

Brownfield Redevelopment Task Force April 21 Meeting

Last Thursday's Task Force meeting was characterized by an overwhelming attendance, indicating that our redevelopment momentum is continuing to grow. Over 50 task force members and interested stakeholders attended the meeting generating standing room only for a few. It's very encouraging to see this heightened level of interests with real estate developers, bankers, lawyers municipal officials, and major property owners, and citizens, joining with non-profit, academic and environmental stakeholders to promote redevelopment.

In addition, Thursday's meeting represented the achievement of another milestone: for the first time, citizens groups were represented at the task force meeting. As part of our outreach strategy, six neighborhood presidents were invited to the meeting. All attended and expressed interest in becoming more involved. Given that level of interest by the citizen's group leaders, we will expand our outreach with additional opportunities for greater citizen participation.

Another exciting observation from April's meeting is the impressive progress toward Phase I deliverables including a greatly needed toolkit product, and a state of the art GIS database product. We should all applaud the user friendly toolkit approach that Dr, Chris Reaves is developing for accommodating and supporting region wide brownfield inquiries. His presentation demonstrated the complexities of organizing an overwhelming volume of information, resulting in a practical toolkit alternative with amazing flexibility for customizing to a broad range of brownfield situations. Dr Reaves product will greatly facilitate the brownfield initiative as a source for responding to inquires regarding redevelopment. Accordingly, Elizabeth Salter presented an equally exciting and intriguing demonstration of the GIS database product currently under development by the US Army Core of Engineers. Upon completion the user friendly GIS brownfield informational resource and redevelopment tool will be managed and maintained by RPCGB.

Also, I received significant feedback regarding the desire to learn more about upcoming changes to accounting rule FASB # 143, and its likely impact of encouraging brownfield properties from "mothball to market". We achieved our goal of raising awareness for those in attendance. As a result of positive feedback, we made arrangements for a focused presentation by the nation's leading brownfield redevelopment experts at MGP Properties and The Guardian Trust. Their presentation will take place on May 18th at the Alagasco Midtown Center; details and formal announcements to follow. Attached is a brief summary of potential impacts attributable to the upcoming change in rules.

And, as always, it's very encouraging to have the support of our regulatory collaborators: Camilla Warren EPA Region IV Alabama Brownfields project Manager, and Edwin Johnston, of ADEM. We greatly appreciate their messages of encouragement and technical enlightenment, and their time and effort in traveling to Birmingham in support of our brownfield initiative.

Again, welcome to those who attended the task force for the first time on Thursday, thanks to all others for your continued interest and support and we look forward to seeing you on May 18th.

Bob Wilkerson
Brownfield Redevelopment Task Force
RPCGB

Note: meeting notes and other updates will be posted to our website within the coming week at: www.rpcgb.org