



FORT DUPONT

SHAPED BY HISTORY & ANCHORED IN NATURE

Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation Land Use Planning Committee

October 24, 2023 – 4:00 p.m.

Delaware City Community Center
250 5th St
Delaware City DE 19706

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Minutes – Land Use Planning Committee Meeting of September 26, 2023
4. Land Use Planning Committee Charter
5. Status of Brownfield Remediation on the Fort DuPont Campus
6. Executive Session (if needed)
7. Action to be Voted Upon from Executive Session (if needed)
8. Next Meeting Date: November 28, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.
9. Adjournment

Please note: Pursuant to 29 Del. C 10004(e)(2), this Agenda may be changed to include additional items including executive sessions or to delete items that arise at the time of the meeting.

Potential executive session pursuant to 29 Del. C. 10004(b)(9) (“Personnel matters in which the names, competency and abilities of individuals employees...are discussed.”)

Potential executive session pursuant to 29 Del. C. 10004(b)(2) (“discussions regarding sales or leases of real property) and 29 Del C. 10004 (b)(6) (discussion of the content of documents, excluded from the definition of “public record,” where such discussion may disclose the contents of such documents).

Potential executive session pursuant to 29 Del. C. 1004 (b)(4) (“Strategy sessions, including those involving legal advice or opinion from an attorney-at-law...”) and 29 Del. C. 10004(b)(6) (discussion of the contents of documents, excluded from the definition of “public record,” where such discussion may disclose the contents of such documents.

FORT DUPONT REDEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION CORPORATION
LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Fort DuPont RPC Land Use Planning Committee meeting was held on September 26, 2023 at 4:06 p.m. via Zoom with the anchor location at the Delaware City Community Center, 250 5th Street, Delaware City, with Chair David Edgell presiding.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Rony Baltazar-Lopez (Secretary of State) (departed at 4:59 p.m.)
Mr. Tim Konkus (Resident)
Ms. Wendy Rogers (Fort DuPont Resident)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Cecily Bedwell (Resident)
Mr. Michael Lutz (Resident)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Tim Slavin, FDRPC Executive Director

OTHERS PRESENT

Mr. Michael Tholstrup, Delaware State Parks (DNREC)
Mr. Andy Howard, Hitchcock Design
Ms. Bridget Deatrick, Hitchcock Design

COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chair David Edgell welcomed the committee members and noted that their charge was to recount, review and revisit the physical land use master plan of the sites. The committee will be brought up to speed on all the different components of the projects moving forward and strategically assess future opportunities for the land use configuration. Mr. Edgell advised that part of their responsibility would be to question the validity and relevance of the assumptions that founded the original master plan and consider if they are right for the current market and the community's needs. The committee will recommend the appropriate direction for the property, taking into account the current environment and the constraints that the property is under. He advised that the meetings are open to the public, and community participation is encouraged. The committee will share its findings with the public at a later stage.

LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEE CHARTER

Chair David Edgell reviewed the charter that sets out the committee's responsibilities (Exhibit 1). Members were requested to review it prior to the next meeting, at which time it will be considered for approval. He noted that the committee does not have any decision-making authority or approvals and will only make recommendations to the Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation's Board of Directors.

REVIEW OF CONCEPTUAL PLAN

Mr. Tim Slavin, Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation (FDRPC) Executive Director, stated that the conceptual plan (Exhibit 2) was frozen in time just prior to his arrival approximately one year ago. He noted the challenge of consolidating numerous iterations into a unified plan. Mr. Slavin advised that the current situation demands a refresh and emphasized the need to re-evaluate the decisions and assumptions made, keeping in mind the evolving economic and market dynamics, as well as the limitations faced by the corporation. He reviewed the conceptual plan, as follows:

Marina District

At the upper left-hand corner of the plan, there is a parcel that refers to the Marina District, originally designated for Marina operation. The Branch Canal comes in at a diagonal where it meets the Delaware River. That upper portion, where it looks like there is a new Marina, is land that is owned by the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE). It is not out of the question that the FDRPC could own it, lease it, or help secure the use of it, but it should not be relied upon for planning purposes with the level of detail that they have in the past without the ownership issue being resolved.

