

March 14, 2018 Update

Elwyn C. Lee

Vice President for Neighborhood and Strategic Initiatives

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. HISD Crisis

Monday, March 12th, TEA deputy commissioner AJ Crabill made it clear that Texas Education Agency (TEA) will not grant HISD a waiver from statutory requirements and TEA guidelines. He emphasized that TEA would follow the law. Of the six schools targeted by UH only Blackshear elementary school is threatened with imminent closure. HISD must now submit a proposal to TEA in April.

HISD administrators and the City have approached the COE about helping to save Blackshear from *permanent* closure. COE has made clear that UH would not establish a charter school and become the designated school legally responsible for all aspects of a reconstituted Blackshear. Apparently, to date, no credible institutions have submitted proposals to HISD offering to take over Blackshear or any of the other schools.

2. BOV Task Force on Third Ward Schools

The Task Force met via conference call late last week. Due to the uncertainty and turmoil at HISD due to the aforementioned crisis and the recent resignation of Superintendent Carranza, it was decided that the Task Force should delay further action until UH's role in the schools is clarified, especially at Blackshear. The conference call participants agreed that the appropriate UH administration should reach out to the TEA deputy commissioner to clarify the process and timetable for TEA action.

3. WOLFF Foundation Board

Vice Chancellor Eloise Brice and Vice President Elwyn Lee met with the foundation board and summarized UH's involvement in Third Ward. On March 5th eight (8) of the board members joined Dr. Lee in a tour of the Greater Third Ward immediately following their board meeting at BAUER College of Business. The highlight of the tour was the brief visit to SHAPE community center.

4. ACES Institute Building—An anonymous gift of \$1.5 million will fund expansion of the building to 8500 square feet, almost double the original size. Enlarging the building will not delay its 2019 estimated occupancy date.

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

Christopher Heard, Clinical Professor, UH College of Law

Leonard Baynes, Dean UH College of Law

1. SURE Program

a. Spring Semester—Over 600 individuals attempted to apply for the Spring Semester SURE program. Of that number 215 were interviewed, 115 accepted. Of that number 108 are still attending classes. A total of 16 participants are from Third Ward or recommend by Third Ward organizations. Close to 40 participants have been referred by Third Ward SURE Alumni. Thirty five MBA students are acting as mentors to the participants.

2. GRAMEEN AMERICA INC. VISIT – Andrea Jung, President and CEO of Grameen America, Inc. (GAI) visited the campus on February 28th to learn more about the SURE program and to share her vision for GAI and a future partnership with UH. Ms. Jung also met representatives from Wells Fargo after which she and her colleagues toured the Northern Third Ward prior to a dinner with UH and community representatives. The GAI representatives were very pleased with their visit and indicated that they definitely would be back to select a location for their Houston branch office of GAI.

3. BOV Task Force on Third Ward Economic Empowerment

a. First Task Force Meeting – On March 12th six members participated in person or via telephone. Earl Cummings, Task Force Chair, presented employment data from the Greater Houston Partnership, HUB data from UH, and brief descriptions of Project Row Houses (PRH) and the SURE program. He reported on his lunch with Dr. Assata Richards, a key leader of the Emancipation Economic Development Council (EEDC). His suggested objectives were adopted by the enthusiastic members after lively discussion with the amendment that the group would reach out to UH business alumni who might assist in providing internships for Third Ward residents and/or contract with small businesses nurtured by the SURE program.

b. Future action items include meeting with Dr. Khumawala, meeting with the UH head of purchasing, and meeting with the Director of the PRH/EEDC Young Mothers Residential Program.

4. Anchor Strategies –DRAFT MOU and The Democracy Collaborative (TDC)

A Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) drafted by the consultant group, the Democracy Collaborative (TDC) has been sent to the four institutions that are considering working together on

anchor strategies. The institutions are UH, Memorial Hermann, Houston First and Texas Southern University. UH administrators are reviewing the draft prior to sharing it with the President.

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. Treating Obesity in Underserved Communities in Houston (TOUCH)

a Publicity – Several UH administrator me to discuss how to publicize TOUCH’s preventive and diabetes treatment service as well as the United Health Foundation’s generous \$2 million grant.

b. Recent Activities. –Thus far TOUCH has provided treatment services to 96 families and 762 individuals. TOUCH has started its second Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) class at the Houston Texans YMCA earlier this month and is looking to host 10 classes this year. It is still doing outreach with the Third Ward United Methodist Churches and partnering with Wheeler Ave. Baptist Church (WABC) utilizing the TOUCH awareness campaign that raises awareness through print and digital bulletins along with live announcements during service.

2. Third Ward Clean-Up-On Saturday, February 17th the 3rd Ward Citizen Patrol spearheaded a collaborative clean-up of Northern Third Ward. UH students and staff from the College of Technology came out in force. Texas Southern University students also came out in force and participated. A beautification effort is scheduled for April 7th. Volunteers will plant flowers around Blackshear Elementary and the park adjacent to Shape Community Center.

3. Riverside Hospital -It has been widely reported now that the Houston Endowment foundation will provide a \$5.3 million grant to Harris County which will then buy the Riverside Hospital property through the bankruptcy proceedings. The county will convert the hospital into a much needed behavioral and mental health facility. As part of the deal with Houston Endowment the County is rumored to have committed to preserving the historic Negro Nursing School building exterior. UH NSI has suggested that part of the building be used as a museum on Third Ward and will solicit support for the idea among the community organizations. Rick Lowe, Project Row Houses founder and UH Adjunct Professor, already likes the idea.

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** – Two new recently selected fellows continue to work on projects that explore aspects of Third Ward church history, culture and place-making practices.
2. **UH Public Art** – Dr. Emily Messa will meet with Dr. Assasta Richards to explore having the Sankofa Research Institute assess the degree to which Third Ward residents have been exposed to UH public art, so that future progress can be measured.

SECTION V: RELATED INFORMATION

1. **Bike Trains**—Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis announced that his office is committing \$30 million toward the reconstruction of Cleburne, parts of Holman and Cullen boulevards in order to establish bike lanes near TSU and UH.