

December 15, 2017 Update

Elwyn C. Lee
Vice President for Neighborhood and Strategic Initiatives

This update covers the period since the November 14, 2017 Cabinet meeting.

SECTION I: THIRD WARD INITIATIVE – EDUCATION

Leaders:

Robert McPherson, Dean, College of Education

Jonathan Schwartz, Associate Dean, College of Education

Anne McClellan, Director of Innovation, College of Education

1. BOV Task Force on Third Ward Schools – The Task Force Chair, Wayne Lockett, has been leading the group in discussions on the merits and feasibility of the following potential activities: (1) establishing a Task Force member as liaison to each of the targeted schools; (2) organizing a dinner with the principals and the liaisons; and (3) organizing a meeting comprised of COE representatives, Task Force members, and HISD administrators implementing the Achieve 180 program at Blackshear Elementary School and Cullen Middle School.

2. PROMISE Grant Application - A decision on the \$30 million federal Promise Grant application submitted by the UH College of Education is due at the end of December. If approved funds would be used over a five year period for a variety of neighborhood improvement projects.

3. Building Site Expansion – The site for the building that will house the Advancing Community Engagement & Services Institute (ACES) and other services is directly north and behind the McDonald’s restaurant on Elgin. UH has recently purchased a land parcel adjacent to the original site; this will allow additional parking space once the building is completed. The project is moving along and seems to be on schedule to open in 2019.

4. Third Ward Multi-Services Center Space –The City Department of Health has agreed to allow the College of Education (COE) to utilize space in the Third Ward Multi-Service Center. However, due to hurricane HARVEY, no COE staff members have moved into the center.

5. Community Meeting on Third Ward Education- As part of the Complete Communities, the Mayor’s Office of Education headed by his Director of Education, Juliet Stipeche, is hosting a Third Ward Community Meeting on Education on January 25, 2018. The COE is working with the city and helped to shape the format of the meeting.

6. Positive Press–The November 16, 2017 DEFENDER newspaper contained a very positive article entitled: “UH initiative partners with 3rd Ward schools.” In the article the principals of Blackshear Elementary School and Cullen Middle school rate the UH support and contributions as A-plus. The article acknowledges the genesis of the initiative that began with the University Neighborhood Partnership Forum (UNPF).

7. Yates Health Clinic–Professor Jonathan Schwartz of the College of Education and Legacy Health Clinic representatives toured Yates high school to identify a potential space for the proposed in-school clinic.

SECTION II: TWI: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Leaders:

Saleha Khumawala, Professor of Accounting, Director of the SURE (Stimulating Urban Renewal through Entrepreneurship) Program, BAUER College of Business

Jerry Evans, Professor College of Technology

Leonard Baynes, Dean College of Law

2. SURE PROGRAM -

a. Wells Fargo presented the SURE program with a check for \$21,400 at the December 9th SURE holiday function at the Elizabeth Rockwell pavilion . Approximately 200 people attended including Regent Paula Mendoza.

b. Grameen America – Dr. Saleha Khumawala, Director, UH SURE Program has been in touch with Andrea Jung, the President and CEO of Grameen America Inc. who indicated that she would like to come to Houston to explore establishing an office in Houston and a partnership with the SURE program. Grameen is based in New York and has 13 offices spread throughout the country but none in Houston. This visit will occur in 2018, possibly January.

3. Young Mother’s Employment Pilot Program (YMEPP)

a. Assessment Meeting – Dr. Jerry Evans, and Dr. Margaret Kidd from the College of Technology joined Vice President Elwyn Lee in a meeting with our Third Ward community partners to evaluate the YMEPP program. Our partners were Dr. Assata Richards of the EEDC, Delores Rogers, and several volunteers who provided enrichment workshops and counseling during the program. All meeting attendees agreed that:

1. the criminal background checks should have occurred at the beginning of the program so that efforts to seal or expunge records could have started earlier;

2. that greater emphasis should have been put on identifying and addressing the personal impediments of each participant (child care, transportation, domestic conflict, university debt, etc.)

