

Meeting Minutes

Client:	City of Pittsburgh
Project Name:	Lincoln Lemington Belmar & East Hills Community Visioning Study
Project Number:	10-20296
Date:	1-14-2021
Location:	Virtual
Meeting Purpose:	Visioning Workshop #2 with Lincoln-Lemington Collaborative and public
Prepared By:	Amy Wiles

In Attendance	
Name	Company
Amy Wiles	E. Holdings
Janette Williams	E. Holdings
Paige Nealer	E. Holdings
Christopher Corbett	City of Pittsburgh

Summary

- 25 Attendees (excluding City and Consultant Staff)
- Two breakout room facilitations
- Participation in open ended and fact-finding questions
- 2000+ flyers informational mailed to the neighborhood prior to the meeting date

Christopher opened the workshop/meeting by welcoming and thanking all participants for coming and participating.

Amy W presented the attendees with a brief overview of the 1st workshop and highlighted the key take a ways from that meeting and how this second workshop would piggy back of that and build on what members of the LLB community would like to see in a vision for the Lincoln Lemington Belmar community. The goal is that by the end of the study to provide the Collaborative with some Short/Long Term Goals & Projects and Action items that will help the community in the successful undertaking of their community Visioning Plan.

Amy stressed to the participants that this is about their vision of their neighborhood, not EHoldings, not the City of Pittsburgh.

Following is What We Have Heard So Far:

Use One Word to describe Lincoln Lemington Belmar:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilient • Diverse • Spirited • Family • Home • Permaculture-sustainable • Parks & Green space | <div>Vision</div> <div>Beauty</div> <div>Peaceful</div> <div>Changing</div> |
|---|---|

Favorite Things:

- Families stay for multiple generations
- Very peaceful
- Charter Schools
- Family oriented
- Convenient

Needed Improvements:

- Safety
- Recreational Center upgrades
- Storm water management
- Paulson Field improvements
- Walking Paths
- Signage
 - Community branding
 - Gateway signage

Amenities needed:

- Stores
 - Retail/Professional services
 - Restaurants
 - Grocery/Fresh Produce
- Fitness Center
- Pharmacy
- Community Events:
 - Sporting
 - Cultural

Following is the discussion/questions and chat comments that took place just before the Visioning Exercise. Amy asked participants after seeing the key themes from Visioning Meeting #1 if there some things that may not have been discussed or thought of.

Discussion: Amy pointed out that housing was not previously discussed as one of the main themes, and asked participants if they felt housing/development is a priority? Housing and development was on the list to discuss but was not identified as one of the key themes during Workshop #1.

Discussion: Fred B. agreed that this is a very important issue and should also be a key theme. He is not sure of the depth of discussion in which we can get into with the Comprehensive Study, but he would like to look into getting some type of remodeling grant for homeowner. It's important for the Elder homeowner's, as they age to stay competitive as well, because they are living longer. Property value is going to be going up due to all the changes that are going to be taking place.

Discussion: Amber agreed; and to piggyback off of Jordan and Fred, she said there is existing infrastructures that are blighted and need fixed up so that people can occupy them; in addition residents may need some help with repairs and upkeep. She said there are some predatory agencies/individuals who will call code enforcement for a damaged roof, which they know the homeowner cannot afford to fix up right away, which results in them getting multiple citations that often lead to them losing their homes and they do not want to see

that. Wanting to see overall beautification in the neighborhood was the other point Amber wanted to add, to include some public art and murals that represent the rich history of the community, the people who are living there and what their values are.

Chat comment: Attorney Gilmore agreed with Amber, that housing is key. In addition, he would like to see opportunities provided for residents to invest and redevelop and build new. To add that, he would like to signs to give the neighborhood a brand.

Question: Is there any existing signage at present?

Amy: We will incorporate housing and topics of discussion related around housing in the key topics. She asked the participants if there were any other big items themes they would like represented to include under the existing five themes?

