills – will this be brought to the community so they can have a say in final selection? People thought it should be.

g. Zoom - Group 3:

- Renovation over demolition (when possible).
- Involve RCOs to convene zoning meetings.
- Equitable contractor sourcing (local, minority and woman-owned).
- Maintain aesthetic integrity of surrounding properties-get community input on design/façade.
- Utilize solar power when possible as a part of the renovations.

4. Historical Elements:

a. In person - Group 1:

- Prioritize this!!!

PHDC GERMANTOWN/MT. AIRY REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Hire people who understand cultural pressures, construction technology, keeping and restoring character defining features.
- Restore before demo – If it looks “bad” it doesn’t mean it’s beyond repair.
- Climate change is real and demands reuse of existing properties.
- This is the most historic neighborhood in the nation’s most historic city – keep the layers of history and respond to them.

b. In person - Group 2:

- Fine – with façade.

c. In person - Group 3:

- N/A

d. In person - Group 4:

- N/A

e. Zoom - Group 1:

- N/A

f. Zoom - Group 2:

- Everyone supported keeping historical elements, if possible, especially on Germantown Avenue and in general not altering buildings or approving new construction that doesn’t “fit in” with surrounding properties and stands out like a sore thumb.

g. Zoom - Group 3:

- Absolutely maintain any and all historic elements.

5. Green Spaces:

a. In person - Group 1:

- Preserve what we have.

b. In person - Group 2:

- N/A

c. In person - Group 3:

- N/A

d. In person - Group 4:

- N/A

PHDC GERMANTOWN/MT. AIRY REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

e. Zoom - Group 1:

- Is there a way to get large planters on the streets?
- Can we get more trash cans?

f. Zoom - Group 2:

- In general, affordable housing was the priority and people did not support a tear down (if necessitated by condition) becoming a garden or green space. However, they felt all developers should be required to have green space with lawns, trees, and shrubs around buildings whenever possible. Developers need to maintain these green spaces and keep them clean when used as rentals.
- If any of the properties are already lots, people liked the idea of giving residents (or a non-profit such as an RCO) on such a block the opportunity to purchase and turn into a community gardening space.

g. Zoom - Group 3:

- All RFPs must require green space and a plan for maintenance.
- Utilize solar.
- There must be a green element at each property. Where green space does already exist on a property, other elements such as street trees, windows, boxes, etc., should be utilized.
- Green space installation is the responsibility of the property manager or developer.

6. Additional comments:

a. Zoom - Group 2:

- No one disagreed with the Steering Committee's Summary of Meeting Two attendees' concerns, suggestions and priorities. They felt they were lacking depth, details and time frames. While there was strong support for community engagement, there was a great degree of frustration expressed coupled with some cynicism concerning too much talking and not enough action, not getting answers to questions, lack of timeline, etc.
- There was some discussion about possible discrepancies concerning the number of properties. Could this be looked into ASAP? Points raised were: a flyer from May, 2018 which lists 35 properties and newspaper articles which gave even a higher number.
- There was a consensus that a survey should be sent via email to all individuals and groups who participated in the community engagement process so this one can be improved as it continues and future ones can be more robust, inclusive and efficient. A few people expressed shock and disappointment about the extremely low turn-out. Ann Doley noted that Mr. Dave Thomas had said there would be a survey.

