



*A Civic Vision for the Central Delaware
Value Sessions, 12/11-12/14
Session #1: Saint Anne's Social Hall, 12/11*

Report: Fishtown discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Beth Perry

The participants in my group from Fishtown who had lived in the neighborhood all their lives were eager to tell how strong the neighborhood connections were, and how those connections reached back into several previous generations.

One woman from that old line of Fishtown residents held back when I pointed out her small group forming at the next table: "Oh no, those are all new people... who don't really know the neighborhood..." *Me*: "Well, does that mean that you don't want to let them know what you think?..." After a second or two, she went right over, and the discussion soon seemed quite animated and reciprocal as they wrote down characteristics such as a family neighborhood, a walkable one, with good access to downtown and other parts of the city, with attractive, historical, and well-built houses, and viable local small businesses.

There was a sense that the horse was just about to leave the barn (if it hadn't already left). "Too late. I worry that it is too late -- although I am glad to have a chance to say something." was the way one woman put it. Another man spoke of a group needing to work on zoning as a way of having some control over what was going to change in the neighborhood.

There was a sense of having not been consulted about many things ("being done to", 'is this a dead issue?...', first and foremost the proposed casino development. One man spoke of the dangers that casinos posed to 'blue-collar families' -- the threat of gambling addiction to tight family budgets and the worry about increased liquor access to vulnerable wage earners. The onset of increased traffic snarls and new kinds of crime worried people. And there was the barely spoken sense of having been here before -- expressing their strong opinions and realizing that it hadn't been enough to make a difference in the outcome. Behind all that was a sense that they were expressing perceptions shared by their neighbors, many of whom were with them in the room that night.

Green space and parks came in for special notice, with the chance to walk, jog, bike, boat along the river getting enthusiastic mention. Several people spoke of the views of the river -- one person pointing out how valuable that asset could be for a waterfront restaurant. Another spoke of the need to remediate (my word) the abandoned industrial land along the river, and others spoke of the opportunity that that situation could provide for the development of 'green' businesses that could focus on repair and reuse and smart use of existing resources that might eventually 'lead the country'. The need for dedicated public land (not just private land with some public access to the water) also got murmurs of support, although it came late in the evening after the lists were done.

As a native Philadelphian, I felt real pride in listening over these three hours. I hope their comments achieve a critical mass of support, and I hope that the sense of pride in last night's efforts is really widespread amongst all those people who attended.

Report: Fishtown discussion group
SUBMITTED by Stacie Molnar-Main

Here are my reflections on the evening:

What energized my group - Concern: What will the effects of the Casinos be on Fishtown, a residential community?; What excited them: Talking about the possibilities associated with developing with Fishtown's history in mind; Envisioning a greater connection to the waterfront; Discussing comprehensive development of the waterfront as a way of connecting all waterfront communities and making Philadelphia distinct.

Quotes - Some people talked about the naturally occurring revitalization that is already happening in Fishtown. The question was raised, "How do we develop the waterfront and maintain what is good about the revitalization that is already going on." I will be sure to capture more quotes at the next forum.

Process -- Several citizen moderators reported concerns about the tenacity of the anti-Casino conversation. One moderator stated: "No matter how hard I tried, it kept going back to casinos." We may want to deal with this upfront in plenary or provide some specific strategies to moderators during the pre-meeting. Also, we should make sure we have the same number of people coming from each group to consolidation groups. Otherwise, groups that send 4-5 will have a stronger voice than groups that send 2.

A comment on process from one of my team members: "I firmly believe in knowing where the bathrooms are as a way of being helpful from the get go to our participants. It should be information shared with us as facilitators in the first general orientation on site, so that we can share it with anybody we talk to, even before we gather into our groups."

Fishtown Values:

- Community Feeling in the neighborhood- small town near a city; small businesses/services; inter generational living; walkability; safety; good schools
- Access to water and open spaces - this reinforces identity and fosters interconnections
- Unique history of Fishtown as a pre-revolutionary/maritime community; includes architecture/streetscapes; Penn charter park, etc.
- Accessibility - to downtown, public transit, I95

Report: Northern Liberties discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Fran McNeal

I was the "scribe" for the Northern Liberties group (about 22 people).

