

Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 25, 2008 at 11:00 -1:00 pm
Baxter Community Center - Grace Conference Room

Voting Steering Committee Members Present

1. Sgt Elliott Bargas - Grand Rapids Police Department
2. Captain Eric Payne - Grand Rapids Police Department
3. Ray Tromp - Baxter Neighborhood Association: resident
4. Stacey Stout - Baxter Neighborhood Association
5. Marian Barrera-Young - Baxter Neighborhood Association
6. Kathryn Caliendo - East Hills Neighborhood Association
7. Sandra Latham - Southeast East End Neighborhood Association
8. Pamela Benjamin - Eastown Neighborhood Association
9. Scott Vogel - Madison Avenue Neighborhood Association: business representative
10. Michael Yasenck - Drug Enforcement Administration
11. Janet Strahan U. S. Attorney's Office

Non-Voting Regular Attendees and Guests Present

1. Kristine Jaros - Weed and Seed Site Coordinator
2. Debra Ross - Grand Valley State University
3. Amber Kilpatrick - Eastown Neighborhood Association
4. Susie Rigas - Arbor Circle.
5. Aaron Stevens - Grand Rapids Police Department Community Officer
6. Liz - Wedgwood Christian Services
7. Megan Aupperle- Wedgwood Christian Services

Steering Committee Members Absent

1. Haris Alibasic - City of Grand Rapids
2. Tim Doyle - Kent County Prosecutor's Office

Non-Voting Regular Attendees Absent

1. Dr. William Crawley - Grand Valley State University
2. Johannah Jelks - East Hills/Wealthy Heights Neighborhood Association
3. Kathryn Lett- Grand Rapids Police Department

I. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Pamela Benjamin at 11:02am.

II. Introductions

Members introduced themselves. A quorum was present.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Kathryn Caliendo to approve the minutes of the Oct. 28, 2008 meeting. The motion was seconded by Elliott Bargas. The minutes were approved.

IV. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Kathryn Caliendo, and seconded by Elliott Bargas to move the written committee reports to the top of the agenda. This was to accommodate the schedule of Dr. Debra Ross. The motion was passed and the agenda was approved as amended.

V. Written Committee Reports *(originally VII. Written Reports)*

A. Budget Committee

All monies must be spent by November 30 for Fiscal Year 2007. All of the 2007 are accounted for and being submitted. Marian raised a question regarding the supplies budget for the Weed & Seed copier she is using. Dr. Ross explained that the monies had been reallocated at the October meeting by a electronic Steering Committee vote.

For the full copy of the written reports see information below which includes the FY2009 Application Update, the FY 2008 Report, and the FY2007 Budget Report.

a. FY2009 Application Update

- The application is due to CCDO by January 21, 2009. This is the 5th and final application. The potential award amount is \$175,000. The effective date range will be 11/1/2009- 8/30/2010. RFPs were issued the week of November 3rd and are due back on Wednesday, December 3rd. Q&A sessions are being held at Baxter Community Center on Monday, November 10th 9-12pm and Monday, November 17th at Baxter Community Center from 1-3. Additional times are available via appointment. The RFPs received by December 3rd will be sent out electronically for review prior to the **December 16th** Steering Committee Meeting. A draft budget will also be sent out electronically. **The FY2009 budget approval MUST take place at this meeting to assure that our application is submitted on-time.**

b. FY2008 Report

- The GAN has been approved and sub-award contracts are being prepared. The effective date range is 12/1/2008 – 10/30/2009.

c. FY2007 Budget Report

- Addendums to original FY2007 contracts were issued and signed by Arbor Circle/Lies That Bind, Neland Ave CRC, Eastown Ministries and Jubilee Jobs. The total amount allocated to these 4 groups was \$2050. See attached budget report from Dr. Ross for details on current balances. The end date for FY2007 expenditures is 11/30/2008.

B. Crime Statistics Report

Sgt Elliott Bargas distributed the crime statistics up to November 20, 2008. Vehicle breaking and entering crimes were up in November. He advises the public to remove valuables and lock the car. Although crime is down in the Weed and Seed area, it is increasing in other areas of the City, particularly within the Burton-Plymouth area, with a concomitant rise along the Southwest corridor.

An up-date was provided by Sgt Elliott Bargas on the anti-gang video. He said that Officer David Nowakowski and Officer Terry Dixon have been working on the anti-gang DVD. Our Community's Children, Arbor Circle/Anneshia Freeman, and the Hispanic Center are identified as current partners in the project.

