

Mayor's Southern Dallas Task Force
Area #6 Team Meeting
03/10/09 @ 3 p.m.

In attendance were Richard McNeal, Robin Bentley, Kent Anderson, Michael Immler, Amanda Popken, Timothy Glass, and Cynthia Rogers-Ellickson. Guest speaker was Kim Moore, City of Dallas Economic Development Department.

Mr. McNeal began the discussion with the findings he discovered while doing research for the area. He found that the area was distributed in three categories: Religious, Quasi-Industrial and ECO-friendly. He asked the other team members to report their thoughts about the area. Mr. Anderson reported that there are hardly any parks. Mr. Immler reported that the Southwest Center Mall area has hardly any activity at night because of the crime rate with many car thefts being the highest in the metroplex. Additional discussions of redeveloping the Mall area came up throughout the meeting. Mostly it was decided that the current owner will eventually probably sell but redevelopment of that area was more of a long term goal.

Mr. McNeal mapped out Area #6 as part of the Power Point presentation and asked that the members continue to feed information to him to put in the presentation. Mr. McNeal agreed to gather photos and more information, existing and new, to create a presentation.

Mr. Glass began the discussion on marketing for the area. He mentioned that the team should think about what they wanted to focus on first. His question was who did they want to attract? Some ideas mentioned by the team were land redevelopment, developing new housing, obtaining a big company to occupy some commercial space or develop space and focusing on the natural beauty of the area. The question of who owns the land between Illinois to Loop 12 arose but Mr. Glass wasn't sure who owned the land. He thought that much of the land was owned by the Potter's House and DISD. Mr. Glass mentioned that Keenan Street was not conducive to industrial/commercial. He also mentioned that the apartment complex on Loop 12 close to Jefferson was partially occupied and would not be immediately vacated to try and do something with that parcel of land. A final suggestion was bringing in Dart. Mr. Glass mentioned that would be a long term goal because Dart probably couldn't get a rail line up until the year 2020. Several questions thrown out were: Does the area offer anything unique in comparison to other similar areas? What section of the area is priority? What is the zoning?

Mr. Glass mentioned that one challenge to the area is that there are not many builders in Dallas who know how to build in the terrain such as the Mountain Creek area and preserve the natural beauty at the same time. Mr. McNeal asked if he knew of any other cities the team could talk to that are similar in terrain and have built up their areas. Mr. Glass suggested contacting larger cities and asking Ms. Moore about it when she arrived. Another challenge mentioned by Ms. Bentley is that when purchasers buy homes in the area they will be in one of three possible school districts.

The focus changed from many subjects to one, the natural beauty of the area. Ms. Bentley mentioned that the triathlon participants train out at Joe Poole Lake. She said that they ride through the Mountain Creek Lake area during training. Further discussions from the team involved focusing on developing bike riding trails/lanes. Widening roads to include bike lanes, building facilities, maybe even parks were all discussed. Ms. Moore mentioned that bike trails are expensive to do and finding funding in various forms such as grants, loans, foundations, etc...may want to be explored. She mentioned that Capella Park bike trails could connect to trails developed in Mountain Creek. Ms. Bentley mentioned that she would explore some grants and bike groups to gather information. Ms. Popken suggested talking to the City's Park department to maybe piggy-back with some plans they may already have.

Ms. Moore suggested that the team not change the name to coincide with an existing area such as Dallas Hill Country. She suggested coming up with something unique but maybe keeping their identity as Mountain Creek Lake. Some partnerships mentioned were with DISD, DCCCD, Northwood College, Joe Poole Lake, Tec....The team believed that by focusing on development of the bike trails they could attract more people to the area that would then bring in more homebuyers, developers, retailers and commercial businesses. Ms. Moore mentioned "smart building" to help keep the areas natural beauty. Ms. Popken will contact Michael Hellman to discuss planning. Mr. McNeal will find out zoning for the area.