1. What energized the group

- knowing the others that were part of the group and realizing they had a history of working together to discover, develop, design, promote and protect their neighborhood
- issues of diversity (people, nature, architecture)
- issues of community (places to hang out and commune: physical structures and green spaces)
- walkability of the neighborhood (public/easy/contiguous access to waterfront)
- accessibility of the neighborhood (bus, car, walk/run, el/subway, bike)
- affordability of the neighborhood (housing, stores)
- life in the neighborhood (things to do, businesses)

2. interesting things people said

- I like kid friendly things in my neighborhood (Alana, 7-10 year old girl)
- We know each other (meaning the people who attended the meeting) and this is one of many ways we work together for our neighborhood

3. What worked well

- continuous updates on the project/opportunity via the yahoogroups
- opportunities to ask questions via the yahoogroups
- emailed agenda, notes, handouts prior to event via the yahoogroups
- good training + day of orientation
- good mix of moderators and citizens
- good and plenty ... food
- good flow of the evening (let citizens access the microphone and speak out indiv, small groups, public)
- good that you used all people that indicated an interest (I see one person will facilitate all 3 events)
- kept to the schedule, start/end on time
- process worked well
- leaders and moderators and citizens all smiled at each other
- separating citizens via neighborhoods

4. Things to change immediately

- include zipcode and exact street addresses for locations, so people can use "map" programs to get better directions
- email payment info prior to even
- need more beverages ... water

**Report: Northern Liberties discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Ilene Wasserman**

Welcome/Introductions

Mike: Waterfront is important in neighborhood; opportunity to be involved; pet peeve.

Jane: One year in neighborhood; waterfront is underused

Jessie: 11 years in neighborhood; designed wasteland; public dialogue is important; great opportunity and challenge with waterfront; concern with traffic and access.

Alana: What kids want

Clora: Grave concerns; affordability of area; tax base; cost of houses; loss of open space; plans do not consider low cost restaurants for seniors

Kate: 10 year resident; trees chopped down

Keith: 2-year resident; public access and transportation at issue

Bridgette: Grew up in Fishtown; now live in Northern Liberties

Jennifer: President of Northern Liberties Neighborhood Assoc; Want better for all

Scott: Outsider; works in Northern Liberties; Learn opinions

Elaine: 30 year resident; Riverfront open and accessible to public

Susie: Since 1989; Casino issues and large part privately owned

Dale: Since 2000; Landscape architect/artist; Voice opinion and share ideas

Alexa: Be part of something positive

Bennar: Planning Commission; Observer

Barb: 2 year resident; See something happen

Mamna: 6 year resident; Be part of process

Ira: 30 years old; moved from Chicago; Want "Lake Front Planning"

Stewart: Redeveloper; Listen and consider opinions

Linda: Former reporter for Inquirer

Joe: Love waterfront; photographs it; Care about neighbors, neighborhoods;

City should be better place to live.

Anne: Proud of riverfront; friends go to; Could be great neighborhood in city

Common Values

- Open Space (Parks)
- Public Access to Waterfront
- Diversity of People
- Diversity of Nature [Water, Trees, Natural Space]
- Diversity of Uses
- Diversity of Architecture/Design
- Centrally Located - Accessibility of Other Neighborhoods
- Real Sense of Community [Involved Neighbors; Guidebook for NL?]
- Safety of Neighborhood
- Walk-Ability
- Public Transit Access

How Does Waterfront Fit Values

- River Walk ... [Walk Over River]
- Open Space and Greenery in Neighborhood
- Not Accessible [have to drive to Penn Treaty Park]
- Value Easy Ingress/Egress, Accessibility
- Dodge Traffic [place for people to cross safely]
- Penn's Landing – place to access by foot; very short
- Want all Section Available
- Private Development has to Give Up Access to Public

VALUES

1. Accessible Open Space
2. Diversity of People – Uses – Architecture [No “Big Boxes”]
3. Sense of Community / Neighborhood Feel [No Chain]
4. No Congestion / Density
5. Safety – Public Transit – Walk-Ability

Report: Port Richmond discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Okima Williams Amaya