Comment: Jordan would like to add to the theme: Encourage more business/amenities. He said if we think about outside of the community and what amenities the community wants with/from neighboring communities such as Homewood, Larimer and East Liberty, who already have businesses or a plan, there are different types of businesses and partnerships representing themselves and we should complement those areas as well as support our community.

Comment: Fred want to include that they don't necessary need to have a Target or a Macy's move in and would like to see business move in that are representative of the community. Amy agreed and reiterated the healthy discussion on this during Workshop #1.

Chat comment: Rev. Mary Lovett suggested the community needs some for the youth.

Comment: Jordan agreed with Rev. Lovett; he said he knows we talked about the topic of youth during Workshop #1 and right now their youth programs are what is currently anchoring the community and totally agrees with emphasizing something for the youth. They have a Midget League football team, the cheerleaders, a rec center, a new spray part, a few Day Cares and there is also a new school, so we are moving in that direction.

Chat comment: Large key investment from state and federal government.

Chat comment: We need internal communication tools for residents and businesses. A website or something so we can share needs, opportunities and concerns.

Chat comment: Donna J agrees that branding is key to motivate folks wanting to invest. Whomever comes to the community, we should creating a community benefit agreement.

Chat comment: Attorney Gilmore said, we can develop entrepreneurs -- for profit and nonprofit.

Chat comment: Donna J. suggested getting funding to help organization get office and staff,

Chat comment: Jordan agreed with Rev. Mary about capacity building for businesses; He would love to have a conversation with Rev Mary to talk about that, perhaps office space for their many organizations. (LLC, LLCCG, WAVE, NRG)

Chat comment: Atty. Gilmer suggested that the community could have had a light-up night! Or Christmas light tour to raise some funds.

Discussion: Reverend Mary said that with the new Health Care facility coming to the community and recognizing that along with that some housing for seniors; she is looking at all this development through the lens of the community and looking in terms of events and things, she thinks they should start looking at the space they already have and could partner with organizations and entities coming to the neighborhood. There may be occasion when the space may be empty and she said that they need to ensure they are on the same

page with each other on these partnerships as well to make sure that everyone within the community is benefiting from these partnerships for the good of the community. She said she has not talked to her CEO about it but it is on her heart that the community should also have the opportunity to use that space.

Discussion: Charlise interjected-she is a resident and Collaborative member and has been part of efforts taking place in the community for the past 5 years. She would like to see "strategic, intentional community participation on every level of this Visioning Plan, and not just from a perspective of the volunteers within the community to get the community to the point where they are now and no one from the community is being paid-and it seems as though that external professional always get the first opportunity to get paid. Because at the end of the day they still have to work and feed their family; but every time something comes into the community, they are just the "volunteers." They have also reached out to the Larimer Consensus Group for some guidance and again they have been on this journey for the past 5 years and it would have been nice to have had the opportunity to have offered up information even on this evenings PowerPoint presentation. It would be nice to have a seat at the table every step of the way so that the community can be empowered by being a part of the plan.

Discussion: that is a great point; does that mean they the community need to create some type of simple work force development plan? Something similar to what was done in Homewood with CEA. It is a great program that allows those in the neighborhood to get certification for their specific skills. A lot of times the men in the community have the skills but because they are not certified, certain stipulations are placed on them. The men work all over and have in most cases kept the community going by offering their excellent services to those in need.