Down the middle of the plan, shown in yellow, is proposed new construction of townhouses and condominiums at Marina Village. This is the second phase of housing and they are in the process of getting approvals from the City Council, the Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment. Other approvals are necessary from DeIDOT and DNREC and the National Park Service, which would release and trade some of the protections that are on that land and place it on other lands on the campus.

Water Treatment Plant

Immediately to the right of the upper left-hand corner is the water treatment plant, represented by a block with circles in it. One of the assumptions was that the plant would eventually move off of the Fort DuPont campus. There has been very little movement in that direction and it should be assumed that the plant will stay where it is.

Canal District

Further down the plan toward the diagonal cut of water, is the Canal District, which is fully built out and Officers Row is built out except for four vacant lots, all but one of which are sold. That community is seen as a key factor influencing the larger plan due to community expectations regarding amenities.

Parade Ground, Theater, and PX

The Parade Ground is shown in the middle third of the plan and is represented as the large green area. The proposal is to keep it as a flexible open space area with a minimal amount of programming. Moving towards the river are the theater and PX buildings, which will be pivotal for providing amenities.

Old Battery Lane

From the middle of the plan, there is a sharp line from the point in the river which is part of the State Park system. Either side of Old Battery Lane is where some of their acute concern is now. The buildings that are between the Parade Ground and Old Battery Lane necessitate a strategic approach for adaptive reuse.

Undeveloped Land

The large yellow block with an H next to it on the plan is undeveloped land conceptualized as warehousing or light industrial. For the purposes of this exercise, that space is open to reconsideration in light of changing needs and possibilities, keeping in mind that warehousing and light industrial may not be the highest and best use now, 10 years later.

Preservation and Development

Acknowledging the historical significance of the campus and previous demolition of some buildings, efforts will be directed towards preserving the core historic buildings and implementing adaptive

reuse strategies. The potential for residential infill and larger-scale new construction remains feasible in certain areas. Market trends indicate a shift from office spaces to residential units, impacting the initial concept for certain buildings like the Governor Bacon and Painter buildings along the Parade Ground.

Amenities Planning

An original exercise took place with the Hitchcock Group; however, it did not involve a lot of people. Hitchcock was brought back to involve people with presentations and workshops.

Referring to the conceptual plan, Chair Edgell noted that the existing buildings were indicated by blue footprints and the yellow footprints signified proposed future structures, presenting ample opportunities for infill. He clarified that certain sections, like the lots along Officers Row, are designated for residential purposes. Conversely, the area previously intended for warehousing presents an open canvas for considerations during the ongoing planning process.

Mr. Edgell advised that the Marina Village project was currently in the contract phase for the construction of approximately 100 to 128 townhouses. Stressing the corporation's responsibility for obtaining the necessary approvals, he acknowledged the challenges and uncertainties involved in navigating the extensive approval process. These complexities, he noted, should be kept in mind. He also noted the known element of the National Guard area at the bottom right corner, indicating that it will remain unchanged.

HISTORY OF CONCEPTUAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Tim Konkus recalled the early discussions with Sasaki Associates, the original planner for the project about a decade ago. He mentioned the dynamic nature of the meetings held at the Firehouse, where participants from various backgrounds shared their views on the project. Mr. Konkus highlighted the unconstrained nature of these discussions, allowing for a free flow of ideas and suggestions, regardless of their feasibility. He noted that one of the most exciting aspects of the process was the online discussion. It was an open space where everyone could share their thoughts as long as they were socially acceptable. The resulting discussions were very valuable, focusing primarily on the future of the land and people's aspirations for it.

Referring to the plan, Mr. Konkus pointed out the Marina in the upper left corner and noted the absence of the hotel and Convention Center initially proposed for the area extending into the Delaware River. He drew attention to the density of homes near the Lennar development, emphasizing the significant changes over the past decade. He also mentioned an earlier suggestion made during the Sasaki meeting about the possibility of exchanging the 6F land for the Grassdale parcel, which would be a higher and greater value than the 6F land by the river.

Mr. Konkus advised that the envisioned design for the area along Newcastle Avenue, now known as Old Elm Avenue, was inspired by the former military base, The Presidio. He described the original plan for the elegant Gregorian-style multifamily residences with tree lined streets and sidewalks and beautifully manicured gardens, contrasting it with the current denser layout in the new master plan.

SECTION 6(F) OF THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND ACT OF 1965

Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (LWCF) mandates that any conversion of lands or facilities purchased with funds from the Land and Water Conservation Act for non-recreational purposes must be coordinated with the National Park Service.