The group, which consisted of about 32 community members, was divided into two groups. The group moderated by myself and Alan Sharavsky had similar concerns as other groups. Interestingly when it came to neighborhood safety, the women in the group did not concur with the male members. This difference was related to teens that hang out on corners as well as how they interacted with these teens. Many of the slogans that were stated: "We want downtown to work its way up to us" and that there is "Waterfront Envy". They reported wanting the modified waterfront without the "riffraff". Other concerns associated with this involved the impact of the waterfront on the quality of life, city services, e.g. police, corrupted governmental officials, infrastructure etc. They discussed having a friendly, culturally rich and diversified community where everyone knows each other due to the long history, and longevity of the neighborhoods. When questioned about the ease of diverse groups moving into the neighborhood, they stated yes it was easy, but eyes were on the ceiling ☺. They valued "that" sense of community. They want the waterfront modified, their neighborhoods enriched, to remain friendly and comfortable.

**Report: "Other" (residents from outside of Kensington area) discussion group
SUBMITTED by Ilene Wasserman**

- Greenways/Yards – Nature
 - Health/Spirit
 - Sustainability
 - Economic [Impact on Real Estate]

- Walk-Ability
 - Pedestrian Focus/Mobility
 - Connection to Neighborhood
 - Sense of Community
 - Engagement
 - Human Scale/Bicycle Lanes

- Diversity of Environment
 - Recreation
 - Small, Engaging Senses in a Positive Way
 - Tranquility [Water, Sailboats]
 - Quality of Light

- Diversity of Use
 - Mixed Use [Cafes, Bookstores, Galleries, etc.]
 - Diversity/Experience Communal Life
 - Organic Development [Extension of Energy]

- Diversity of People
 - Festivals
 - Diversity
 - Constructing Relationship/Experience, Communal Life, Human Interaction, Subfamily
 - Relationships – Public Society Connection
 - Part of Bigger Society / Interaction
 - Authentic; Expressing Places that All People Can Go

- Diversity of Access – Private/Public Transportation; Gated/Open
 - "Clean" Transportation / Public [Environmentally Conscious]

**Report: "Other" (residents from outside of Kensington area) discussion group
SUBMITTED by Ilene Wasserman**

Small group discussion, Group 1

1. Plan
 - a. Comprehensive
 - b. Cohesive
2. Safety
3. Schools and Infrastructure [Streets, Water, etc.]
4. Big Dig 2 [Commitment – Just Do It!]
5. Nature and Environment
 - a. Green Space
 - b. Aesthetics
6. Shopping, Retail, Activities
 - a. Services for Quality of Life

**Report: "Other" (residents from outside of Kensington area) discussion group
SUBMITTED by Ilene Wasserman**

Small group discussion, Group 2

CORE VALUES

- Natural & Intimate
 - Greenway as a Conduit for Pedestrians and Bikes
 - Division of Use of Space [i.e., light industrial, festival]
 - Health, Shaped Experience, Diverse
 - Natural Views
- Mixed Use
 - Organic
 - Cafes
 - Boat Yard Variety
- Engaging Community
- Evolving [Not Plopped All At Once]
- Economic Viability – Sustainability
- Diversity of Openness
- Vibrancy, Energy and Vitality of City
- A Plan
- Safety [Lighting, Openness, Fences]
- Schools & Infrastructure [Bid Dig 2, Drop 95 Underground]
- Shopping/Retail
- Commitment to Services
- Stewardship
- Creative Use of Space [Parking, No Barb Wire]

**Report: "Other" (residents from outside of Kensington area) discussion group
SUBMITTED by Ilene Wasserman**

Small group discussion, Group 3

WHAT INSPIRED ME TO COME

- What People Want
[Civic Perspective]
- Would Like to Get to Waterfront [Visit]
- From Temple
- Business Person
[Has Seen Change; Need Master Plan; Under Utilized?]
- Resident
[Lots of Clients Interested In It]
- Want Cohesive Plan
- Professor Teaching Course
[Wants City to Take It Seriously]
- From Torresdale
[Loves City, But Disappointed. Wants Mixed Use]

**Report: "Other" (residents from outside of Kensington area) discussion group
SUBMITTED by Ilene Wasserman**

Small group discussion, Group 4

- Geographical Location
 - Walk-Ability
 - Closeness
 - Accessibility
 - Public Transportation
- Public Access
 - Can Walk to Waterfront (Value ?)
 - Visual Access can be Impeded ?
- Unique Neighborhoods
 - Worth Keeping Historic Buildings
 - Activism in the Community
 - Cohesiveness
- Comprehensive Plan – Major Value
- Economic Development and Jobs – Important to Area
- Deepen Delaware River
- Sense that What They Think will be HEARD

