

**Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday, June 25, 2008 at 12:00 pm
Baxter Community Center Fireside Conference Room**

Voting Steering Committee Members Present

1. Captain Eric Payne - Grand Rapids Police Department
2. Sgt Elliott Bargas - Grand Rapids Police Department
3. Haris Alibasic - City of Grand Rapids
4. Marian Barrera-Young - Baxter Neighborhood Association
5. Ray Tromp - Baxter Neighborhood Association: resident
6. Alice Menninga - Eastown Neighborhood Association: resident
7. Olivia Destrades Mendoza - Eastown Neighborhood Association
8. Kathryn Caliendo - East Hills Neighborhood Association
9. Sandra Latham - Southeast East End Neighborhood Association

Non-Voting Regular Attendees and Guests Present

1. Kathy Lett - Grand Rapids Police Department
2. Dr. Debra Ross - Grand Valley State University
3. Kristine Jaros - Weed and Seed Site Coordinator
4. Johanna Jelks - East Hills Neighborhood Association: (alternate)

Voting and non-voting Members Absent

1. Dr. William Crawley - Grand Valley State University
2. Pamela Benjamin - Eastown Neighborhood Association
3. Scott Vogel - Madison Avenue Neighborhood Association: business representative
4. Tim Doyle - Kent County Prosecutor's Office
5. Kaye Hooker - U. S. Department of Justice
6. Michael Yasenachak - Drug Enforcement Agency

I. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairperson Captain Eric Payne at 12:13 pm.

II. Introductions

Members introduced themselves. A quorum was present.

III. Approval of Minutes

Dr. Debra Ross made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2008 Steering Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Caliendo. The minutes were approved.

IV. CRI Site Evaluation Survey

- Kristine Jaros announced that the Community Research Institute Evaluation Survey will be conducted on Saturday, June 28, 2008 beginning with a training session at 10:30 and completing the door-to-door survey by late afternoon. Capt. Eric Payne explained that the Police Foot Patrol would also be out that day in the survey area. Food for volunteers was provided: doughnuts by Meijer's, sandwiches by Subway, soda by 7-11, and Trina Middleton provided additional food supplies from donations received for GRPD events.
- The goal was set at obtaining 50 volunteers to survey 250 residents. The following people have recruited commitments for this project: Trina Middleton, Kristine Jaros, Marian Barrera-Young (5, plus a number of youth volunteers,) Alicia Menninga and Johanna Jelks have also recruited volunteers.

V. NeighborWorks Training

- Rather than sending several Steering Committee members to Chicago for training, Weed and Seed will set up a training session in Grand Rapids. This will enable Weed and Seed to include more committee members and to provide a two-day session, enabling other groups to include personnel for training. Groups that may be offered this training include non-profit organizations, as those groups who are in partnership with Weed and Seed and neighborhood associations. Possible venues are Wealthy Theatre, GVSU, Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church and other sites.
- The training sessions are led by a non-profit group whose main emphasis is capacity-building in all areas for other non-profits. Kristine distributed a "NeighborWorks America Place-Based Training Assessment" document for members to prioritize major capacity-building issues and requested that members return their list along with the day (s) preferred and suggested length of time for training at the next meeting. The group asked that a poll be taken electronically prior to the July meeting and be presented at that time. Kristine will present.
- The inclusion of youth in the training sessions was discussed as was the concept of including youth in the Steering Committee activity. Issues such as timing of the meetings led to the consideration of having Steering Committee meetings from 3:00 - 5:00, instead of from 12:00- 2:00pm.

VI. Youth Involvement

- The Center for Neighborhood Enterprise Youth Leadership and Development is holding the 5th Annual Summer Youth Leadership Camp from July 20 - 27, 2008. This opportunity is located in Florida and requires one chaperone for each

2/3 students enrolled. To cover expenses for the youth camp, \$4,700.00 could be appropriated from the travel fund of Weed and Seed. The time frame is within three weeks and we have no established criteria for youth selection. It was the consensus of the Steering Committee to target this for the 2009 CNE/CCDO Weed and Seed Summer Youth Leadership Camp and to begin a process for youth involvement which would then be a factor in youth selection.

- Marian Barrera-Young made a motion to adjust the Steering Committee meeting scheduled for July 23, 2008 to start at 3:00 rather than at 12:00, and thus end at 5:00 pm. Haris Alibasic seconded the re-scheduling and the motion was passed. Kristine will reschedule use of the Baxter Community Center Grace Room for this new time.

VII. Annual Community Meeting of Central City Weed and Seed

- The Annual Community meeting is an informational and promotional meeting for the whole community to better understand the Weed and Seed program and its various activities. In describing the Annual Meeting, all aspects of the program are available for discussion. Crime statistics will be explained and the CRI survey will be discussed. The public and our partners are informed of the whole scope of Weed and Seed. Written materials are available, and specific presentations are scheduled. The meeting is conducted in an open-house atmosphere. The Annual Meeting is tentatively scheduled for the evening of Monday, October 20, 2008 at the Wealthy Theatre. Kristine to check into the location.