Mr. Mike Tholstrup of the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation explained that, acting as the state liaison for the National Park Service, the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation manages the transfer of information and internal decision-making processes to ensure the preservation of these lands for outdoor recreational use and to maintain accessible open space for public use.

Mr. Tholstrup noted that while land conversion or relocation is not uncommon, it is a significant process to go through. Over the past 15 years, various proposals or suggestions have been considered by Fort DuPont, but no final decision had been reached regarding the new boundaries or the designation of a new protected area. He mentioned that they have recently been actively communicating with their National Park Service representative, ensuring that they are informed of the potential changes to the map, the rationale behind their decisions, the factors considered in the recreational planning process, the public feedback incorporated, and how it affects the outdoor recreation plan.

Mr. Tholstrup advised that, typically, key concerns revolve around the location of the areas considered for a 6F swap, their current utilization, and whether they are presently utilized as park spaces. He clarified that if an area is already serving as a park space, including it in the protected area would not significantly expand the park's space. Regarding the Parade Ground, he highlighted that although it is maintained as an open space, it is not managed or operated as a park. He mentioned that they are currently undergoing an internal review within DNREC, ensuring that the division director comprehends the implications of the change. Several mapping exercises have been conducted to visualize the potential new boundaries, connectivity, and if the area being identified as the new 6F protected area would function as a park in perpetuity.

Mr. Tholstrup presented a map outlining both the current and proposed 6F protected areas for review.

RECREATION CONCEPTUAL PLAN PRESENTATION – HITCHCOCK DESIGN GROUP

Mr. Andy Howard and Ms. Bridget Dietrich of Hitchcock Design Group presented conceptual plans revised to incorporate community-driven insights, considering both passive and active recreational components. It was noted that this is the second pass at their preliminary concepts. Initially, they designed a plan that was densely focused on active recreation. However, after revisiting their assumptions and engaging with the community at various in-person events, they gained a better understanding of the community's preferences for the size and scope of recreational amenities. These ideas are still in their early stages and the next step is to present them to the community for their feedback, make sure they heard, understood and interpreted the feedback correctly and see what the preference is for a single plan moving forward. The long-term vision is to synthesize these ideas into a unified plan that encompasses various elements. The area of focus spans from the section north of Exchange Road to the peninsula known as Fishing Point.

Referring to the site plan, Ms. Dietrich noted the following:

- Throughout the discussions with community members, a lot of consideration was given to where it was appropriate for high-use, active recreation, quieter, passive recreation that is a little less noisy and busy and where it is appropriate to incorporate different nodes to nature appreciation and the sites rich military and social history.
- Expanding beyond the park site, they have begun exploring locations for potential memorials to the Fort's military service, marked in pink to denote seating areas along key locations, largely along the bike trail (highlighted in blue) running atop the levee.

- Spots for nature appreciation have been identified and are indicated by green asterisks and the main active parkland is represented in yellow.
- The area behind the theater and the PX (in orange) has been identified as a potential activation area. Although the current focus remains on the broader development, they are mindful of the possibility of utilizing the PX and theater for public use in the future, thus preserving these spaces for potential recreation and community uses.
- One of the recreation amenities being considered is a dog park, which requires a considerable amount of space. A very brief study was conducted to consider moving the dog park out of the yellow or orange areas (active parkland and potential activation) into the dark blue section of the site (possible alternative dog park at Delaware Avenue and Colter Road). The study took into account the potential impact on the existing active recreation amenities and other amenities being considered for inclusion in the park spaces.

Referring to Concept 1, Mr. Howard and Ms. Dietrich noted the following:

- Concepts have been developed to address accessibility and parking arrangements. People will be walking and riding bikes, some from nearby residences. The aim is to ensure equal pedestrian and vehicular access.
- One concept considers eliminating a through road with the focus on integrating the open space from the Delaware River into the central core area, creating an uninterrupted space. This includes an open lawn space shaped in an oval or circular form, as well as more active recreational features, such as four pickleball courts, a single tennis court, and a full-court basketball court further north.
- Discussions included strategies to attract teenagers and tweens. One of the ideas explored was the concept of American Ninja Warrior, combining elements of fitness and challenge courses catered toward older children and young adults. While this course targets teenagers and tweens, it is open for use by adults, caregivers, and individuals of varying ages. This inclusive approach aligns with the feedback received during the community meetings and survey, emphasizing the need to create a space that accommodates multi-generational activities.
- The playground area is indicated in blue and includes a gazebo for shade and a restroom. To protect the restroom from potential floods, the existing 3- to 4-foot-high levee berm will be used for elevation. The restroom serves both the playground visitors and those on the levee path. Although not depicted, some seating areas are proposed along the levee such as a bench or a bench swing, realizing that the views and the star of the show is the Delaware River.
- The parking off Old Battery Lane currently extends out and over where the proposed levee is located and there is an existing gravel parking lot with signage or a trailhead. Concept 1 proposed bringing the parking inside the levee. Other concepts move parking closer to access the peninsula or the fishing point.
- The large red rectangles denote the existing historic structures within the area. While firm plans for utilizing the structures are yet to be decided, they are ensuring that the buildings are included and having some integration in the design. This integration guarantees that if they were to be repurposed as public gathering spaces or storage for recreational amenities, they would still be incorporated in the park layout without cutting off the park amenities.

- Just south of the designated challenge sports area, represented by a gray, amorphous shape, there is the opportunity for a wheeled plaza to cater to the older age group using scooters, inline skates, and skateboards. While the idea of a skate park is still valuable for many of those activities, they are also exploring the possibility of incorporating pump tracks and other facilities for those learning to ride a bike. This concept can be re-evaluated for need.
- Due to their preliminary nature and the wide-scale view, many other aspects that have been discussed with the community and leadership do not appear on the plans. These include considerations such as natural plantings, a detention basin, accommodations for the existing wetlands on the site, which the engineer is currently evaluating under EPA regulations. Additionally, there are other green initiatives being contemplated like the use of permeable surfaces and a sizable parking lot that could be converted into an overflow area to the north, reinforcing it, or alternatively removing it entirely, except during peak usage times. As the project progresses and the layout is finalized, these additional considerations will be incorporated into the final construction plan.

Referring to Concept 1 - Overlay, Ms. Dietrich advised that this first version shows what it could look like if the dog park were removed off site. The dog park, which would be kept within the recreation amenity, would be approximately 1 acre with a .4-acre area for small dogs and a .6-acre area for the large dogs. This version keeps the recreation very close.

Referring to Concept 2, Mr. Howard noted that the main difference with the second version is that the dog park is located to the south with a drive-through destination to connect Old Battery Lane. It is a meandering drive to help slow vehicles down. The larger parking lots are located on the west side with an alignment with pedestrians to get them across Exchange Road, depending on what happens and gets developed in the open lot area to the west. There is access to the main dog park area which is divided into roughly 1 1/2 acres of an acre for the large dog park and a half acre for the small dog park.

Still referring to Concept 2, Mr. Howard and Ms. Dietrich noted the following:

- The amenities to the north are still the two pickleball courts, one tennis court, lawn games such as a permanent bean bag toss game, or more of a tables and chairs type of area where you could play chess or checkers, or bocce. Then the main area, which would be the play space, the initial concepts are steering away from designs that are overly themed toward the history of the site and the military aspect, but more toward the nature-based aspect and asset of the Delaware River and the birding corridors. A nautical theme for the play equipment might be an option moving forward.
- Instead of full court basketball, this plan considers three half-court basketball which would be more casual pickup games and less formal full court basketball play.
- To the northwest either of two options for the challenge/fitness area could be a mix or variety of the Ninja Warrior Challenge course material and outdoor fitness equipment. A variation that would appeal to the teams through the adults and provide play options that are not just limited to a playground and traditional equipment for the younger children. Both the playground and the challenge/fitness areas have been mapped out with standard sizes and they are confident that these shapes and sizes would fit equipment and be adequate to provide a good range of activity for a playground in the larger of the two circles and the fitness challenge idea in the smaller circle.