Discussion: Judge Cooper Jr wanted to get back to discussing plans for the youth and the two Recreation Centers on Paulson and Chadwick Field. One of the attendees interjected about the Chadwick Center and stated that they are currently working on that one, are under contractual deals, and have had numerous meetings with the City Council, the Mayor's office and she said they could speak about it, but this meeting was not the forum; she has been working on this a little over 5 years, etc. Judge Cooper Jr-then focused the conversation back on to the Paulson Rec Center. He said he knows that this is where the youth like to gather and he knows they need to upgrade this facility for them. The only reason he put Chadwick out there is because when he goes there to vote and he goes to support the games, he sees how run down it is. In the case of Paulson he said that even if they updated the kitchen for example, the community might be able to use that to teach the youth different culinary skills and they could bring somebody in to show them that trade, etc., and upgrade their technology, to teach them how to develop their own website, etc to starting their own business. There is so much now a days you can do with technology. They could have one good site to go to have all this at their hands to take advantage of the tools and resources to tap into this. When he was coming up, this was an attractive Center; it needs to get back to that so the youth of today can see the attraction and want to come there. Jordan added to that; pre Covid the program "I Am My Brother's Keeper" was there and they currently do coding booths within the rec center.

Chat comment: Amber E. I haven't been in the rec center for a long time, but I know they upgraded the outside. Did they not also upgrade the inside at all?

This was the perfect Segway to transition to the Mapping/White Board exercise. Amy explained the purpose of the exercise will be to not only have in writing the areas where specific key themes will fit into certain buckets but at the same time we can physically see on the map of the community where they will best be effective.

White Board & Mapping out a Strategy:

A two-part exercise, which consisted of a white board and an interactive map, was done with participants to engage them on where they felt their community could use the most focus and attention. The goal of this exercise was to identify targeted locations within the Lincoln Lemington Belmar community that needed improvements based on categories created by residents and community partners during Workshop #1. Participants were asked to collaborate on where they thought some projects could begin to take shape. Participants were asked to think BIG & SMALL picture and to consider what projects are "low hanging fruit" and also, what will take time to plan, mobilize and fundraise for.

Discussion: Jordan stressed that housing and development are major. He went on to identify some of the most dense/heavily populated intersections **that would need to be added** to the map.

These intersections include:

- Lincoln & Lemington (this area was once heavily populated with housing and mixed-use and buildings and would be a good spot to build or even replicate what was there.
- Lincoln & Apple; (commercial mix-used with some residential on top)
- Lincoln & Deary (behind and next to the Family Dollar-there are several parcels-Jordan is not sure who owns the parcels;
- Lincoln & Rowan
- Campagna close to Eva P. Mitchell residential high-rise.

Jordan indicated that these are all good housing/redevelopment opportunities and that each location has at least one or multiple vacant lots, that can be utilized for either mixed-use development and/or housing. He also included that when the business and retail aspect of the vision comes into play that these are some of the areas that should be considered and focused upon. He would like to get a financial institute or credit union into the neighborhood.

- Grotto Street "Trail" as Jordan called it. It is not an official trail but as youth they used to walk through it to get to Chadwick Park.
- A Heritage Walk can be created to connect Lower Lincoln to Upper Lincoln-this can also be developed into some a use trail/green space; this also connects to Grotto Street.

Resource: Amber said there is an organization she could not recall the name of the organization that comes out and does trails in communities. Jordan agreed and said we should definitely try and connect with that organization.

Chat comment: Dani K.: The community has been cleaning that area; it's a beautiful space

Following is a list of locations (where signage and beautification needs to take place) in which the meeting participates provided within the Chat. These locations will be incorporated into the map.

- A sign at the intersection of Verona Blvd and Lincoln Avenue. Another at Lincoln & the Bridge. These would be easy to start with.
- Atwell Street
- Another sign at Washington Blvd across from the police station. That was identified as the Lincoln Viaduct and it's been named an historic Landmark

Chat comment: Atty. Gilmore pointed out that Churches also have lots of underutilized facilities and suggested considering reusing the Corpus Christi Church somehow.

Chat comment: Charlise would like to see the Historic Opera House be a part of the community plan; participants agreed and stated it is in pretty bad condition and something needs to be done with this historic building before it falls apart completely. (This is at intersection of Apple & Stranahan-near the Chaucer Steps-this is yet another connection point that would increase connect to Lincoln and Homewood and provide walkability of the community and its connecting neighborhoods.

