

**DRAFT MINUTES  
THE PRINCETON PARTNERSHIP: HOUSING  
FEBRUARY 3, 2009**



**Present:**

**The Council of Princeton Future**

Robert Geddes, Chair  
Marvin Bressler  
Susan Hockaday  
Katherine Kish

**Princeton Borough**

Mildred Trotman, Mayor  
Kevin Wilkes, Member of Council  
Robert Bruschi, Borough Administrator  
Derek Bridger, Zoning and  
Affordable Housing Applications  
Officer

**Princeton Township**

Bernard Miller, Mayor  
Elizabeth Lempert, Member of  
Township Committee

**Princeton Regional Planning Board**

Marvin Reed, Chair, Master Plan  
Subcommittee

**Princeton Regional Schools**

Alan Hegedus, President, School Board

**Princeton University**

Kristin Appelget

**Housing Authority of the Borough of  
Princeton**

Kate Warren, Commissioner  
Scott Parsons, Executive Director

**Princeton Community Housing**

Sandra Persichetti, Executive Director

**Princeton Senior Resource Center**

Susan Hoskins

**Citizens**

Hendricks Davis  
William Sutphin

**Bob Geddes** welcomed all and asked each person to explain 'how you fit in'. He especially thanked both Mayors for coming. He, then, suggested the following agenda:

TWO PLANS, ONE OPPORTUNITY

Welcome & Introduction: Robert Geddes, Chair, Princeton Future

1. Community Regional Plan : Marvin Reed, Chair, Master Plan Subcommittee of the Regional Planning Board & Former Mayor of the Borough of Princeton
2. Campus Plan: Kristin Appelget, Director of Community & Regional Affairs, Princeton University
3. Opportunity: Sheldon Sturges, Managing Director, Princeton Future
4. Community Housing: Sandra Persichetti, Executive Director, Princeton Community Housing
5. Public Housing: Scott Parsons, Executive Director, HABOP
6. Developer Housing

Bob said that Princeton Future started out two years ago with broad views. "People came and we listened. It became apparent that there were 5-7 issues. We didn't recognize at first that consolidation would become important. Then, 3 issues emerged:

1. Mobility[Walking, Biking, Transportation/Traffic/Parking]
2. Downtown
3. Housing

We have held working group meeting on the first two and today we are holding the third meeting on the topic of Housing. The emphasis this morning is on structures and how we govern each other on issues of preservation and development. In some ways, it is different from the ways Princeton Future contributed to the building of the square, the apartment building with retail and the garage. That was largely a physical, economic and social success story. Here we are discussing organizational change. On February 14, we will meet in the Community Room downstairs to address the 3 issues above from the point of view of forming a partnership. The Princeton Partnership in which Governments, Businesses, Community Groups and Institutions set out to work together. It has worked in Morristown and many other communities. Today, it could be good if we could focus on existing structures and move towards proposals.

### **THE COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN**

Today, we are fortunate to have Marvin Reed, Chair of the Master Plan Subcommittee here to explain The Housing Element of the Master Plan.

**Marvin Reed** said that the element that has to do with housing describes housing types, but it doesn't say much 'pro-actively', with the exception of the enormous addendum prepared in response to the State's affordable housing mandates. The Master Plan doesn't go beyond this to advocate and implement housing for different groups. The Master Plan was written for abandoned farms and dealt with developers coming in. What we are witnessing right across the street on Palmer North, on the Witherspoon Campus of the Hospital site and at Merwick is the biggest development of residential housing, right in the downtown. The institutions of higher education have all become more involved recently. They are feeling that they have to be active in the housing market if they want to attract the best faculty...both rental and for sale. The Seminary is replacing its 200 units on Canal Pointe. The University is replacing Butler Tract The Institute is engaged in creating more housing for its own use. All of this helps to relieve excess pressure on the community for rentals in particular. The Seminary is replacing its 200 units with a new village with 600 units, of which 200 will be for their own use. Most affordable units come through the 'set-aside' at particular income levels. Some efforts at Griggs Farm, Maple Street, Clay Street, John St, Maclean and Shirley Court have been made to develop mixed housing to provide more of a 50-50 balance. All of those that will be built as new housing depends on what happens in the real estate market.