**Report: "Other" (residents from outside of Kensington area) discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Jesse Hunting**

A. What energized the group -- ideas, concerns, solutions, values...

- The notion of diversity – many of the group members value the City's diversity of people, places, restaurants, and destinations. They hoped that the diversity of the City would only be enhanced by future waterfront development.
- The group was concerned about access to the river and believed that I-95 disconnected the River from the City. To better connect the City with the river, one group member suggested burying I-95, like the big dig in Boston.
- Green space for recreation, family outings, and tourism would strengthen the cities reputation and contribute to its economic growth.
- They were concerned that casinos would bring in crime and lower the property values along the waterfront.
- There was an overwhelming consensus that the waterfront should support a mix of uses that would include opportunities for businesses, recreation, green space, and industry.
- They wanted to see more investment in already existing public infrastructure (roads, sewers, power lines, etc)

Noteworthy Quotes:

"How can we plan for new development when we can't take care of the infrastructure we already have?"

"To improve access to the waterfront we need a big dig in Philly – to sink I-95 underground."

**Report: "Other" (residents from outside of Kensington area) discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Ellen Peterson**

Interesting and energizing comments from the group were as follows:

- They valued green space and beautiful space to convene in a destination for the natural space experience.
- Wanted an environment that was safe.
- Vibrant — wanted to hear the excitement of people and the mixed use of residences and businesses.
- Wanted sustainability — not another failed civic venture with unfinished cement and garbage left behind.
- Services: a blocking and tackling issue was important. Ongoing street repair, sewers.
- A strong sentiment was expressed that you can't have a vibrant neighborhood without a new neighborhood school filled with kids from the neighborhood symbolic of the success of the development endeavor.
- The view to and from the space should be aesthetically pleasing — Big dig approach — put 95 underground so it wouldn't be visible from the space.
- An upfront plan that would be followed is a must.
- Diversity of use was important-business, personal, recreational.
- The ability to have a space that would be welcoming, green and economically viable.
- The opportunity for businesses and the community to plan the space and be creative with it.

**Report: "Other" (residents from outside of Kensington area) discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Josh Warner**

What energized the group?

The 'other' group started off with some confusion about integrating the 'how the waterfront reinforces this value' piece of the work; however, many of the values they came up with were in tune with the other neighborhood groups. The peak in energy came during the small-group breakout section (three groups of four), and then in comparing the small groups values. With this group, I noticed that energy seemed to build as individuals explained why they considered something a value, and then others would reinforce or agree with their statements. In general, this group went through the process very smoothly, followed the ground rules, and came out feeling pretty good about the sub-neighborhood and small group work.

Interesting things people said:

I was not able to capture any direct quotes from individuals in the group. During the group consolidation work, however, there was a strong sense of the upcoming waterfront master plan as a value in and of itself. Not so much in the sense of the plan as a filter for bad vs. good development or as the shaper of future buildings and open space, but more like the plan as a citizen driven document that allows everyone living/building/working in the area to be on the same page and have a common ground/consensus for how the waterfront will look, work, and be like for everybody involved.

Report: General plenary discussion
SUBMITTED by moderator Josh Warner

Citizen comment notes:

I took good notes when Steve Pyzer was on stage asking for comments from the entire group. Here they are.

Comment A: (Sharon, Chestnut Hill)

People living outside the waterfront neighborhoods also care about the city and the future of the Delaware waterfront. She expressed desire for a more specific/tailored process for those living outside the specific neighborhoods highlighted that evening.

Comment B: (Joe P., Northern Liberties)

He questioned the wisdom behind "shortening" the citizens' individual values during the various consolidation steps. He talked/wished for more exploration and use of different methods of community involvement, and stated that the community and citizens should be serving at the middle and end of the planning process, not just at the beginning as in tonight.

Comment C: (Janice Woodcock, Planning Commission)

She reiterated the 'public = government' promise for this exercise. She expressed confidence that she, her staff, and the elected officials would take all of this input from the communities and really use it in the plan.