- The restrooms are shown along the levee with shelters built in and another small shelter area shown to the side with open lawn that could be used very freely for informal gatherings, rented out for community members, or even used for some official programming.
- This concept depicts the idea that parking can cross the levee and provide trail head parking along Old Battery Lane. The design focuses on ensuring the safety of the bike trail and managing the natural features and water protections close to the shoreline. In order to enhance accessibility to fishing point and the trailheads, especially for those with limited mobility, the plan carefully considers two options: one with vehicular access crossing over to the northern area and the other without.
- It was prefaced that the green areas designated as open lawn are viewed at a conceptual macro level and not everything seen in green is going to be turf or lawn. For the levee and other areas, the incorporation of native plants and rain gardens with native plantings are proposed. Heading north toward the Delaware River, consideration is given to decreasing maintenance, increasing biodiversity, decreasing maintenance, and managing water on site by filtering it with native plants.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting is scheduled for October 24, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Chair Edgell requested that an update on the status of brownfield remediation on the campus be provided.

ADJOURNMENT

By unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1 – Land Use Planning Committee Charter

Exhibit 2 – Fort DuPont Conceptual Plan

APPROVED: *October 24, 2023



Charter

1. Committee Name: Land Use Planning Committee

2. Purpose and Objectives: The Land Use Planning Committee of the Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation (FDRPC) is established to make recommendations to the Board of Directors on the overall development and uses of lands on the Fort DuPont Campus. The committee's primary focus is to recommend a conceptual plan for the campus, including periodic updates as needed.

3. Scope: The committee's scope encompasses all the landholdings of the FDRPC.

4. Responsibilities: The Land Use Planning Committee is responsible for:

- Making recommendations to the Board of Directors on the conceptual plan for the Fort DuPont campus.
- Ensuring that all special conditions on Fort DuPont landholdings are known and communicated in the conceptual plan. This includes, but is not limited to, restrictions, protections, easements, and other legal conveyances which otherwise influence the future use of landholdings owned by FDRPC.

5. Authority: The committee is authorized to solicit public input and comments on land use issues through public meetings, online forums, surveys, or other means it may identify.

6. Membership: The committee shall consist of six (6) members, three (3) of whom shall be members of the Board of Directors. Ex officio non-voting members may be added to the committee at the discretion of the Committee Chair.

7. Chairperson: The committee shall be appointed by the Chair of the Board of Directors. The Committee Chair responsibilities include leading committee meetings, setting agendas, and facilitating communication with the Board of Directors.

8. Meeting Frequency and Quorum: The committee shall meet on a quarterly basis beginning in September 2023, but may meet more frequently if needed. A quorum shall consist of four (4) members of the Committee.

11. Review and Amendment: This charter shall be reviewed periodically by the Board of Directors to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Proposed amendments to the charter shall be submitted to the Board of Directors.

12. Duration: The committee shall remain in operation at the discretion of the Chair of the Board of Directors.

16. Signatures: By signing below, committee members acknowledge their commitment to the responsibilities outlined in this charter.

[Insert space for signatures and date]

This charter is approved by [Name of Approving Authority] on [Date of Approval].



- LEGEND:**
- TRAIL HEAD
 - GENERAL PARKING
 - TRAIL HEAD PARKING
 - A** CANAL DISTRICT (RESIDENTIAL)
 - B** OFFICER'S ROW (RESIDENTIAL)
 - C** MARINA / COMMERCIAL MIXED USE
 - D** MARINA VILLAGE DISTRICT (MIXED USE)
 - E** THEATRE DISTRICT
 - F** QUARTER MASTER DISTRICT (RESIDENTIAL & RECREATION)
 - G** BATTERY ROW DISTRICT
 - H** REEVES FARM DISTRICT (PUBLIC-PRIVATE SERVICES & MAINTENANCE)
 - I** EXISTING NATIONAL GUARD
 - J** BARRACKS DISTRICT (OFFICES & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES)
 - K** PARADE GROUNDS
 - L** EXISTING BOAT TRAILER PARKING LOT
 - M** EXISTING PUBLIC BOAT RAMP
 - N** RECREATION AREA
 - O** EXISTING WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY
 - REFORESTATION
 - MEADOW
 - TIDAL WATERS / DWM BMP
 - TRAIL OVERLOOK
 - TRAILS / WALKWAYS
 - EXISTING DELAWARE CITY PROMENADE
 - PROPOSED CANAL DISTRICT PROMENADE
 - PROPOSED INNER / BIKER TRAIL
 - PROPOSED INTERIOR SOFT SURFACE LOOP TRAILS
 - ASPHALT PAVEMENT
 - STRUCTURES:**
 - EXISTING
 - PROPOSED
 - EXISTING NEW CONSTRUCTION



MAY 24, 2022



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