

REVITALIZING NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE - Meeting Minutes 10-16-07

Committee Members Present:

Heather Ibrahim, Gail Heffner, Jill Meyer, Cynthia Price, Ben Stehouwer, Paul Haan,, Frank Lynn, Kimberly Van Dyke, Lori Stanton, Suzanne Schulz, Kevin Wisselink and Carol Townsend.

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Paul Haan.

Survey Monkey

Carol Townsend continues to work on the logistics of the Survey Monkey. Extension is buying a membership so the survey will be able to accommodate more options than the free one.

CID Update:

The Economic Development Project Team (EDPT) will meet next week to review revisions on a CID plan and approve changes and make a proposal to bring it to the City Commission for vote. The EDPT recommended one change whereby the neighborhood prove that it is in transition or decline to participate. There will be 6 criteria that neighborhoods would have to bring to the city before qualifying for CID. The Uptown CID/BID Task Force approves of the proposal/plan

There is an issue with the extra work incurred by city staff. There is no allowance for recouping the costs of setting up a BID. The question was posed about 'how can neighborhoods substitute for the city

Economic Development Committee:

Carol reported about the outcome of the "Brown Bag Luncheon " held on 10-12-07. Dr Rich Jelier gave a "sobering " but helpful presentation on the *State of Michigan Cities: An Index of Urban Prosperity---February 1, 2007*, put out by the Michigan Higher Education Land Policy Consortium. Copies were distributed to those who attended.

Jill Meyer will send a reminder note to Gastavo from Community Research Institute about coming to our next RNC meeting. She will give him updates from the Economic Development Committee. It was suggested that a neighborhood from each Ward look at the CRI data to help define economic indicators.

LEED-ND:

Cynthia Price reported on the RNC subcommittee with members including herself, Christine, Mike Cary, Carol Townsend. They are charged with looking at recommendations and how to best deploy LEED-ND criteria. There is a possible pilot project with the county- wide storm water ordinance. Suzanne Schulz posed the question, "how will LEED/ND reconcile with zoning standards and what should be done regarding possible conflicts"? Suzanne also mentioned that LEED is a good way to

introduce townships and small towns to concepts like sustainability, building density and smart growth, etc.

Other:

Kimberly Van Dyke announced that the NBA and Neighborhood Ventures will be holding the Neighborhood Business Awards Banquet at Wealthy Theatre on 11-8-07 and encouraged everyone to attend. Carol Townsend has been nominated for the Neighborhood Business Champion Award.

Work Session with Suzanne Schultz, Planning Director:

Suzanne reported that the City Commission will vote on approving the final draft of the new Zoning Code on 10-23-07. She explained that there are 18 inspectors for the whole city, so services are predominately complaint based and not proactive. However, a Sign Inspector position has been developed, whose job will be to help enforce sign regulations.

RNC will work together with the Planning Department to develop educational brochures and presentations/workshops to help introduce the new Zoning Code. It was suggested that the brochure focus on the “basics” for residential properties and business districts and highlight the reasons “why” behind the regulations. Example----transparency of windows support crime prevention and CPTED principles. Education will be important because average people don’t know that “zoning rules are out there.” C\”Citizen knowledge will be critical because they can be extra eyes and ears on the street”

The following suggestions were made regarding the joint project:

- ❑ Begin with Master Plan goals and principles for context to explain why the zoning rules exist---example, walkability and public safety.
- ❑ Begin with broad zoning goals and narrow them down with detailed examples
- ❑ Good photo examples are important.
- ❑ The brochures could be included with the Neighborhood Ventures Façade Grant Request Applications.
- ❑ Multiple brochures should be developed on specific issues like windows, fences and storefronts, for example.
- ❑ Photos should be examples from within the Grand Rapids area.
- ❑ The brochures should be short and concise but phrased in a way that people understand the concepts..
- ❑ The committee will determine which zoning principles are most important to neighborhood stakeholders, eg, signage, transparency, etc.
- ❑ The brochures and presentations should be included on website and run on cable if possible.
- ❑ Check out brochures, etc that have been developed in other cities like Madison Wisconsin to see what they focused on.

Suzanne reiterated that it will help her to get a perspective on what’s most important for residents and business owners. She suggested getting started by identifying the “top five list” of most important concepts from the Master Plan and Zoning Code. For

example, the five top questions that neighborhood associations get asked about zoning would receive priority for the brochures. Emphasis should be placed on the issues that are at the greatest risk of happening without oversight and education.

A sub-committee was created to begin to plan the process for developing the zoning brochures and educational presentations. Members will include, Jill Meyer, Heather Ibrahim, Lori Stanton, Kim Van Dyke and Carol Townsend. They will meet and begin work prior to our next RNC meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Lori Stanton  
Substituting for Secretary, Christine Helms-Maletic*