**Robert Geddes** asked if Kristin would speak out housing in the Campus Plan.

**Kristin Appelget** said "I'll be brief. PU houses 70% of its graduate students and 100% of its undergrads. We believe that this relieves some of the pressure on rental market in town. The plan is to replace the Butler Tract housing for graduate students with housing for faculty & staff. We have completed a study with the Boro for there to be new units for faculty and staff on that site and Stanworth will be slowly converted for use by graduate students with young families. Hibben-McGee will be renovated.

**Marvin Reed:** What Kristin says is extremely important. Other university towns are not as fortunate as we are. 100% is not par for the course. If they didn't keep up, there would

be no rental housing for anyone else. I am familiar with Syracuse. It is a very different mix.

**Kristin** added that the economic changes will have an impact on how quickly these plans get built out. We are currently building 5 units on Leigh Avenue to meet COAH requirements and we are in lengthy discussions working towards building additional units at Princeton Community Village.

**Marvin Bressler** asked if PU knew what percentage of the faculty commuted.

**Kristin** replied that 80% live in New Jersey, with a significant percentage in 08540-2 zip codes. "We don't know the actual breakdown as to the faculty," she said.

**Marvin Reed** said that the hospital and the university had provided traffic counts as to how many have to commute to work here. No employees of the hospital live in 08542! The thrust of our discussion with Princeton University is "How can we get more faculty and staff to live in close proximity to Princeton University, especially within walking and public transit distance?"

**Kristin** said "This is very consistent with the panning work we have done. It is why we have purchased Merwick. It is why the Franklin Parking Lot has been purchased and we are in feasibility conversations with the Mayor and HABOP about that site.

**Marvin Reed** said "I am going to ask you to write down 'Working Families' and 'Yuppies'. Princeton doesn't really provide enough that attracts the creative class. He mentioned Richard Florida's work. [Editor's note: He is best known for his work in developing his concept of the creative class, and its ramifications in urban regeneration. This research was expressed in Florida's bestselling book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, *Cities and the Creative Class*, and *The Flight of the Creative Class*. A new book, focusing on the issues surrounding urban renewal and talent migration, titled *Who's Your City?*, was recently published. Prof. Florida's theory asserts that metropolitan regions with high concentrations of high-tech workers, artists, musicians, lesbians and gay men, and a group he describes as "high bohemians", correlate with a higher level of economic development. Florida posits the theory that the creative class fosters an open, dynamic, personal and professional environment. This environment, in turn, attracts more creative people, as well as businesses and capital. He suggests that attracting and retaining high-quality talent, versus a singular focus on infrastructure projects such as sports stadiums, iconic buildings, and shopping centers, would be a better primary use of a city's regeneration resources for long-term prosperity.]

**Robert Geddes** wrote 5 categories of housing needs on a display tablet:

*Affordable: subsidized low, moderate, middle income*  
*Workforce*  
*Seniors*  
*Diversity of Family/working*  
*Yuppies/cool/hip/neat*

**Susan Hoskins** said "We're talking about tiers of housing...subsidized, affordable...but it is the tier above that needs attention. The people in support jobs. Teachers. And I will speak for all of the non-profit managers: none of us can live here.

**Marvin Bressler** noted that Princeton University is one of the most self-contained universities.

**Marvin Reed** said "After they graduate, they don't stay here. In the interest of the economic development of the region, we need enough pizzazz to keep them!"