PHDC GERMANTOWN/MT. AIRY REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

V. Questions + Answers

1. The community's level of poverty continues to grow and addressing the issue of affordable housing doesn't solve the overall poverty. Has there been a thought about addressing social services in order to break the cycle of poverty?
 - i. PHDC tries to partner with social service providers and this is something that will be included in any RFPs for the redevelopment of the properties.
2. Was the Redevelopment Authority absorbed?
 - i. The organizations were consolidated to be more effective in delivering services. Nonetheless, the Redevelopment Authority still exists legally, without employees.
3. When will units be renovated?
 - i. Most town homes can be saved in terms of the structure. Those cases would probably be addressed faster than the multifamily buildings.
4. Is there a possibility to purchase a property to be rehabbed for affordable housing?
 - i. After the community engagement process, if there is an opportunity for people to acquire those properties, information shall be provided.
5. What is the probability that the units will remain as affordable housing?
 - i. Those properties will never be sold at market rate and will remain for affordable housing for the next 30 to 60+ years.
6. Is there a fund from the developers that is supposed to go towards housing?
 - i. The Housing Trust Fund is used to subsidize development and other social safety network needs. It is controlled by the city of Philadelphia.
7. To learn from history and share with the community the history of what happened with the properties in question to avoid the danger of repeating the mistakes, can an investigative report about it be shared with the community in order to heal?
 - i. The properties' situation was brought by the community to the Redevelopment Authority (RDA). However, being a third lender, the RDA control over the properties was almost null. The RDA worked with federal and state government partners to exercise their rights and there are safeguards now that were nonexistent before to prevent this situation.
8. Are we going to have a survey of this community engagement process?
 - i. Yes, it can be done.
9. With you being the owner, how accessible are you if we have issues?
 - i. PHDC will be accessible to hearing issues and there will be a property manager to manage their properties.
10. What is the deadline to conclude the community engagement process?
 - i. By the end of summer and have a game plan of what to do with the properties by the beginning of fall. The town homes could be addressed

PHDC GERMANTOWN/MT. AIRY REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

sooner than the multifamily buildings that would probably need supportive services.

11. Are the properties going to be auctioned?
 - i. No, all of them will be a part of an RFP for development. The RFP process will be started after consolidating all feedback, which will be presented first to the steering committee for them to assess it in conjunction with previous meetings' feedback and highlight the suggestions that the community wants. Then, Maple Corporation will give that information and a plan to the city (before the end of summer, end of August). At that time, they will assess the given information and formulate the RFPs.
12. Can you create an email of the attendees and can you send us a summary of everything and the next steps?
 - i. Everything regarding this process is posted on the website.
13. Would there be a chance to review the RFPs before they are issued?
 - i. You will have to speak with Mr. Thomas about that.
14. Please reach out to current/former tenants. Could that be done as soon as possible?
 - i. We reached out to Rachel Garland, the attorney, and have not heard back from her. However, we have current tenants as members of the steering committee to make sure we get feedback from current tenants. Furthermore, we went to these properties' door-to-door to speak with tenants prior to their home inspection, contacted prior tenants and asked them if they wanted to come back, and also delivered door hangers inviting the tenants to the meetings.

PHDC GERMANTOWN/MT. AIRY REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

VI. Attendees List

In-person participants

1	Amy Lambert	16	Mike Bergen
2	Christine Kimble	17	Neil Blunt
3	David Thomas, PHDC	18	Oscar Bent
4	Garth Herrick	19	Renee Smith
5	Hanbbal Farrow	20	Rolent Joane
6	Ibraheim Campbell	21	Sabra Townsend
7	Jacquelyn Sims	22	Sandra Smith-Puch
8	James Finley	23	Shelvia Williams
9	Jessie Lawrence, PHDC	24	Sonya Nickerson
10	Julia Blackett	25	Tanitia
11	Karen McCutchen	26	Tracie Jackson
12	Kenn Penn	27	Vinasay Stolkey
13	Lee McIntosh	28	Vlad Potiyevsky
14	Marcia Garfield	29	
15	Mathen Pullukattu, PHDC	30	

Zoom participants

1	Alex Borowick	16	Jake Bandler
2	Alicia Cooper	17	Jarrett Anderson
3	Allison Weiss	18	Julie Stapleton Carroll
4	Bahiyyah Harper	19	Kahlil Wardlaw
5	Bernard Corbett	20	Kimberly Haas
6	Cornelia Swinson	21	Kimbrell Francis
7	Deborah Cobia	22	Kirnon Joaquim
8	Denise Burton	23	Marie-Monique Marthol
9	Doley Ann	24	Regina Robinson
10	Domita Satchell	25	Renee Mills
11	Elizabeth Walmsley	26	Rey Small
12	Garlen Capita	27	Roslyn Mckelvey
13	Greg Paulmier	28	Samantha Shasanya
14	Hannah Kalkstein	29	Sylvia Conner
15	Ines Love	30	Yvonne Haskins