Discussion: Amber E.: Along Lincoln & Apple (Its kind of "hilly") that could potentially be an area to develop some housing development or mixed-us development. Jordan also add up and into Vassar and even past it a little is all potential for development.

Christopher C. informed the group that he believes the owners of the Opera House are starting fundraising to rebuild.

Chat comment: **Charlise/Shaman** confirmed that and said yes they are. She said a few community members received a Grant, but an issue arose with the completion and awarding of the Grant due to the technical wording of what type of organization was applying for the Grant. They pushed through that and are working on getting another part of a grant and will more than likely get that. Any and all grants/monetary help helps;

referrals of other grants, matching funding, etc. (If anyone comes across any matching funds grants for historical sites that would be helpful). They did not at the time have the status of 501C3. This is something small and realistic projects that we can do alongside the Eva. P Mitchell and the senior campus. We can capitalize on the exposure of the Opera House-this will show that Lincoln Lemington is strategically trying to get together to do things within the community.

Question: Jay Gilmer, Esq. : Are there any funds to fix some of the retaining walls and fences throughout the neighborhood -- even though they're privately owned, when they're falling apart, that hurts the entire neighborhood. (Lincoln Avenue, Wiltsie Street, when you drive around and through the community you notice them. Ms. Bryant agreed with that and liked the idea of fixing the retaining walls on Lincoln and Lemington.

Chat comment: Judge Cooper Jr: suggested a dine in place to eat. (A Cafe) near Lincoln & Lemington.

Chat Comment: Dani K. says that in regards to accessibility/ walkability: the sidewalk of Lincoln from Deary to Vassar needs help-(listed below to be added to map). Jordan and Ms. Mary said that should apply to further down. Amy asked the members for mapping purposes to try and identify more specific streets that sidewalks need help on. (Response was that all the sidewalks really need help, but they got the gist of the request). They do at least have the sidewalks; but their main concern is that they are overgrown and if they were just cleaned it would not be as bad and they would not have to walk into the street.

This brought Amy to the point that at the first Workshop as well as this one that beautification was a key theme whether its weeding/planting where would some of those corridors be? Jordan said to be honest the entire Lincoln, unless the gas company or some kind of utility company comes and clears the weeds, the seniors are usually out there doing it. Paulson (trees, bushes, benches-there are a lot of houses along this street)

Question: Amber E. With the opera house...Is there any collaboration with the Pittsburgh Opera at all?

Question: Gerald F.: @Amber do you know if the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust i.e. Heinz Hall etc. would provide funds and or support for the Opera house in Lincoln Lemington?

Answer: They can and most likely will once funding is secured on that level; at present they have not been in that area of the historical landmark projects. That's not to say we cannot apply for specific grants as it relates to the space itself and it's not just focused on it being an historical landmark and that would come later when most of the development has already begun.

Answer: Amber E.: Anqwenique Wingfield, a Black opera singer from Pittsburgh has family who, I believe, owns property on Lincoln. She may be interested in participating in that project.

Resources: Jonnet Solomon is the owner of the Opera House is willing to come to the table. Charlise said she is willing to participate and will come to the table with a lot of brain power; she said most of the people in the community know the overall way to go about things but at some steps along the way they may just be missing a little piece of the nugget and that is where our help comes in. They just want their community to strive, their families to be ok and the guns violence to go away.

Amy says she loves Charlies previous idea and that can transition us to start thinking about Workshop #3; where we can put all these things in their respective buckets and start identifying local groups, residents, organizations, etc that fit within the buckets and can assist with those specific things. If not during this visioning process, during implementation of the plan. This will be a great next step and she will follow-up with everyone on where they are on pulling together a spreadsheet to start filling this information in-that is one of the focuses of a community study, is to harness the talents of the community along with their energy ideas, so that when we leave the community will be the ones who will implemented it. (Jordan has one more place to add to the map for Green/Open Space and/or development of some of the Social Service that were talked about @ Paulson/Lincoln & Dunmar. It is currently a concrete parking lot used to house certain machinery and equipment. Charlies suggested to bring her neighbor to the table as that is a lot of his stuff there. Jordan said that would be fine he was not sure if it was private or public.

