

Safe Community Task Force

Agenda

June 12, 2010 – Prescott School

9:00a – 1:00p

- | | | |
|------|---|------------------|
| I. | Call Meeting to Order | Mayor Roy Buol |
| II. | Outline of Session plan – What we must accomplish | Urban Strategies |
| III. | Overview of Previous Meeting & Review of Themes | Urban Strategies |
| IV. | Mixed Income Housing Presentation | Urban Strategies |
| V. | Writing of Recommendations | Urban Strategies |
| VI. | Adjourn | Mayor Roy Buol |

May 27, 2010

Meeting notes from Dubuque Safe Community Task Force – Research and Facts Committee.

Attending: Rachel Daak, Jerry Maro, Steve Jacobs, Rick Dickinson, Doug Stillings

Discussion started around our most recent charge by the Task Force “to gather information and schedules of events this summer.”

- We are confused about our duty. We are not sure who will use the information and what information beyond what is already published is needed. Please consider the following report in that light.
- Greater Dubuque Development Corp. is compiling a listing of events in the area for the summer months.
- There was discussion of some entities wanting us to gather information about resources providing human services for different populations.
 - This would be an unproductive use of the committee’s time as there are a number of resource guides available from numerous entities in the community. These include:
 - Dubuque County Family Resource Guide
 - Neighborhood Resource Guide
 - Leisure Services Program Guide, including Uptown Recreational opportunities.
 - Dubuque Kids Guide – online listing of regional program/services updated every other week (www.dbqkidsguide.com).
 - GDDC has rolled out their “Newcomers Guide” both on-line and as hard copy. There are a number of inserts that can be added to this guide as needed
- The bigger issue that needs to be addressed is dissemination of all this available material to our marginalized and disenfranchised citizens. It is not enough to provide a stack of pamphlets to be added to the paperwork they get at the Housing Department, or to stack them in the library or at the Multi-Cultural Center.
 - To say the information is available on-line is to ignore the lack of internet access many of these citizens deal with. Library community computer access is limited and very busy, and many do not have access at home.
 - To provide these resource guide at portals to our community services that are used, like the Rescue Mission, Teresa Shelter, Crescent Community Health Center, the City Housing Department etc is part of the answer – but still does not assure availability to all who may need assistance.
- Is summary – we have very good resource guides available from a number of providers. We also have pretty complete listings of events. The issue seems to be appropriate dissemination of the information to all segments of our population.

Law Enforcement

1. Expand the "Kickoff to summer" policing programs in the most troubled areas, Do it several times throughout the summer...where you bring in members from the different policing departments (Dubuque Police, Dubuque Sherriff, State Police) to hit the area hard and get the offenders off the streets.
2. Enforcement of the noise ordinance for loud music, loud cars, loud motorcycles, etc. Having a peaceful and quite place to live is important for quality of life issues.
3. Make sure that the police department is fully staffed....too much time between when you lose an officer (retirement, quit, moved, etc) and the when you get the position filled...It may be a good idea to have a couple of extra officers on staff to be in position to cover the openings.
4. Additional training or emphasize to the police officers about making sure that they share information across department lines, ie. if they are called to a property for a disturbance call and during their investigation they see the property is in substandard condition, they then would notify housing/building services to have the property investigated.....All City Employees should go through some sort of training that they are the eyes and ears for the city and that they need to be aware of issues and make sure to communicate code violations(even outside their department) to the proper department for follow up. **(Also on housing list)**
5. Recent changes in landlord notification by police dept of all calls to their property provides a feeling of accountability to neighbors who were calling landlords themselves about problem behavior. **(implemented)**
6. Maintain crosswalks and enforce use of them.

