

**Work Group Minutes
Management of Physical Environment
November 18, 2009**

In Attendance: Joyce Connors, John Gronen, Mike VanMilligen, Molly Grover

We discussed finding more members to join this work group. Names to contact include:

- Jeff Mozena – Premier Bank (Molly w/c)
- Michelle Mihalakis – north end business woman (John w/c)
- Genatta Howard - black female in downtown neighborhood (Joyce w/c)
- Mary Rae Bragg – retired TH reporter (Joyce w/c)
- Wendy Wheelock (or other NICC rep) – (MVM w/c)
- Matthew Noel – attorney (Joyce w/e-mail)
- Josh Jasper – Exec Dir Riverview Center (Joyce w/e-mail)
- Wendy Lyons – Dept of Correctional Services (Joyce w/e-mail)

Focus #1: Condition of properties and responsibility of owners/tenants:

- Prior to lending mortgage money, Banks/Credit Unions should require Performance Standards (applications, background checks).
- If any City financial assistance is given, Performance Standards should also be expected.
- Landlords need to be notified each time police are called to their rental properties so they are aware of what is going on with their renters.
- Identify a centralized (local) program to conduct background checks on all renters.
- Increase lighting in certain neighborhoods.
- Minimize the time allowed for deficiencies to be corrected (currently almost 2 years)
- Professionalize the appeal process for all housing violations to maintain consistency and factually based decisions.
- Reduce the inspection cycle so apartments are inspected more often.
- Request strong support for the Washington Neighborhood Development Corp. as they work to implement the Washington Neighborhood Strategic Plan.

Focus #2: Promote beautification of neighborhoods:

- Personal visits with neighbors in targeted areas where the homes/yards are kept neat and clean to learn from them how their neighborhood stands out among other areas that are rundown.
- Choose one street (or block) as a pilot to promote rain gardens, rain barrels, porches or other amenities. Invite the neighbors to work with us instead of the City doing it for them. Possibly post some signs on that street/block (i.e. "Beautifying our street one block at a time").

Other ideas:

- Initiate an "acknowledgement program" whereby we greet all people with a smile, hello, etc. showing acceptance and respect.
- Research Harlem's Children's Zone (internet) to see if we can "borrow" some of their practices to reduce crime/violence/drugs.
- Get feedback (or invite into our community) representatives from other areas of the US that are facing many of the same problems we are (i.e. Urban Strategies in St. Louis; Crime tax in Santa Rosa CA; Newark mayor initiatives; Boulder CO).

Our group recognizes that some of our ideas fall into categories that other work groups are working on. Feel free to discuss/borrow/etc. ideas that fit more into your group.

Next Management of Physical Environment meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec 9, at 3:00 PM in the Chamber of Commerce Board Room.