

University Neighborhood Partnership

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 30, 2009

Members Present:

Institutional Members: Beth Rougeux (SU), Barbara Karper (LeMoyne); Win Thurlow (Upstate Medical); and Sharon Sherman (City of Syracuse for Fernando Ortiz)

Neighborhood/Resident Representatives: Joe Russo (SEUNA/Westcott – West); Barbara Humphrey (WENA)

Investor/Property Owners: Paul Walsh (Westcott-West); Patrick Pfohl (Outer Comstock); Hugh Gregg; and Norm Roth (Sherman Park)

Student Representatives: None

Other: Christina Merchant, SU Prof and meeting facilitator; Students assisting from Chris' class: Efrem Bycer; Melissa Young; Sisi Zheng

Agenda:

1. Schedule UNP Meeting Dates
2. UNP Membership
3. Sidewalk Snow Removal Project
4. New Projects for the Year
5. Meeting Reflection

Schedule Meeting Dates:

We currently meet the third Monday of every month. Upcoming meetings (all at 5:30PM at Westcott day hab): 10/19, 11/16, 12/21, 1/18/2010 (MLK Day), 2/15 (Washington's Birthday), 3/15, 4/19, 5/17, 8/16

Correction to 8/17 minutes:

Norman Roth (represents property owners in Sherman Park), not Barry Park; Patrick Pfohl is (property owner-Outer Comstock)

Change sign-in process to a permanent form where all we do is check off our name. A more formal sign-in sheet may be more effective with a column for what area an individual is representing. Chris will develop this for next time.

Membership:

Sharon: Fernando Ortiz is in the hospital. Paul Driscoll appointed deputy commissioner

Brenda Silverman has been ill (from an email in response to attendance e-mail). She expects to continue participation when her health improves.

Student representation:

SU student, Brian, was expected to come. Beth will check to see what happened to him. SU has started Community Ambassador program in surrounding neighborhoods. This group may be interested in participating...Beth Rougeux will check this out.

Still looking for willing participants from SUNY Upstate. Norm will investigate looking into his tenants who are in medical school. He will provide their information to Win Thurlow.

LeMoyne student representative has graduated and they are looking for two new candidates to participate.

Student representative idea: Reach out to multiple students at the same school so that they can share coverage of meeting participation.

Sidewalk Snow Removal Project:

BID discussion:

Hugh: BIDs may be limited to business districts. It appears new legislation in Albany may be needed to form a BID in a mostly residential area. He is exploring with the Corporation Council to see if a neighborhood district can become a BID and with Senator Valesky's office at the state level.

Questions asked:

- What about special neighborhood districts (i.e. lighting districts)? These districts are created by the city. They do not necessarily come with a tax assessment.
- Can a fee structure be added to the already existing structure? A special district is for zoning purposes or for services over and above services provided by the city.
- Can the city make this happen and would they want to? What do their regulations provide?
- Can we use the existing structure, Special Neighborhood District, to use the taxing power for service provision. Does it need to be for a particular service or is there a general one?

BIDs are implemented by the City but the definition and law comes from the State.

Sharon: She will send email to Nancy Larson and CC Tim Carroll. Two issues: one about BID, the other about Special Neighborhood District.

Sidewalk Snow Removal Action Plan:

UNP members have been reviewing the plan with respective constituent groups. Overall, positive response.

Certain questions popped up: How were the blocks picked? Why were certain blocks not picked? SPOA (Syracuse Property Owners Association) blocks were targeted because we'd be 1/3 of the way to the necessary 60%.

How to sign up: The mailing: Select a contractor. At a public meeting (10/13), neighbors will have an opportunity to discuss and ask questions of the snow removal plan. They will be encouraged to bring checkbooks to sign up with the contractor. The City willing to provide mailing list based on water bills from the area. SU is willing to copy, stuff and pay for the mailing of the flyer and contract.

How will we know how many properties are participating? Contract says the contractor must post participating addresses online, which will be a check on follow-through from checks sent in. The contract is directly between property owner and contractor. This group is not responsible for the contract.

What about Westcott business district?

The UNP cannot be responsible for money being returned. The contract as written covers all the legal bases. Bonding and a reputable person will be important.

Changes to the flyer:

Deadline changed from October 19 to October 26. Decision will be made on project go or no go by Nov. 1.

October 26 – now reads “contacts and payment deadline (one-time payment of \$70)”

Action steps:

1. Sharon will let us know by tomorrow whether and when she can get labels or just a mailing list. Start the process tomorrow. Sharon, Beth and Norm will work out clean up of list to remove SPOA members.
2. Hugh will send legal language about fresh check policy to Paul.
3. Paul will send Beth revised Snow Removal flyer including block numbers.
4. Sharon will let Beth know what form of list we have by Thursday (10/1)
5. Barb will let Norm know which blocks are included.
6. Paul, Norm, and Barb will pick contractor by Friday (10/2). Win Thurlow will find out if there have been any cases brought against the current potential contractors and contact Better Business Bureau. Add a fresh check policy to the contract – checks will not be cashed until 60% is reached.

7. Beth will get letters out Wednesday (10/7) Mailings will include the contract and the hand out.
8. Patrick and Norm will go door-to-door in some of these areas. Patrick will organize door-to-door campaign.
9. If the letters can't get out in the mail and if we can't get the labels in time. Plan B is to hand deliver them to the properties.

Westcott Flower Project; Bulb event is coming up this Saturday (10/3) and will hand out action plan idea to other neighbors. Paul and Barb will talk with neighbors about snow removal program.

If SU is not able to get the labels and documents in time to have the mailing out by Wednesday (Oct. 7th) then Plan "B" will be to SU Community Ambassadors do an outreach/market campaign to properties with owners living in their area

Meeting reflection:

Positives:

A lot got done

Good to have lawyers

Things to improve:

Don't talk over each other as much

Agenda for next meeting:

New projects for next year

Update on snow removal program

Next Meeting will take place in the Westcott Dayhab at 5:30 pm, October 19th!