

Transcript, WCC Board Retreat, November 19, 2019

Participants:

Riccardo Pappi (RP), Albert Kahn Associates
Rose Bellancan (RB), Washtenaw Community College
Bill Milliken, Jr. (BMJr), Washtenaw Community College Board of Trustees

Total Running Time: 5 minutes

42:06:

RP: Uh, mixed use development. Morris Lawrence is a very good convention center and training center, but sometimes it's seen as maybe perhaps undersized or at capacity. Uh, Washtenaw Community College has expressed an interest in providing housing and hotel space, perhaps even retail space, but not actually taking on the ... uh... uh... the operations of that, so uh, perhaps through development of a private partner ... uh, excuse me ,a private development partnership, uh, developing some mixed use convention developments.

42:46

RP: – So, we have three locations for this mixed use development. Sorry, wrong button. Up here on the north end of that – north campus – uh, this would help feed the - uh or support the Health Fitness Building. On the northeast corner of the campus, right here, this would be a great – this would be a very good location because of its high visibility, its connection back to the township, and then down here at the corner of Clark and Huron. Um again, a great corner spot and high visibility.

43:15

BMJr.: You've numbered those one, two and three. Is that an order of priority, or is that happenstance?

43:19:

RP - That's happenstance. It was one, two and three. Uh, each one has its – obviously, there are always pros and cons for each one. For the north campus one, it's a little bit seclu – it's a little bit secluded. A little bit kind of off the beaten path. And from here – am I hitting this one right? I'm sorry. Right on the northeast campus, this would be – this would have a great connection to the Morris Lawrence Building and then also back to the rest of the campus. Uh, this location here, the main drawback of that one is that you would have to infringe upon that wonderful open space

44:00

RB: - May I just

44:01:

BMJr: - Please

44:02:

RB: - Thank you. Just to remind the Board, the reason we are really interested in mixed use –looking at mixed use space – not only because of the comments that we have heard, but when we went through all the – uh- trends in enrollment that this environmental scan, and we read books, and we've been talking about it, and we're starting to see the beginning of it – the enrollment is not going to be where it always has been. And it is going to continue to be more challenging. And that's not a surprise to any of us.

RB: - Right now the community colleges - well, first – and number two, my second point I want to make, is that we are going to need to bring in some additional revenue, so that – in addition to our tax base- so that we can provide the quality of programming that we are – that we want to continue to provide for our students. And you can imagine the increasing technology costs – I mean – and ... and what lies ahead of us.

RB: - In order to do that, we have to look at some other revenue options. And the – the comm – the colleges – the community colleges that are – there are two in particular that are extremely well positioned now, regardless of their enrollment, and that's Schoolcraft College, as I know Dianna knows from our – from MCCA, where that – sorry that president through the years has invested in mixed-use opportunities for his college, so he has revenue coming in.

RB: - The other is Macomb Community College, and that president, the one I worked with, um, had – I mean – we own everything around – on Garfield. And all of that mixed use, you know, land brings in revenue to the College. And so, they don't really have to worry too much about their enrollment, because they have other ways to bring in revenue to support their college.

RB: - So what – that was one of the reasons we thought about we might need to start looking at some mixed use opportunities for our college. Just to remind you. I know you were all part of that, but – about why– this is an important thought for us.

46:40

BMJr: - There are data in Ann Arbor over a couple of decades of documented need for conference, meeting, convention facilities, and Ann Arbor has not been able to get enough consensus in the community to undertake any of those, which makes something like this attractive and may provide a business case for it.

47:06

RB: - That's great.