

**Northwest Quadrant Study Group
Draft Notes June 11, 2009**

**Attending: Keyserling, Palmer, Pinkerton, Bellew, Smalley, Gadson,
Guests: Charlotte Brown, Garrett Budds, Evan Thompson, Jay Weidner, J. Von
Williams, Mark Krueger, Naomi Lewis, Collin Davidson**

Dwayne Smalley handed out copies of the Neighborhood Resident Questionnaire. It has been shortened to 10 questions from the original 65. It was patterned after the one being used for the BC3 book project – Old Commons Neighborhood. Dwayne’s plan is to try the questionnaire this coming weekend when he interviews members of First African Baptist Church.

John Gadson will be interviewed Saturday morning on a local radio talk show. He plans to discuss the re-zoning of Bladen Street, but will attempt to expand the discussion to introduce the things that will be coming forth regarding the NW Quadrant neighborhood.

Pete Palmer asked is it too early to talk about opportunity?

John Gadson said he will have to see how the interview develops. He does not see the rezoning as a negative. It is similar to the area on Greene Street where he live which was rezoned a few years ago to Neighborhood Commercial. That zoning has a residential, commercial and civic component. He wants to continue to remind our group that we must above all respect the neighborhood for what is there – currently. Friday night event in Washington Park is well attended. He was in Pruitt’s Store recently. It looks abandoned, but it was full of folks. Mr. Pruitt knows them all by name. Many were “running a tab” to pay at the end of the month. This is a real neighborhood gathering place and is important to the neighborhood.

Evan Thompson did not have anything to share, but will have a spread sheet of vacant lots by our next meeting.

Peter Palmer reminded the group the ultimate goal is to strive for providing those in the neighborhood with the opportunity for fuller use of their property. This should be attractive to those living in the NWQ.

Evan Thompson said Right of Way issues exist that prevent the full use of property.

Garrett Budds says Coastal Conservation League has helped communities petition DOT to make allowances for existing historic neighborhoods in their ROW policies.

Billy Keyserling: DOT wants the City to take back the streets. The City is not prepared to do that.

Charlotte Brown: SCE&G is a hinderance as well. The recent tall power poles resulted in easements that may prevent rebuilding of houses if they are destroyed.

James Bellew is close to having a final report on the financing opportunities.

Pete Palmer: I wish we could find even one person to take through the process as a sort of test case.

Billy Keyserling: Our report should include recommendations for affordable housing for police, fire, teachers, nurses and students. I am approaching architects to create some models for us. We also need to think “Green” and sustainable. Billy introduced J. Von Williams from the NWQ.

J. Von Williams: He grew up in the NWQ and will be glad to help all that I can.

Billy Keyserling suggested a mock interview between Dwayne and J. Von.

After explaining the intent of the survey, Dwayne began the interview questions. It was very successful exchange.

Billy K. introduced several young people who will be helping with the project for the next few weeks: Colin Davidson, Naomi Lewis, Mark Krueger

Charlotte Brown reiterated the importance of keeping the neighborhood user friendly.

Pete Palmer thinks if the neighborhood could hear the discussion here tonight they would be excited.

John Gadson: We need to keep in the process our original idea to make property owners developers. They should be part of it – provide opportunities.

James Bellew has identified an array of opportunities, is concentrating upon those who actually live there. Looking at low cost funding, reverse mortgages, etc. Also there are grants and matches that exist.

Submitted by Donna S. Alley