VI. Round Table Discussion on Stability “What Do We Want To Be in 2011?”

Pamela Benjamin led this discussion related to the future of Central City Weed and Seed. According to Pamela Benjamin. She said there are two choices: we can elect to become a “graduated site” or, we can disband services and structure. If we decide to continue on, we will need to be self-funding, as the government grants will no longer be available to Weed and Seed. Although no money would be offered, we would be able to access technical assistance from the government.

Kathryn Caliendo stated that due to her position of Community Organizer, she is personally not allowed by the government to raise funds. This restriction covers all neighborhood association organizers. The Police Department would be able to fund their participation through alternate overtime funds. Discussion centered upon how to incorporate the community partnership representatives into our meetings and activities. A suggestion was made that Kristine Jaros contact local, regional, and national sources which represent recently “graduated sites” for information which can be helpful for our future.

We may be able to locate some funding sources for two of the Weed and Seed projects: the Domestic Violence Summits and the Teen Summits. Residents can be assigned a more active role in some projects as well. New community partnerships may be recruited to help retain some programming. Discussion concluded that a specific person will address the Steering Committee about this issue from a “graduated site” perspective.

Additional Notes from the November 25, 2008 Steering Committee Meeting

Is Weed & Seed worth YOUR time?

Pamela – Yes.

K.C. – East Hills – they do not want to fund raise and she is specifically not allowed to fund raise.

GRPD – OT will dry up by (before)they receive other funding for OT and will continue to do the work.

SEENA – W&S going away doesn’t impact them. More residents need to be recruited to the table. She is not comfortable making decisions without resident input.

Mike Y – Other sites (which) he has been involved in have left sustainability to the organizations that have received the funding – the programs that W&S assisted with need to be self-sustaining. Sandy agreed with this approach.

Question arose regarding Prisoner Re-entry – BNA, GRPD and Parolee used to hold meeting to introduce community resources to those re-entering. Should this be happening again?

Next Steps:

Group decided they wanted training on what a “graduated site” is including specific examples of things people have done. Possibly Feb/March 2009. 2008 / 2009 awardees should be at training

- Flint has a graduated site – Marian has contact
- What happened to Garfield Park and West Side? – Kristine to check with Karen and neighborhood associations
- Kristine to contact Alyson Parham to see about TA.

(VII. as discussed above as V, IV as follows:)

VIII. Guest Speaker - Maria Gajewski Community Research Institute 2008 Survey Results

This presentation will occur at a future date.

IX. Neighborhood Update (Easttown, Baxter, East Hills, & Seena)

Easttown - A public meeting on foreclosures proceedings, which is a growing economic problem, was held at the Easttown Hall recently. Information on the process and assistance was discussed. Statistics were provided on this serious family situation. A grant has been submitted for the Easttown summer day-camp project for children up to 12 years of age. The camp has been extended from a half-day 6 week program to a full-day 8 week program. The project includes

excursions to cultural sites that are not normally available to these campers, such as the Zoo, the Gardens, the Museums, the Open Farmers' Markets, and the Civic Theatre.

On December 4th, Eastown, East Hills, and MidTown have coordinated a Shop-Hop with trolley transportation, refreshments, and other attractions.

Baxter - The Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department scheduled a meeting at Baxter Community Center with neighbors to discuss ideas for the expansion of Joe Taylor Park.

Marian Barrera-Young announced that she conducted a workshop to tell the neighbors how the court system works, and to discuss the housing stock in the area. A resident from Sigsbee Street has made a chart about the housing stock on three blocks: the 800, 900, & 1000 blocks of Sigsbee. This chart shows ownership status and relative condition of each house.

On December 16, at Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, a recognition event for Baxter Neighborhood block captains is scheduled. The exact time should be announced later, presumably in the early evening. Details to be forthcoming, report follows.

East Hills - Their efforts continue to improve the Wealthy Heights area, and East Hills is part of the December Shop Hop event.

Seena - Sandy Latham announced that in conjunction with Pearl Banks and Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church, a variety of classes in practical living skills are provided to the neighborhood. More blocks clubs are in formation, and some clean-ups are scheduled.

X Announcements/ Updates and Public Comment

The Kent County Health Department has received grant money through the "Building Healthy Communities" program with the State of Michigan. The grant money will be available for use in establishing a community garden within the Weed and Seed service area. Efforts are underway to form a committee to select a location and to determine a method of assigning plots. Additional efforts are being focused on collaborating with a City of Grand Rapids initiative to expand Joe Taylor Park to possibly provide for a community garden on this site.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee is scheduled for December 16, 2008 to be chaired by Capt. Eric Payne.

There was no public comment.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:13pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ray Tromp: Secretary

Next Steering Committee Meeting

**TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 16, 2008**

**11:00 am - 1:00 pm
GRACE ROOM
BAXTER COMMUNITY CENTER**