

Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 28, 2008 at 12:00 pm
Baxter Community Center Grace Conference Room

Voting Steering Committee Members Present

1. Ray Tromp - Baxter Neighborhood Association and Resident
2. Pamela Benjamin - Eastown Community Association and Resident
3. Alice Menninga - Eastown Resident
4. Johanna Jelks - East Hills Council of Neighbors: (alternate)
5. Scott Vogel - Madison Neighborhood: Agency Representative
6. Captain Eric Payne - Grand Rapids Police Department
7. Michael Yasenachak - Drug Enforcement Agency

Non-Voting Regular Attendees and Guests Present

1. Dr. William Crowley - Grand Valley State University
2. Kristine Jaros - Weed and Seed Site Coordinator
3. Trina Middleton - Grand Rapids Police Department Volunteer
4. Elizabeth Gonzalez - Eastown Community Association Intern
5. Dan Reeves - Jubilee Jobs at Baxter Community Center

Members Absent

1. Dr. Debra Ross - Grand Valley State University
2. Marian Barrera-Young - Baxter Neighborhood Association
3. Stacy Stout - Baxter Neighborhood Association
4. Kathryn Caliendo - East Hills Community Association (represented by alternate)
5. Sandra Latham - Southeast East End Neighborhood Association
6. Haris Alibasic - City of Grand Rapids
7. Tim Doyle - Kent County Prosecutor's Office
8. Kaye Hooker - U. S. Attorney's Office

I. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Pamela Benjamin at 12:15 pm.

II. Introductions

Members introduced themselves. A quorum was present.

III. Guest Speaker

Mr. Dan Reeves from Jubilee Jobs presented a report on a Weed and Seed project called "Yes! 4 U". This is a program targeting youth from the ages of 14 to 21. The program promotes job readiness, skill-development, and tutoring in reading, mathematics, and preparation for the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) . At the conclusion of this program, a supervised, six-week internship is provided at various job sites. Jubilee Jobs gives a stipend for the youth who pass to the internship level and are placed at a job site. At the interview point, each applicant to be part of Jubilee Jobs is informed that entering the program does not guarantee that a job internship for each participant will in all cases be available. Employment is never promised. The employer does not contribute nor pay the intern. Jubilee Jobs pays them with funding from grants and donations accepted.

Dan Reeves addressed questions from members of the Steering Committee. The role of the company in relationship to the intern does not extend beyond the six-week internship. The internship

benefits the intern from the on-the job exposure to an actual job-site and from the exposure to the skills required to get and hold a job. Weed and Seed is concerned that efforts should be consistent in providing meaningful experiences to the interns. Weed and Seed does not desire the program to engage in exploitation of either party, but rather seeks for a proper meaningful relationship between the employer, the work, and the intern. Selecting and maintaining connections with employers who provide good job experiences is a challenge for both the Jubilee Jobs and for the company which provides internships. The ideal is for the student-intern to receive a realistic, viable life--experience, for the company to provide meaningful experiences in the work-force, and for Jubilee Jobs to provide support and necessary supervision and follow-up. A suggestion was made by the Steering Committee that employers write a letter of recommendation for those who are successful intern participants.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Captain Eric Payne to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2008 Steering Committee meeting. It was seconded by Scott Vogel. The minutes were passed as presented.

V. CRI Site Evaluation

Kristine Jaros provided a draft copy of the Central City 2008 Evaluation Plan. Training will begin at 10:30 Saturday morning, June 28, 2008 at Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church Multipurpose Room. Donations will be sought to provide breakfast, lunch and snacks for the day. Other surveying times will be scheduled to take place as needed. The draft included information related to the details of conducting the survey. **CONFIRMED VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!**

VI. Reports

a. Budget Report

As Dr. Debra Ross was on vacation, a full budget report was not presented for 2007 funds. Kristine reported that additional 2008 changes had been made per CCDO's requests. We are still waiting to hear regarding the 2008 award.

b. Weed Report

Captain Eric Payne informed the Steering Committee that Elliott Bargas would be returning to the Steering Committee, as a voting member. He reported that crime is down from the previous year, the 2007 contract between the Police Department and Weed and Seed has been completed. The street cameras have been ordered by the police department. Captain Payne has talked with a radio announcer and discussed Weed and Seed issues on the radio program. He also attended a meeting in May at the Wealthy Street Theatre. He clarified the information about Weed and Seed as a federal program. He explained that this program does not, as a result of receiving federal funding, turn over anyone to the federal government for incarceration. He stated that the way the justice system works, there are specific criteria for sending convicted felons to either the state system or the federal system, and the Federal and State Prosecutor's generally makes this decision.

c. Seed Report

Baxter Neighborhood Association "National Night Out" is to be held August 5, 2008. There was a discussion about having a "Safety Day" along side the NNO. Child booster seats could be distributed. Youth Conference is being held on September 6, 2008 from 9:00 to 4:00 at Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church corner Eastern and Logan St. S.E. Alice Menninga reported that the Domestic Violence Conference "What Isn't Said" is looking for avenues for publicity. The members of the DV Coordinated Community Response Team provided the committee with a list of possible speakers. This conference will be held on October 25, 2008. The 8 week "Lies that Bind" program is scheduled to begin Tuesday July 8 through Tuesday August 26 called "The Legacy of the Locks." Sessions will held at Urban Families Ministry. Contact Annesha Freeman. The Wealthy

Heights section of East Hills will present “Neighborhood Love Week” which will involve landowners who are eligible for the Land Trust Program. The date set is June 16 through June 21, 2008. A program on the parking lot of “Coats of Many Colors” will host activities on June 20th. A program for youngsters will be available Saturday. See Johanna Jelks for information.

d. Site Coordinator

Kristine Jaros informed the committee that Georgia Taylor has been hired to facilitate the Baxter Community Center’s “Around the Table” program which promotes good eating habits, family togetherness and social graces. Pearl Banks of Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church is starting a program with the young men support group. They are considering purchasing HUD houses and refurbishing them. They are currently making attractive chairs for sale. A calendar of events was provided which lists events from May through October. Thirty-two events are included with date, time, location and a contact person. Brain Gym Workshop at Eastown Ministries is filling up fast for June 11, 2008. Pamela Benjamin, Eric Payne and Kristine Jaros are working on a revised policies and procedures narrative. Captain Payne will chair the next meeting.

VII. Announcements/Updates

Pamela Benjamin suggested that Weed and Seed develop a web site. This could help promote stability, and help elevate the status towards graduation. It will also help in establishing a 501(c)3 designation, as we may progress in that direction. The Steering Committee agreed that a technical Assistance grant should be pursued by Weed & Seed to obtain money for a web-site. Urban Family Ministries offered to be the “fiduciary” if there was determined to be a conflict of interest as the TA grant is administered at GVSU. Kristine will look into.

Kristine Jaros said that Karen Henry has invited Central City Weed and Seed to take items out of the previous Weed and Seed site at Steepletown.

The next meeting will be held at Baxter Community Center Wednesday, June 25, 2008 at 12:00 in the Grace Conference Room.

VIII Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ray Tromp