VIII. Reports

A. Budget Report

- The 7- page copy of the budget report was distributed by Dr. Debra Ross. The last page noted that money allocated to Eastown Community Association for a mural competition was no longer viable. The building with the wall to be used was purchased and the new owner planned to install windows instead of using it for a mural. Eastown requested that the funding originally to be used for the mural be re-allocated for gardening tools. These tools will be used by adults and by at-risk young people in the community garden plot. Currently there are no tools for this program.
- Dr. Debra Ross stated that there was no problem connected with the 2008 Application and that we are waiting on the Department of Justice process, as are all sites throughout the country. There have been reports that the National Weed and Seed program may be eliminated from future federal budgets. At this point the information is not solid, but letters to the U.S. Senators and Representatives

are necessary to keep the program in the budget of the Department of Justice. Other reports have indicated that cuts are predictable in Weed and Seed budgets.

- Dr. Debra Ross showed that there is a balance in the travel budget of \$4,784.95 due to cuts by Washington D.C. in conferences. This money must be reallocated. Possible uses include such funding ideas as supplementing existing programs (which would then submit proposals), sponsoring Neighborhood Associations to the NAM Conference (Neighborhood Associations of Michigan), supplying digital cameras to neighborhood associations for newsletter creation and documentation, developing a website, expanding marketing, and other concepts. Marian will check into the cost of the NAM conference and provide an update to Kristine. Kristine to check on the cost of digital cameras and whether GVSU can assist with the web-site per Dr. Ross' suggestion.
- Marian Barrera-Young made a motion to transfer the mural money to the gardening tools request. Kathryn Caliendo seconded the motion. The re-allocation motion was passed.

B. Weed Report

- Captain Eric Payne informed the committee that the foot patrol has been reactivated for the season, and that GRPD has recently purchased equipment with the Weed & Seed funds as allocated in the budget. Sgt Elliott Bargas announced that the anti-gang training DVD is being edited by Terry Dixon. A document, "Central City Weed and Seed Crime Map Data," was provided showing an increase in reported Domestic Violence instances and Curfew infractions. Some possible contributing factors involve high unemployment rates, more daylight hours, and school vacations. Captain Eric Payne also noted that the number of aggravated assaults was reduced.

C. Seed Report

- Johanna Jelks contacted Grand Valley State College, Calvin College, and Kendall College about rental living space for students in the Wealthy Street area. These colleges indicated interest as the prospective houses are on a bus line, close to the schools, and the neighborhood provides a mix of convenient businesses.
- The Domestic Violence Conference received a donation of \$1,500.00 for food, according to Alice Menninga. Job Corps will cater the event. The next meeting of this committee will be held at the Diversity Center on July 15, 2008 at 12pm.
- The next meeting of the Youth Conference Committee will be held at the Baxter Neighborhood Association at 12:00 on Thursday, July 17, 2008, as stated by Marian Barrera-Young.

D. Site Coordinator Report

- Kristine Jaros reported that the Brain Gym program held at Eastown Ministries for adults generated 20-25 participants and was well received.
- The GRPD field office at Cass and Hall Street will have an open-house on Thursday, June 26, 2008. Weed and Seed will have a booth and be available to answer questions.
- The author of “Donnie and the Little Shoes”, Beverly Holmes, asked to be considered as a partner with Weed and Seed. The book is available at all G.R. Public Schools. The themes are drug use and violence with graphic undertones, and it is targeted at readers from fifth grade and above. Kristine was seeking feedback on partnership between Weed and Seed and the author. Author services could include presentations at public meetings, starting a book club for teens, and other speaking opportunities about the book and its research. Such a donation of time could be utilized by a variety of other partners, programs, small groups and mentorships. Kristine to meet with Ms. Holmes and provide a report at the July meeting.
- A calendar of 22 events was received with listings from June through August, 2008.
- Of the 26 churches located in the Central City Weed and Seed area, three of them are involved in the Weed and Seed program. More church involvement would be beneficial.
- Progress reports are due on July 30, 2008 for the first six months of 2008.
- Marian suggested at the next meeting the Steering Committee examine the progress of each Goal and Objective as contained in the Narrative.

IX. Announcements/Updates

- Next scheduled meeting is Wednesday July 30, 2008 at Baxter Community Center. **3:00-5:00 pm.**
- The Third Annual Teen Summit “Keepin’ It Real” with keynote Speaker Anneshia Freeman will be held on Saturday, September 6, 2008 at Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church. Registration information is currently being accepted. This event is also sponsoring a T-Shirt design competition with prizes awarded. Pearl Banks is accepting design entries until July 16, 2008.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ray Tromp

NEXT MEETING

Weed and Seed Steering Committee

Wednesday July 30, 2008, 3-5pm

Baxter Community Center Grace Conference Room

***Please* NOTE NEW TIME:**

3:00 - 5:00 pm