

Okie Land Project – Exploratory Meeting with Subject Matter Experts

Attendees: Janice Bortner (FI Town Council, RCC), Stephen Pryce Lea (Dep. Executive Director, Delaware Botanical Garden, Carol Anderson-Austra (Landscape Architect, consultant), and Deborah Cowell (GIWG Lead under RCC)

After introductions and a brief description of the property Fenwick Island has been given by the Okie family and goals for the property discussed at the last meeting and with the mayor, the following discussion points were explored:

- The great opportunity to use this space as educational opportunities on stormwater management and native vegetation. Project should be thoughtfully executed.
- Current conditions on the property, including initial pictures taken by Mike Locke of representative plant materials, walkways, vegetation and trees.
- Need for Miss Utility to identify any potential wires or lines running through the property (was a priority discussed by both experts).
- Informally marking the corner points by FI Town officials with stakes to flag locations of each approximate corner point. Will ask Mayor if Mike Locke can do this for us.
- Both experts are interested in stormwater management and use of this property to educate the visitors about this topic; we did discuss cisterns briefly.
- Both experts are interested in showcasing and educating on native plants and using natural materials on the property to mulch and line the walkways. There are some existing paths and use of natural materials is a practice at the botanical gardens.
- Doing an initial evaluation of the property to identify trees, plants in the under canopy, invasive plants (i.e. bamboo identified in the pictures), identifying lighting in each area (dappled versus darker shade). This initial evaluation will help to frame a formal plan for how the pathways and areas can be laid out.
- Do a messaging campaign to include:
 - an article in the local paper to call attention to the property, and
 - a sign or bulletin board on the property to provide information on the project and who to contact to get involved. Perhaps this sign could be a first step with the development of a small space up front for an initial park dedication honoring the Okie family.
- Reach out to neighbors on adjacent properties to get their feedback and concerns and see if they would like to participate in the parks' development. (Also raised in last GIWG meeting).
- Lay out a strategic plan with base priorities and timeframes.

Next Steps:

Both of our experts have agreed to support this project and we thank them. The initial walkthrough and formal evaluation will be done by Stephen sometime in mid-February, after which Debbie and Stephen will do a formal walkthrough to discuss findings. Stephen will also do soil samples.