**Sandra Persichetti** said "The next level you are looking at is middle income."

**Alan Hegedus** said "You have just defined everyone in the school system!"

**Robert Geddes** then asked Sandra to report on Community Housing.

## COMMUNITY HOUSING

**Sandra Persichetti** said that Princeton Community Housing was begun in 1967. John Borden, Ted Vial and Jim Floyd were on the original board and the latter two still are. We have 238 low and moderate income units at PCV. It opened in 1975. It would never be approved today. Elm Court has 88 one-bedroom and studio units. It opened in 1985. At Griggs Farm we manage 70 low-income units. It opened in 1989. At Harriet Bryan we have 68 units. It opened in 2007. It is the poster child for consolidation. We had to do everything twice because it straddles the Boro-Twp line. I am also always struck by the opposition to affordable housing. We spent \$200,000 on legal fees defending against "Friends of...". I think where the general conversation has been heading, where we will be in 5-10 years, is to work on finding infill units. Leigh Avenue is a terrific example. Turning over decrepit buildings is a difficult task. It is very difficult to think in terms of large scale anymore. You always meet resistance. We will add perhaps 40 units to PCV. The bus, the sewer, the roads the community room...they are all in place. We may have some influence in the new administration. Karl Light's son-in-law has just been named the head of HUD. But funds will be less. The DCA has a Balanced Housing Fund that is funded by the transfer tax on real estate transactions, so that will be difficult. There are some private developers who build good affordable housing but there are no sites in Princeton that would interest them. One item, we are getting a high percentage of Asians in Harriet Bryan as their adult children live near.

**Mildred Trotman** said that you can't have a preference because of the funding source..federal and/or state.

**Sandra** said "That is correct. Affordable housing is not for people on the dole. Both Mom & Dad are working. They are not there during the day. We have developed an after-school program with Princeton Young Achievers for K-5 kids.

**Mildred** said PCV is affordable rental. They have to qualify on entering. Some pay a high rent.

**Susan Hoskins** asked "How many PCV residents work in the community? My sense is that they give back to this community."

**Sandra** said that many work at the hospital, Princeton University and the Seminary. There is a 5-year waiting list. We have young college kids looking for one-bedroom units.

**Robert Geddes;** "Is PCH a non-profit?"

**Sandra:** Each site is a non-profit 'single asset entity'. We pay PILOT.

**Marvin Bressler:** "Suppose you wanted to encourage certain kinds...for teachers, firemen...?"

**Sandra:** Can't do it if it receives public funding.

**Robert Geddes:** In NYC, they are doing it for teachers, for instance. Is it a possibility?

**Sandra:** On sites with heavy mortgages with NJHMFA, no. But perhaps on a fresh piece of property.

**Marvin Bressler:** Does Princeton University receive public funding?

**Kristin:** It is COAH.

**Robert Geddes:** OK. Let's move on. Yes, Bill.

**William Sutphin:** [Ewing St resident and attorney for the Boro Zoning Board]. "I want to speak of a problem in my neighborhood: the Dempsey-Cuyler-Walnut area. These homes were built as part of the desegregation effort in the late 50's & 60's. 448 Walnut,

27 Dempsey, 325 Jefferson, 18 Cuyler and 152 Terhune have been or are being torn down and replaced by much larger homes. 4 can do this as of right. I suspect this is not specific to my neighborhood,” he said. “Barbara Fox has written about Larry DuPraz’s small Cape Cod home on Harrison. If this is allowed to continue, all small homes will disappear. I suggest that this organization look into demolition permits. Some thought should be given to slowing down this process.

**Robert Geddes:** You are suggesting that regulations are not sufficient.

**William Sutphin:** The problem is that if you restrict it, it is a taking. There is the possibility of historic district, perhaps.

## **PUBLIC HOUSING**

**Robert Geddes:** I’d like to move on to Public housing. In New York City, it has been a major factor. In my career, it has been a major element.