Resource: Melvin H. El: email address mel@pahouse.net State Representative Ed Gainey's office. We have contact information for Mr. Wingfield

Follow-up: Gavin W. Jordan, I'd love to chat as well as we continue to think about the parks in this area (and with anyone else who wants to talk parks)! - gwhite@pittsburghparks.org

Following is a list of retaining walls/fencing /walkways, etc., that are in need of repair; many agreed with this. Christopher would like a list of these locations created and sent to him. Attorney Gilmore indicated that he will get that list started.

Retaining walls/fencing/walkways

- Love the idea about fixing the retaining walls and walkways on Lincoln
- The fence at Wiltsie and Lincoln near Dorothy Day apartments.
- Retaining wall on Lincoln north of Lemington.
- The fencing in front and back of Lemington School could use some repairs.
- in regards to accessibility/ walkability: the sidewalk of Lincoln from Deary to Vassar needs help

Beautification/cleaning:

- I'd like to see parts cleaned, especially at Lincoln Avenue Bridge
- Some of the owners of the large buildings that have sides that are easily visible (on Lincoln) may be open to having murals done on the sides of their buildings
- City steps next to Lincoln Bridge going to Washington Blvd. Has anyone used them in the last 10 years?

Infrastructure/Safety:

- Widen Lemington Ave going down to Washington Blvd so 2 cars can pass safely and there is continued "rippling at the bottom"
- Multi-family housing along some parts of Lincoln Avenue.
 - Lincoln & Lemington
 - Lincoln & Churchill/Churchland (this would be a good spot to build the hardware store-when we discussed specific wants that the community wants to see this would be the perfect spot.

Resource: Ms. Mary B informed everyone, that some time ago she heard about an organization /program providing bricklaying skill building services. She has always wondered if it could be funded so that they could use those retaining wall projects for skill building within the community.

Chat comment: Amber E.: @Gerald...I'm not sure but it wouldn't hurt to find out. I think every one of these larger cultural organizations should be solicited for funding for that project.

Resource: Dani K.: Grounded Strategies would be an excellent org to reach out to for help beautifying/repurposing vacant lots

Question: Donna J. asked who owns that location.

Resource: Student Conservation Association might be interested as well; as well as the Trade Institute of Pittsburgh, which is located on Susquehanna Street.

Upcoming Meetings:

Christopher C. thanked everyone for sharing their visions and stories today. I'll see you on February 11th @ 6PM Please register and pass the invite on.

Amy asked for the next meeting if folks wanted to do some type of Charrette or Open Green Space Visioning meeting? Jordan asked what would the other option would be and Amy offered up from a design perspective,

Gateways, Corridor Improvements, Parks & Green Space. Jordan said maybe stick with Corridors and we haven't touched too much on Green Spaces, but that is equally important. Corridors are in major need of repair from sidewalks to buildings from Lincoln to all the way up. Everyone agreed. Jordan said from the current residential stock its in need of repaired and the Social Services and then we can get into the VA, the Single mother's etc and then we can talk about helping them with the residential stock.

Gavin was asked how much he could do to help with the parks. He said let him know what amenities and where they can get the help (Paulson/Chadwick)-this could be talked about in depth at the next meeting. Council just passed the Parks Act, Paulson and Chadwick is high up on the list, but that funding may not come until the next 5 years.

Community Input Survey:

Paige N. posted information to register for February meeting: <https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/lincoln-lemington-belmar-visioning-study/events>

Follow-up Amy posted the link for participant to take a survey <https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/east-hills-visioning-study>