

Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday, August 27, 2008 at 3:00-5:00 pm
Baxter Community Center Grace Conference Room

Voting Steering Committee Members Present

1. Captain Eric Payne - Grand Rapids Police Department
2. Sgt Elliottargas - Grand Rapids Police Department
3. Officer Aaron Stevens - Grand Rapids Police Department
4. Haris Alibasic - City of Grand Rapids
5. Marian Barrera-Young - Baxter Neighborhood Association
6. Ray Tromp - Baxter Neighborhood Association: resident
7. Alice Menninga - Eastown Neighborhood Association: resident
8. Kathryn Caliendo - East Hills Neighborhood Association
9. Pamela Benjamin - Eastown Neighborhood Association

Non-Voting Regular Attendees and Guests Present

1. Kristine Jaros - Weed and Seed Site Coordinator
2. Janet Stahan - U.S. Attorney's Office
3. Johannah Jelks - East Hills/Wealthy Heights Neighborhood Association
4. Aaron Grand Valley State University Intern
5. Rose Simmons - United Methodist Community House
6. Stasia Anderson - United Methodist Community House
7. Sara Surdan - United Methodist Community House
8. Alton E. Sherman - Peacekeeper Million Man March

Steering Committee Members Absent

1. Scott Vogel - Madison Avenue Neighborhood Association: business representative
2. Tim Doyle - Kent County Prosecutor's Office
3. Sandra Latham - Southeast East End Neighborhood Association
4. Michael Yasenachak - Drug Enforcement Administration

Non-Voting Regular Attendees Absent

1. Dr. William Crawley - Grand Valley State University
2. Kathy Lett - Grand Rapids Police Department
3. Dr. Debra Ross - Grand Valley State University
4. Olivia Destrades-Mendoza - Eastown Neighborhood Association

I. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Pamela Benjamin at 3:05.

II. Introductions

Members introduced themselves. A quorum was present.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the August 27, July 30th meeting by Sgt Elliott Bargas, and seconded by Marian Barrera-Young. The minutes were approved.

IV. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

V. CCDO Site Evaluation Visit

The consultant, Ms. Valencia Coar, will conduct a one-day visit to Grand Rapids Central City Weed and Seed on Tuesday September 8, 2008. The focus of this visit will include a grant review and an analysis of the site coordinator's execution of the narrative, and observations and evaluations of the Steering Committee operations, law enforcement strategies, community policing strategies, prevention, interventions and treatment strategies, safe haven operations, neighborhood restoration strategies, program evaluation efforts, and sustainability. Ms. Coar will meet with the site coordinator, representatives of the Steering Committee, and the fiduciary for discussions and a tour of some sites. This visit will be an observation and an assessment opportunity of the GRCC Weed and Seed as it is carrying out the narrative. As such, format prevents Ms. Coar from interpreting the data being observed, from answering direct questions related to these observations, or from predicting any results that the CCDO may make as determined from the observations and information gathered during this visit. This is a scheduled routine visit as part of the CCDO's process to track grants as they are being implemented.

VI. CCDO Technical Assistance /Neighborhood Works Training

The training will be held at Grand Valley State University DeVos Place on September 12, 2008 from 12:00 to 5:00pm. The discussion issue is Sustainability. Kristine Jaros took a survey for menu selections in preparation for the meal.

VII. CRI Site Evaluation Up-Date

So far, the Community Resources Inventory has completed 65 of 250 surveys, this represents 28% of the total. Kristine Jaros distributed a page of information. 53 streets need to be covered, yet. These streets are in Baxter, East Hills, SEENA, Madison, and Eastown neighborhoods. Some surveys were incomplete/"send back," others are still "out," and some have are designated "not returned." The final date for completion is October, 2008. Kathryn Caliendo reported that Brian Jones would work with East Hills on this survey. It was suggested that students from Calvin and Aquinas Colleges be recruited to help finish this survey.

VIII. Reports

a. Budget report/2008 Award

In the absence of the fiduciary, Kristine Jaros delivered the report. The 2008 grant money was officially awarded. As in the past, the 25% cut was put into effect on the total grant amount. There are a few unpaid invoices remaining for 2007. There is some opportunity for re-allocation of funds, particularly in the travel line item. As soon as all accounts are paid, we will review some budget items.

The Grand Rapids Police Department has agreed to help pay expenses for their personnel to attend the Crime Prevention Association of Michigan Conference. Discussion centered on the availability of potential conference attendees. Pamela Benjamin and Haris Alibasic are considering attending this event. Sgt Elliott Bargas said he would set up a meeting with the police department to determine the number of police personnel that could be funded.

b. Weed Report

Sgt Elliott Bargas reported that the foot patrol has resumed.. Two curfew sweeps were carried out, with the second one resulting in 15 curfew violations. Although crime has begun to increase over the city, crime has decreased in the Weed and Seed area. The one exception to the decrease is the category of burglaries which are going up. Many burglaries of copper piping have been reported. Another unfortunate circumstance is that prostitution has increased predominately in the Eastern/Kalamazoo area as rules of bail-bond releases prohibit offenders from returning to Division Avenue and adjacent streets. Another complication is that the illegal business uses communication methods that monitor street activity causing arrests to be more difficult.

A two-page report listed crimes committed in the Weed and seed area, and compared the rate to the previous three years, from 2005-2008. Rises and declines in specific areas were noted.

The educational DVD focusing on gangs is in production. Some probation officers will be riding with the Community Police.

c. Seed Reports

The Teen Summit was held at Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church on September 6, 2008 from 9:30 to 3:00. A CD was made of some of the activities.

The committee is finalizing plans for the Domestic Violence Summit to be held at Martin Luther King, Jr. Academy in October. Child-care will be provided. The Job Corps culinary staff will provide a special meal/reception for the participants.

From 25 to 40 teens attended the "Lies That Bind" meetings. Anneshia Freeman reported the success of this event, and the media gave good coverage, also.

Johannah Jelks reported that the neighbors in the area attended the many activities provided in the area recently. As a result, a newsletter will be produced, block parties are being scheduled.. A tour of specific homes for sale or rent is being organized. It is anticipated that this could occur concomitant with the Eastown Street Fair to be held September 20, 2008.

d . Site Coordinator Report

The progress reports from each standing committee related to narrative requirements are due.

Preparations for the CCDO Site Assessment Visit were finalized, and work on the Teen Summit was accomplished.

IX. Announcement/Update

The site visit will take place on Thursday, September 4, 2008, starting at Baxter Community Center. The Teen Summit will be held at Eastern Ave. CR Church from 9-4 on September 6, 2008. A conference on Sustainability is scheduled for September 12, 2008 at GVSU- DeVos Place from noon until 5:00pm.

The next Steering Committee Meeting is Wednesday, September 24, 2008 from 3-5pm

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05pm.

Respectfully submitted, Ray Tromp

Wednesday, September 24, 2008
Baxter Community Center Grace Conference Room
3:00 – 5:00 pm