3. Collaborative Efforts Continue – Efforts continue to assist the program participants in their effort to find employment and/or pursue additional education

4. Anchor Strategies

a. **November 29th Meeting**–The Democracy Collaborative (TDC) facilitated a 4 hour discussion involving administrators that it had interviewed and surveyed in order for TDC to determine whether and how the various anchor institutions might participate in a strategy that would contribute to the economic empowerment of Third Ward residents. Most of the UH staff interviewed were from the Division of Administration and Finance. Twenty-two (22) people attended the meeting including 7 from UH, 4 from TSU, 3 from Memorial Herman, 1 from Houston First, 1 from Rice University, Rick Lowe from PRH, 1 from the City Planning Department.

b. **November 30th Meeting** – At the Kinder Foundation, The Democracy Collaborative (THC) reported on what it had found during its interviews and the November 29th meeting. TDC indicated that the administrators had expressed optimism that with dialogue they might collectively be able to eliminate some of the barriers to making economic progress in Third Ward. Nineteen (19) attended this high level briefing including Nancy Kinder, TSU President Austin Lane, David Minceberg from HoustonFirst, Carol Paret from Memorial Hermann, Roman Manning, Board Chair of the Emancipation Park Conservancy, Assata Richards of the EEDC, and Eloise Brice and Elwyn Lee from UH.

TDC indicated that it wanted to work with the administrators over several months by occasional teleconference to refine the ideas that had surfaced. At the end of the meeting two attendees suggested that the process should be faster while others thought a more moderate pace was more appropriate. TDC indicated that it would reconsider its schedule for moving forward.

5. BOV Task Force on Economic Empowerment

Earl Cummings received background information on Third Ward related to the issue of economic development. On December 6th I took him on a tour of Third Ward. We agreed to meet again to discuss achievable goals.

SECTION III: TWI - HEALTH

Leaders:

Ezemenari Obasi, Associate Dean for Research; Chair, Department of Health and Learning Sciences, College of Education

Luis Torres, Associate Dean for Outreach, Graduate College of Social Work

Dan O'Connor, Chair, Department of Health & Human Performance

Stephen Spann, Planning Dean for the UH Medical School

1. **United Health Foundation Obesity and Prevention Grant** –There has been no substantial change since November 14th. Dr. Obasi and O'Connor will soon be meeting to discuss marketing ideas with Lisa Holdeman, Associate Vice Chancellor for University Marketing, Communication and Media Relations.

2. **Vision Work Group** – Dr. Spann, Dr. Price and Dr. Lee are continuing to work on how to identify the number of children and individuals in Third Ward served by the College of Optometry at its Heights clinic and at the University Eye Institute on campus.

SECTION IV: ART and CULTURE

Leaders:

Andrew Davis, Interim Dean, Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts (KGMCA)

Rick Lowe, Founder Project Row Houses and Adjunct Associate Professor, KGMCA

Ryan Denning, Dir. of Public Art, Project Row Houses

Sixto Wagan, Dir. of the Center for Arts and Social Engagement (CASE), KGMCA

1. CASE-PRH Fellows

a. Fellow Presentations - The two fellows made their final presentations on November 29th. The CASE Director, Sixto Wagan, reports that the “presentations were rich in content, synthesizing research and positing some future actions for each individually as well as potential ideas for community and artists to expand upon.”

b. Recruiting New Fellows – Dean Davis reports that the quality and number of applicants for the two fellowship positions is “truly remarkable” Of the 63 applicants that are being reviewed by the committee nearly half are local artists, 4 international artists and 27 from across the country.

2. Community Outreach

The Band will participate in one or both of the two MLK parades that take place on January 15, 2018. The UH float will participate in what is referred to as the Stamps parade. The float alternates between the two parades.

SECTION V: GENERAL RELATED INFORMATION

1. North Third Ward Planning Project (NTWPP)

This consortium of Third Ward institutions submitted an application for the implementation grant of \$750,00 in October. This week NTWPP received word that its application was approved. **Wells Fargo Foundation has asked us to keep this confidential** until it can organize an official announcement. The original consortium members included the following organizations: Change Happens, Change Happens CDC, the William A. Lawson Institute for Peace & Prosperity (WALIPP), Project Row Houses (PRH), Row House CDC, Wheeler Avenue Triangle Ministries, Inc. (WATMI, the outreach arm of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church) and the University of Houston through its Office of Neighborhood & Strategic Initiatives.

2. Mayor’s Third Ward Complete Communities ---

The kick-off was October 30, 2017. Since then the Third Ward Neighborhood Support Team (NST) has met to help refine the priorities for draft action plans the City’s Department of Planning is developing.

Vice President Lee is a member of the Third Ward NST. Professor Susan Rogers of the UH College of Architecture has been engaged by the City to assist the Planning Department in this effort. Final draft recommendations are scheduled to be presented to the Third Ward community on February 7, 2018, at the Third Ward Multi-Service center.

3. **Upcoming Article** –UH marketing is preparing an article on the Third Ward Initiative for possible inclusion in the UH alumni magazine.

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