

**University Neighborhood Partnership**  
**Meeting minutes**  
**September 17, 2008**

**Members Present:**

- Institutional Representatives: Barbara Karper (LeMoyne), Beth Rougeux (SU), Scott Blair (ESF), Win Thurlow (Upstate)
- City Representative: Fernando Ortiz
- Neighborhood Resident Representatives: Joe Russo (SEUNA-Westcott/West), Mark Strodel (Sherman Park), Barbara Humphrey (WENA-Westcott/East)
- Investor-Owners: Pat Phofl (Outer Comstock)
- Students: Tefan Drayton (SU)

**Members Absent:**

- Neighborhood Resident Representatives: Melanie Stopyra (Outer Comstock)
- Investor-Owners: Norm Roth (Sherman Park), Paul Walsh (SEUNA), Hugh Gregg (WENA)
- Students: representatives from LeMoyne, ESF and Upstate Medical University

**Others Present:** Tom Wolfe, Brian Moore

After a round of introductions, Tom Wolfe took a few minutes to explain that because his position at SU has changed to Dean of Students, he can no longer serve as facilitator for the UNP. Before leaving, he gave a brief history of UNP. He began by explaining that that UNP started more than two years ago as a vehicle for facilitated conversation among stakeholders in the University neighborhood (owner occupants, investor owners, institutional representatives, the City, and students). Decision-making was by consensus to promote engagement in constructive conversation and relationship building, rather than just problem solving, with the facilitator attached to the process, not the outcome. Originally, owner occupants were selected to look holistically at the neighborhood, not as representatives of specific neighborhood organizations, and landlords were selected from two categories—those owning multiple properties (large) via Syracuse Property Owners Association (SPOA) and independent landlords owning fewer properties (small). The handoff from the UNP creators to the new membership occurred at a retreat, and the group set out on its mission.

In the second year, UNP undertook the creation of a Strategic Plan. Membership was expanded to the two large neighborhood organizations and depending on the topic being discussed, other individuals were asked to participate. This group was called the UNP+. Councilor-at Large Van Robinson chaired the Study Sessions for the Plan.. This process involved holding public meetings in the Syracuse Common Council Chambers. Although a Strategic Plan was created by consensus, the process led to the UNP examining its membership and decision process, pointing to the need to restructure the UNP to give voice to residents and investors from the various neighborhoods impacted by the presence of SU and all educational institutions, as well as to provide an alternative for decision-making when consensus could not be reached.

The restructuring effort resulted in a document entitled “Report of the University-Neighborhood Partnership Work Group, March 19, 2008,” that was distributed at the meeting along with “Developing a Strategic Plan Relative to Issues Related to Density in the University Area.” New members were recruited in the Summer, 2008, and the old membership met for the last time in August to finalize the plans going forward and set the September 17 date for the first meeting of the restructured UNP with expanded membership and updated rules of engagement.

Once Tom Wolfe accepted his new SU appointment as Dean of Students, an effort was also launched to find a facilitator. Beth Rougeux suggested approaching the Gifford Foundation, and Brian Moore agreed to facilitate the process of finding a facilitator.

Brian introduced himself, a Gifford staffperson for the past five years and formerly with the CNY Community Foundation Neighborhood Leadership Program, an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Program. In his role at Gifford, Brian is staff to the Foundation Initiatives Program, a neighborhood-based program that has made significant investment in the Southside and Near Westside. Brian explained that he does not come to the UNP as the permanent facilitator, but to move the group to where it wants to go.

He began by asking us to define ourselves, and this is who we are:

- Homeowners
- Landlords
- Employees
- Students
- Renters
- Employers
- Developers
- Business owners
- Parents
- Educators
- Government officials
- Neighbors
- Pet owners
- Walkers
- Bikers
- Car owners

We also realized that many of us wear more than one of the above labels.

Brian next asked us to identify the issues that exist in our neighborhoods. These were identified as:

- Competition among owner occupants and investor owners/renters for limited housing stock
- Litter (excessive)
- Crime

- Perception of students by non-students
- Home environment
- Student/homeowner relations
- Diversity
- Respect/tolerance

We were lastly asked to identify what we have in common. This included:

- Geography
- Human beings
- Stakeholders
- Having a need to co-exist

A next meeting was set for Monday, October 20 at 5:30. It was agreed that the Brueggers Community Room was a nice space, but not large enough for UNP. Barb Humphrey offered to contact Westcott Community Center, while Win will explore space at Upstate Medical University.

NOTE from Barb Humphrey: Westcott Community Center's downstairs room would be available at 6 on 10/20 (once all the afterschool program kids leave) at a charge of \$35/hour.