



Beans & Bread Project Update Tuesday, 8/11/09

To Those Who Have Expressed Interest in the Beans & Bread Project:

I wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with the following updates on the Beans & Bread Project:

- St. Vincent de Paul has entered into formal mediation through the Community Mediation Program, working towards a mutual agreement with community representatives to address concerns about the project;
- Participants in mediation include representatives from Douglass Place Neighborhood Association, Fells Point Residents Association, Fells Prospect and Upper Fells Point Improvement Association;
- The first mediation session was held on Wednesday, 8/5/09, and a second session is scheduled for Wednesday, 8/12/09;
- In preparation for the second mediation session, St. Vincent de Paul has submitted a written list of concessions in response to community concerns and expressed an openness to consider additional measures identified through the mediation process (see attached document for the concessions submitted);
- St. Vincent de Paul requested and received a postponement of the zoning hearing scheduled by the BMZA for the Beans and Bread project in order to allow additional time for the mediation process.

Additional Background Information:

The Beans and Bread project was first envisioned in 2005 with the goal “to improve the Beans and Bread Center facility in order to better serve existing clientele and enable them to achieve greater stability, self-sufficiency, permanent housing, and an improved quality of life.”

The purpose of this project has always been to better serve our existing clients, and does not expand the total number of clients we serve. This project will:

- allow us to better accommodate our existing clients inside so that they can access resources that help homeless people get off the streets and turn their lives around;
- bring the line inside that presently forms for meals, and
- provide a place for homeless people to go during the day so that they are not forced to find refuge in public spaces of Fells Point and surrounding neighborhoods.

St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore is striving to improve the current situation by accommodating more of our existing clients inside through the building renovation and addition.

We are committed to being responsive to all questions and concerns, and to explaining the project fully to all who are interested. We’ve made changes to our architectural plans based on input from our neighbors, and – as our participation in community mediation indicates – we’re still listening and

responding. We have always understood that Beans and Bread needs to be a good and responsible neighbor.

St. Vincent de Paul delayed the submission of its zoning application for five months so that we could spend the necessary time to reply to the concerns raised by the community. We prepared a formal document in April 2009 that addressed the concerns communicated to us together with the concessions SVDP was prepared to make to both the building design and program operations. This is in addition to the changes we had already made to our architectural plans based on input we had received at community meetings held with our neighbors in 2005 and 2007. This document has been distributed through mailings and community presentations and has been posted to our website since April 2009.

In May 2009 we attempted to convene a workgroup comprised of community representatives, city officials, and St. Vincent de Paul staff, chaired by Delegate Carolyn Krysiak, as a forum for dialogue with the broader community. This group met once, but was rejected by the members of the community who stated that they wanted to set up mediation on their own terms, with their mediator, and with the community representatives determining who was at the table. Despite the further time involved, St. Vincent de Paul agreed and, two months later the first mediation meeting was scheduled.

In order not to jeopardize other aspects of the project's development, in July St. Vincent de Paul determined it was necessary to concurrently move forward with submitting the required zoning application, which resulted in a hearing being scheduled by the zoning board for August 18th. However, in continuing our long standing effort to work with the community in response to their concerns, and in order to allow additional time for the mediation process to work, St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore agreed to postpone its hearing to September 1, 2009.

With the new developments regarding community mediation and the upcoming zoning hearing, St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore is excited about moving forward with this project.

For more information please access the Beans & Bread Project webpage at:
www.vincentbaltimore.org/bbrenovationproject.html

Thank you for your continued interest in the Beans & Bread project.



John Schiavone
Executive Director