**Scott Parsons:** Public housing began in the Borough in 1938. There 5 developments with 238 units. For the most part, there has been a new effort every 10 years or so. Mapleton-Franklin were built from 1938 to 1948. There 20 units there. On Clay St, we built 50 units in 1953 as a home for those displaced by the removal of Jackson St. At Spruce Circle, we built 50 units for seniors and disabled in 1967. On Redding Circle, there are 100 units-40 for families, built in the late 70’s. Then there was a gap of 20 years before Karin Court was built with 16 units. We are about at the 10 year mark and we are looking at working with Princeton University and the Mayor on the Franklin St lots. Our one bedroom waiting list is well over 5 years. We have people who have been downsized from multi-room units who have priority over newcomers. Redding Circle was 100% funded by HUD. Karin Ct was funded with tax credits and other sources. “We have lowest of low income. Some pay \$50/month. Our people do not move out. In my mind, public housing is a last resort, but it doesn’t allow for the influx of new population.”

**Robert Geddes:** Public housing got its biggest support from FDR. It is possible that Obama’s Metropolitan Strategy, presented last summer I a very good speech, will become important. Suppose it became possible for us to do much more?

**Kate Warren:** It is difficult in a community that is built out. It is our hope that there will be 80 units at Franklin.

**Sandra:** Given the cost of construction, it is very hard unless the land is donated.

**Robert Geddes:** Why couldn’t we have a consolidated housing authority?

**Kate Warren:** We have that. HABOP has operations in the Township as well. West Windsor and Hopewell are finally moving and taking a lead.

**Sandra:** We can’t do it as one central development anymore because of COAH. Municipalities don’t want to...

**Marvin Reed:** Lawsuits come from people who want to prevent it being next door.

**Sandra:** COAH is so convoluted and unworkable. The 20% is not for the waiting list.

**Susan Hoskins:** I want to echo what Kate is saying. In public housing and in community housing, the Senior Resource Center plays a role in helping people remain in their homes because there is no other option. One of the issues I hear: Do we look for parcels of land? Or, do we look for Leigh Avenue-type of infill and then, build them as opportunities arise?

**Marvin Bressler:** Are current governmental structures imperfect?

**Sandra:** A lot of the problems are economic. All it takes is money. And I think COAH is a problem. We have so many agencies...Smart Growth etc. It takes so much energy.

**Marvin Bressler:** At the Princeton level, things are OK?

**Sandra:** It would be helpful to have a sit-down with the Governor.

**Robert Geddes:** Pre-development costs are not available.

**Sandra:** The Township and the Boro have been very generous.

**Marvin Reed:** You can't build for \$56,000.

**Derek Bridger:** There should be a state-wide funding mechanism. There is a dichotomy between HUD and the State.

**Robert Bruschi:** The price of doing business in Princeton is very high. We really need free land. We can't do that one-on-one. The Boro has stepped up. We have built market and have squeezed some affordable in. As to Larry DuPraz's home, until there is a reliable source of funding, there is nothing that can be done.

**Sandra:** With Open Space, we have a state-wide optional tax. COAH only applies when there is building going on. If there could be an Affordable Housing tax, the municipality would have a reliable income stream whether there was building going on or not.

**Marvin Reed:** If someone does build, he builds maximum FAR the way Barsky does. COAH is only applied to people who are building. A tax would allow us to work in a reasonable environment.

**Robert Geddes:** The case is well made.

**Alan Hegedus:** There seems to be a big gorilla in the room. Where does the moey come from? I haven't yet seen the accounting. Not just the upfront, but the debt service and the ongoing maintenance and operating costs. If you have the situation that we are built out, the problem will get worse. How much has been invested by local taxpayers in last 10 years? From that analysis we can see what might happen in next 10 years. This will give us some sobriety and will bring into focus the options before us. The financial consequences are important. Taxpayers do care. Our school budget was voted down. Every year its budget comes before the voters.

