AFTER THE COAL PLANT CLOSES: LESSONS LEARNED FROM A COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER APPROACH

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DELTA INSTITUTE

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Founded in 1998 to work at nexus of environmental sustainability & economic development.

What we do:

• Convene diverse stakeholders
• Develop innovative programs & market-driven solutions
• Build sustainable markets
• Inform better policy

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FISK & CRAWFORD GENERATING STATIONS

Fisk Generating Station  
Crawford Generating Station
FISK & CRAWFORD TASK FORCE
FISK & CRAWFORD TASK FORCE

• Appointed by the Mayor in March 2012 to establish a vision for redevelopment of the sites
• Delta Institute appointed as neutral third party facilitator
• Dialogue among diverse interests:
  – Three community groups (Little Village Environmental Justice Organization, Pilsen Alliance, Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization)
  – Midwest Generation
  – ComEd
  – Aldermen Munoz and Solis
  – Chicago & Cook County Building & Construction Trades Council
  – City of Chicago
TASK FORCE CONSULTATION PROCESS

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUG

SEP

Community groups, aldermen, City representatives gather public input

Refine principles & recommendations

Technical input to Task Force

Report submitted to Mayor

Public Hearing

Task Force meeting

Site visit
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• Consensus reached on Guiding Principles
  – Clean environment
  – No residential development
  – A preference for light manufacturing and not big box retail
  – Quality, living wage jobs
  – Green space with community access to water’s edge
  – Ongoing collaboration with the community
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Consensus reached on 12 recommendations, summarized:
  – Shut down and decommission both plants
  – Market the sites
  – Promote deconstruction and salvage
  – City to facilitate green space
  – Continue the Task Force to lead collaboration
  – Document the history of the sites and the buildings
HEALTH CONCERNS

• Post-shutdown dust
  – Coal pile at Crawford removed and covered with clean dirt but unknown if remnants remain
  – Fly ash removed but dust does continue

• Radiation from coal
  – Coal contains trace amounts of uranium and thorium, both radioactive elements.

• US EPA air quality and radiation testing
  – Air quality the same as other Chicago communities
  – No radiation detected
SITE MARKETING PROCESS

• Originally thought there would be no interest
  – 50+ interested parties toured the plants
  – 17 firms responded to RFQ
  – 10 firms responded to RFP
• NRG purchase of plants announced March 2014
  – Sale completed April 1, 2014
• The process continues
  – NRG agreed to honor consensus agreement
  – NRG engaged in conversation with Task Force
REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS LESSONS
SUCCESSFUL REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS

**Announcement of closing**
- Economic pressure
- Regulatory pressure
- Community pressure

**Develop reuse priorities**

**Site marketing**

**Site redevelopment**

**Residential Engagement**

**Stakeholder Engagement**

DISRUPT  CATALYZE  TRANSFORM
KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

1. Early planning
2. Robust, transparent stakeholder and residential engagement process
   – All stakeholders at the table (community, public, private)
   – Three public hearings to get input from local residents
3. Facilitation by neutral third party
   – Bring in experts, facts to level playing field & manage expectations
   – Help community partners move from advocacy to partnership
4. Clear, long-term vision for reuse
   – Helpful for site marketing
5. Active government support
   – City clout keeps people at the table
   – Federal and state resources helpful
WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?

• PUBLIC SECTOR
  – Municipal governments
  – Regulators/Environmental compliance specialists

• PRIVATE SECTOR
  – Power plant property owners
  – Private developers

• COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS
  – Community leaders/organizations
  – Funders
PROBLEM

• This is difficult work.
  – Long timeframe.
  – Resource-intensive.
  – Subsidy dollars are scarce.
  – Community will can lag.
  – Redevelopment is complicated by the unexpected.

OPPORTUNITY

• There’s a role for everyone.
  - Opportunity for communities to exchange lessons learned.
  - Government can explore public-private partnerships and inter-governmental efforts that make resources accessible.
  - Foundations can support capacity-building and engagement at local level.
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT = RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

• Stakeholder engagement identifies areas of common interests and can lead to a shared vision.
  – Agreement on no residential on plant sites
  – Agreement on no big box retail

• A shared vision helps communities find solutions for other community problems and recover quickly from other setbacks.
  – Little Village is cataloguing brownfields and creating reuse plans.

• Stakeholder engagement yields a resilience dividend.
  – Education led to more interest in brownfield redevelopment.
  – Focus on green space yielded a comprehensive plan for more parks.
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