

The Lakewood Observer

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Field Of Dreams

by Mark Kindt

So what comes next? A few years from now, the former site of the Lakewood Hospital will be ready for redevelopment. Now is the perfect time for bold visionary leadership from our elected officials. We are presented with a unique once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the City of Lakewood to plan, develop and implement a major and enduring civic achievement on the more than five acres that will be shovel-ready for redevelopment in a few short years.

As thoughtful citizens, voters, and taxpayers how should we guide our elected officials toward a redevelopment that makes sense for our City -- that still reflects our highest values and the best use of the available site? Can we challenge our leaders to do something innovative and significant?

Here is a short list of guidelines that might help our community think about the redevelopment of the Hospital site in a way that will prevent us from settling for the first average plan that comes along. I believe these guidelines are reasonable and make sense from any number of public policy perspectives. Even from the common sense perspective, we all want something better for the former Hospital site than just more fast-food restaurants or condos. Don't we?

Let's start with a little thought exercise. Let's say that in the future our former Hospital site could host either a college campus or a casino. You say to yourself, "Casino! He must be nuts!" So right out the gate, we have a basic gut feel for what a poor redevelopment plan would look like. Most of us would be pretty disappointed if this was the actual plan for the site. While I have no idea of whether a college campus would be the answer, it certainly seems more appealing at a basic civic level. Hopefully, by the time you finish this article, you'll understand why the college campus idea feels better than the casino.

Public and Civic Benefit. The first guideline that I suggest is that any redevelopment concept for the former Hospital site embrace a public purpose and provide long-term civic benefit to the City and its residents. This suggestion is based on the fact that historically most of this property has served just such a public purpose, originally as a cemetery and then from 1912 to the present as our Hospital. This guideline reminds us that public use and civic purpose can have a value beyond merely the commercial. Here are just a few examples of redevelopment ideas that would meet this guideline. We could build a fine public auditorium or a museum. We could build a new city hall on this five-acre parcel (opening other city property for additional redevelopment in the eastern half of the City). We could invite one of our public universities to build a branch campus here. Any one of these ideas would provide an enduring and valuable public and civic use of the former Hospital site.

Innovation. The second guideline would be that any redevelopment concept should embrace the innovative. Beyond public and civic benefit, we have the opportunity to create a major "center of excellence" that would showcase the City of Lakewood in a truly national leadership role. Imagine a campus of specialized science and technology centers pursuing high-end research in Lakewood. Columbus has one with Battelle. Why not Lakewood? An easy reach would be to establish a public-private partnership to build a facility for technology and business incubation. Here's where all the proposed private foundation money can help. On the easiest-side of innovation, we might want to ensure that any buildings on the former Hospital site serve as model examples of green infrastructure and energy efficiency.

Leverage Other Public Funds. This final guideline suggests that the redevelopment concept should be very taxpayer friendly by generating tax revenue for the City and also minimizing redevelopment subsidies to private parties. The easiest way to think about this idea is in terms of how the former Hospital functioned. Millions of dollars of public funds flowed through Lakewood Hospital decade-after-decade and sustained almost 1,000 employees, year-after-year. These public expenditures were from Medicaid, Medicare and the secondary coverages that Medicare encourages. These public expenditures did not come out of our local tax base, but indirectly contributed to it in a significant way. Like the rest of us, Hospital employees paid their Lakewood income tax annually. As we think about

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LAKEWOODWEATHER

Lakewood, OH



At 9:51 AM EST
Overcast
72°F
SSW 12 MPH
[WeatherForYou.com](#)

EVENTSCALENDAR

July 2017

						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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July, 2017

UPCOMINGEVENTS

Wednesday, July 12:

[10:00 AM - 2:00 PM - Herb Guild Garden Club](#)

[11:30 AM - NAMI Walks Kick-off Event](#)

[6:00 PM - 8:30 PM - Blueberry Abundance](#)

the redevelopment of the former Hospital site, our leaders need to give serious thought as to how to leverage non-local public funds either for redevelopment or operationally. An example for redevelopment that would meet this guideline would be the construction and operation of a Veteran Administration facility or other State or Federal facility. This is the boring, but valuable guideline.

A National Design Competition. We have the luxury of time since it will be several years before the former Hospital site is shovel-ready. Given this time, why not launch a national design competition to propose redevelopment projects along these criteria or similar criteria established by our fellow-citizens. Wouldn't that put Lakewood on the map as an innovative City?

I'm sure there are other ideas for these kinds of guidelines. I hope you will contribute your own ideas in the coming dialogue with our elected representatives. Now is the time to think big!

[Read More on Letters To The Editor](#)



Volume 12, Issue 4, Posted 1:37 PM, 02.16.2016

[6:30 PM - 8:00 PM - Bluegrass Sweethearts](#)

[6:30 PM - 8:30 PM - Windows 10 - Updated](#)

Thursday, July 13:

[6:00 PM - 8:30 PM - Blueberry Abundance](#)

[6:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Lakewood Democratic Club Summer Supper](#)

Friday, July 14:

[6:00 PM - 7:00 PM - Frankfurter Fridays](#)

[7:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Front Porch Concert Series: Cats on Holiday](#)

[8:00 PM - City of Angels](#)

Saturday, July 15:

[7:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Perfumery Workshop - July edition](#)

[8:00 PM - City of Angels](#)

Sunday, July 16:

[3:00 PM - City of Angels](#)

[7:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Cook for Your LIFE Cancer Benefit at CLE Urban Winery](#)

Monday, July 17:

[6:30 PM - 8:00 PM - Wildlife in Northeast Ohio: Why can't we all just get along?](#)

Wednesday, July 19:

[6:30 PM - 8:00 PM - Funkyard Experiment](#)

[7:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Monthly Presentations: Jim Roetzel](#)

Friday, July 21:

[7:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Front Porch Concert Series: Diana Chittester](#)

[8:00 PM - City of Angels](#)

Saturday, July 22:

[8:00 PM - City of Angels](#)

Sunday, July 23:

[11:30 AM - 9:00 PM - Fight Cancer Festival](#)

[3:00 PM - City of Angels](#)

Thursday, July 27:

[7:00 PM - 8:00 PM - Richard](#)

[Rothstein's The Color of Law Book Discussion](#)

Friday, July 28:

[6:00 PM - 7:00 PM - Frankfurter Fridays](#)

[7:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Front Porch Concert Series: The Chris Vance Trio](#)

[8:00 PM - City of Angels](#)

[8:00 PM - City of Angels](#)

Saturday, July 29:

[1:30 PM - 3:00 PM - Town Hall for Lakewood Ward 2](#)

[7:00 PM - 8:30 PM - Macbeth - FREE Outdoor Shakespeare](#)

[8:00 PM - City of Angels](#)

Sunday, July 30:

[7:30 AM - 12:00 PM - 2017 Race for Home 5k](#)

[3:00 PM - City of Angels](#)