**Hendricks Davis:** In relation to what we have been saying. I question whether we are built out. We need to expand the box in all of these categories of housing. I think there are opportunities for development and re-development. We see opportunities at Merwick, at the Medical Center, at Franklin. There is tremendous opportunity in the downtown. Other communities have figured out how to do it so that a variety of the population is addressed. As to the financial aspect, it is planning that is lacking. Around this table, everyone is involved, but where is the authority? Until there is a structured way to address housing for the whole community, there will be a problem, not just for 10 years, but for much beyond. We need to ask Princeton University and Princeton Seminary. We need to look beyond. We need planning. One last thought: We need to find the path where the average person can find a path to home ownership so that we are building the stability that comes with ownership."

**Robert Geddes:** "The real first movements in housing have appeared in the darkest moments: the new towns around London are one example. The Princeton Airport is capable of becoming a whole new town. It is a time to think of housing in a greater array. Sheldon Sturges has a summary comment to make."

**Sheldon Sturges:** "Last Wednesday, the Regional Planning Board put forward a first draft for an Amendment to the Community Master Plan: A new element: Princeton

University. Under the heading of General Principles, the draft states:

*The University and the community should work cooperatively to assure a balance of residential housing for a broad range of income levels and life styles, especially housing that is in close walking and biking proximity to the campus.*

A question for us to address this morning is, very simply, HOW? Over the last year, Princeton Future has suggested an answer in 4 steps:

Step One: INFORMATION..We need accurate information on which to base our decisions. To that end, Princeton Future and the Regional Plan Association have formed an alliance to prepare *The Princeton Index*.

Step Two: PLANNING. We need a plan for the Downtown District. As Bob Durkee said last week: "*Princeton University can use more guidance as to how you'd like us to cooperate*".

As the Princeton Future broadside ad said last Mar 29:

*"HOUSING: We want a town with neighborhoods for many different types of people. All of us of every economic level, want to be able to afford to continue to live here, and not be taxed and priced away."*

This creates a moral challenge for the community:

Can we plan for a community that will allow our teachers, our police, our firemen, our hourly workers, our young families with children, our creative community, our retired faculty...to live here?

Step Three: REGULATION. There are 'uses,' 'site plans', and a structure of laws and approval processes in place but they were designed for a different era. We are heading in the wrong direction, quite quickly. By that I mean, the Boro has been a very precious community that has allowed rich and poor to live side by side...

i. But as one Princeton Future participant said, the 'elderly are now shipped on ice flows to far away places'. Well, we need our retired faculty and our age-in-placers to stay. We have much to learn from our elderly. We need them in our downtown.

ii. But, when we talk of seniors, I think that the senior housing overlays encourage development to the exclusion of young families who might overburden our schools. Well, this town needs families with kids!

iii. Our workforce needs housing. There is not one volunteer fireman living in our town. In 2000, roughly 60% of our teachers lived in Princeton. Today, the number is more like 40%.

To raise competent and compassionate human beings, it does take a village. Princeton has a choice. It can remain a village in that way, but it will take new regulations and new structures...

Step Four: IMPLEMENTATION. Again, How? The answer must be defined by the word "PARTNERSHIP".

The prevailing wisdom is that

- i. there is no room for non-market housing in Princeton.
- ii. if there was room, the towns need all the rateables they can get.

There is room in and near the Downtown to build non-market residential for the community on 3 categories of land:

- i. on public lands such as the public works garages, the township bus garage, the Valley Rd building, one of the firehouses
- ii. on private lands, and
- iii. on institutional lands

But there will have to be a 'grand bargain'...a new Partnership. We have built close to 1000 non-market units over the last 40-50 years. I believe that we can build that many again in the next 10-15 years if we work together. Alan, do you think we can build housing for teachers at Valley Road?

**Alan Hegedus:** Again it is the economics. We looked at residential. With the parking requirements and the debt service, it just doesn't work. We are constrained by the impacts on the school budget.

**Robert Geddes:** Are there other comments? We hope that you will all be able to come on February 14.