HOUSING AND HOUSING CODE ENFORCEMENT

1. A **trained** volunteer force **to** be set up to do external evaluations of properties and to inform the various departments of **any** property that has a compliance issue.
2. Continue to encourage home ownership in targeted neighborhoods **with a mixed income approach and an emphasis on trying to re-create the sense of place through good design that the neighborhood has in pockets but that used to exist in the whole area. All buildings using city, state or federal dollars should be required to meet this objective and all projects should meet the City's sustainability goals.**
3. Support landlords in evicting problem tenants.
4. Mandate the landlords conduct renter background checks, using the city's free service.
5. Professionalize the property hearing process by hiring an administrative judge.
6. Create a threshold where if a problem **rental unit** receives more than a certain number of calls(4) in a 4 month period that the landlord, tenant, police department, housing, etc. would be required to meet to discuss the situation and explain consequences if problem does not cease immediately.
7. Additional training or emphasize to the police officers about making sure that they share information across department lines, ie. if they are called to a property for a disturbance call and during their investigation they see the property is in substandard condition, they then would notify housing/ building services to have the property investigated....All City Employees should go through some sort of training that they are the eyes and ears for the city and that they need to be aware of issues and make sure to communicate code violations(even outside their department) to the proper department for follow up. **(Also on Law Enforcement List)**
8. Enact a clearing house(data) where landlords and tenants could share information about each other and prospective landlords and tenants could reference this clearing house when making their rental decision.
9. Recent changes by Housing dept to change priorities in awarding Section 8 vouchers to favor local residents vs. people from out-of-town. **(implemented)**
10. Create standards for property exterior maintenance, including replacement of broken windows.
11. **Encourage rehabilitation of vacant buildings or develop procedures to allow for proper "moth balling" (see preservation briefs) of structures that include proper exterior care, security of structure and scheduled inspections.**

12. Develop a training program about expectations for landlords/managers that they have to go through before they are licensed to have rental units in DBQ.

14. All landlords must do a background check on every tenant (family member) **over the age of 16** applying to rent a unit in Dubuque.
15. Housing and Juvenile Services to share information **concerning juvenile offenders.**
16. Section 8 to do a criminal background check on every adult and child **over 16** that gets accepted into the program, Currently only background checks are being done on the adults.
17. Greatly reduce or eliminate the number and length of visitors to section 8 **tenants. They can eliminate unnecessary distractions so they can focus on their future.**
18. Encourage the city to communicate clearly with the community about politically sensitive topics, such as the racial makeup of the police force. **(Should this be housing?)**
19. Make sure complaints to the Housing Dept. get to the Housing Commission.
20. Reduce the number of Section 8 vouchers.
21. Limit the time a voucher holder can maintain a voucher.
22. Require a plan of action to get Section 8 voucher holders on their feet.
23. Make instructional course mandatory for non-compliance landlords. **(Landlords that refuse or delay corrective action to put property into compliance.)**
24. Tie property inspection cycle to landlord cooperation and number of service calls to a property. Certain number of calls should trigger meeting with landlord, tenant, housing, police. Use a tiered approach of 3-5 annually or 6-10 semi-annually.
26. Educate Section 8 applicants on regulations and expectations to housing **and landlords.**
27. Be sure that "residency" is a defined concept for housing. **(?)**
28. **Housing and landlords to provide a list of school age children residing in rental units to the school district to ensure attendance at school.**
29. **Occupancy License—**
 - inspection based on tiered system
 - background check
 - notification to school district
 - limits on the number of people per unit base on square feet and number of bedrooms
 - required landlord training

COMMUNUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. City housing and building services to meet with leaders of local financial institutions requesting their help in combating substandard buildings.
2. Support Four Mound's HEART home rehabilitation program, the Washington Neighborhood Reinvestment Strategy, Washington Development Corporation, Historic Millwork Area development and development of the former Dubuque Packing Plant.

VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY HOUSING SAFETY PROGRAMS

1. Create a safety audit check list for property owners that provides standards for safer landscape design, including fencing and shrubbery.
2. Train volunteers to do property safety audits as requested by property owners.

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. Develop a training program/handout about expectations (cultural customs that may or may not be different, acceptable in larger cities but not here, actual violations of the law and enforceable?) for tenants or property owners that they would receive from their landlord, Realtor, loan officer.
2. Have the "City Focus" discuss the importance of being a good citizen and ways for citizens to help improve the quality of life in Dubuque. Also give expectations of being a citizen in Dubuque.
3. Document other actions that have been taken that can help with perception of safety. While these are not actions we have taken – they have come about partially because of the additional public awareness of these issues and task force existence. We (Task Force) need to help make people aware of these changes. Both need to be confirmed prior to reporting.

EDUCATION

Recommend to Dubuque Community School District that Central High School remain open.

Recommend to the Dubuque Community School District that they actively begin promoting classes for non-traditionally aged students teaching reading, writing, and basic arithmetic.

URBAN DESIGN

1. Review school and park designs to create safer environments, such as separating the children's play area from the basketball court at Comisky Park and moving bathrooms to a higher visibility area.