Comment D: (Michael Simons, ? neighborhood)

He wished to use meetings like this to explore further and more focused community activism and involvement. Also stated that there was no discussion of the current and potential negatives of the waterfront, and that fact didn't allow the work of the evening to highlight what needs to be addressed along the waterfront and in the future plan.

Comment E: (unknown)

A statement to planners: don't "brand" these citizen values, and then turn them into catch phrases or sound bites to be used in the plan or the media. To do this would be to dilute citizen involvement and personal values.

Comment F: (Paul, Kensington)

Expressed the need for a "dialog Give and Take." Stated that the focus should be on stopping casinos altogether. The plan won't do anything if casinos are allowed on the waterfront. [MUCH APPLAUSE]

Comment G: (unknown)

The "Crumbs left on the table" after casinos divide everything up.

Report: General plenary discussion
SUBMITTED by moderator Josh Warner

FINAL COMMON VALUES FOR THE ENTIRE GROUP

I also took quick notes when the final, full group wide consolidation was being done. Here they are.

COMMON VALUES: (** values had applause/emphasis)

1. Safety

- children
- activity

2. Family Values

- community
- small businesses (locally/family owned)
- people come together
- places of worship

3. Easy Access

- not congested by cars
- bike to
- walk to
- bus/transit to

4. Diversity

- of residents
- ethnic
- lifestyle
- culture
- ages (multi-generational)
- economic
- use (landuse mixes)
- work, live, recreate
- architecture
- ** sensitive to seniors

5. Open/Green Space

- not everything built
- public spaces
- grass / trees
- corridors
- parks
- playgrounds
- recreation / benches
- ** public land

>Here Harris Sokoloff asked if there was anything missing, or not in common on the five neighborhood group lists.

A. History

- river is old
- sense of belonging

- existing neighborhoods
- existing buildings
- name references

B. Jobs

- river/port related jobs
- new jobs / existing jobs
- jobs for teens

C. Green Technology

- clean air/water
- harnessing new technology

D. Gentrification <Labeled as an ISSUE, not value>

- development sensitive to community values

E. The Potential Plan (as a value)

- "raise the psyche of the City"

F. Recreation (this was mentioned, but decided that it should be in the common values section)

- families/kids

G. Fear <labeled as an ISSUE>

- casinos
- runaway developers
- fear of the city dismissing these community values

H. **CASINOS**

(lots of applause/noise)

Harris says:

- this is a process
- this process alone may not help with the Casinos fight

Crowd says:

- Call for a Delay for Casinos / State Gaming Board decision

Harris says:

- this process can help (in tandem) with other grassroots/citizen activities

Report: General plenary discussion
SUBMITTED by Ilene Wasserman

Excited About:

- Casinos
- Opportunity
- Reclamation
- Cohesive Plan
- Things taking Shape
- Jobs Creation
- Air & Water Quality
- Multi-Use Trails / Connecting to a City-Wide Network

Consolidated Values

<u>Nature:</u>	Preservation Environmental Sustainability Access (walking paths)
<u>Communal Life:</u>	Neighborhood Identities Street Life Infrastructure Create Space for People to Come Together Cleanses Your Spirit
<u>Access:</u>	Transportation (clear) Walk-Ability Greenways Access to River
<u>Diversity:</u>	Unique Neighborhoods People Access
<u>Commitment to Planned/Clear Intentions:</u>	Comprehensive/Cohesive Plan will Invigorate City Sense of " <i>We Did It!</i> "
<u>Economic Viability:</u>	Working Waterfronts Mixed Use Organic Evolutionary Development
<u>Safety:</u>	Connect to Communal Life Quality of Communal Life

Public Education

Report: General Dialogue about the evening's work
SUBMITTED by moderator Bob Walker

WHO IS INCLUDED

- People outside the waterfront area use the waterfront too and have a stake in its future, they should be included

WILL SOME VALUES BE LOST OR FILTERED OUT

- There is a problem when you consolidate a long list into a shorter list
- Is there a filter steering committee that may not send what we said
- Casinos is the elephant in the room

FOLLOW-UP ROLE FOR CITIZENS

- There is no say in what happens after these meetings
- Make sure there is a give and take as the decision process proceeds
- WARNING: Be on guard for "branding" by special interests, where they take community a value and water it down or trivialize it in a slogan—half truth

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

- Can you include a way to connect with others for a more long term, or ongoing, community practice
- This was a good start