

# Minutes

## Prospect Park East River Road NRP - 2 Steering Committee Meeting of February 7, 2005

1. The meeting was called to order by Dick Poppele, co-chair of the steering committee, at 7:30 pm in the multi-purpose room at Luxton Park Community Center. There were 18 people present. (See attached sign in sheet.) At this time, at frequent intervals throughout the meeting, and whenever requested, translation into Somali was provided.
2. Chair asked if everyone had time to look over the minutes from the last meeting, which were distributed by e-mail to Steering Committee members with e-mail addresses and by US mail to all others. There were several paper copies available. A motion was made to adopt the proposed minutes. There were none opposed and the minutes were adopted.
3. Chair said that the main business of the meeting was to review the housing proposals received. (See attachment from meeting of Jan 17, 2005.) Dick summarized the housing proposals and read the applicable parts of the minutes from the last meeting.

There were 2 kinds of housing proposals: those concerning affordable housing, pages 3, 8 and 14 of the handout and those concerning housing improvement, pages 4 and 15.

Dick explained that the committee's task is to gather information to present to the community, get the community's input at a neighborhood meeting, refine the proposals using that input and come up with a list of proposals that can be submitted to NRP. Another neighborhood meeting would be held to inform the community what the committee came up with and allow the community to vote on it. It is necessary to find a way to initially present the proposals to the neighborhood in a way that they can choose between them.

Dick suggested that the committee set up a schedule and fix the dates of the 2 neighborhood meetings. After discussion, Tuesday, April 19 and Tuesday, May 24 were chosen, both at 7 pm at Luxton. This schedule leaves 6 steering committee meetings prior to the first neighborhood meeting and 5 weeks after that meeting to write up the action plan and get it approved by this committee before the next neighborhood meeting. This schedule allows time to get the word out and try to get attendance, and to meet the legal meeting notice requirements.

Barb Lickness (NRP) explained to the committee that it is not necessary (or desirable) to allocate specific amounts to each proposal in the action plan. Many proposals can be grouped together in one strategy and the amounts allocated to each can be best decided in a smaller committee. However, she requested that the committee separate new housing development from fix up programs, because they are administered separately by NRP.

At this point Dick asked the translators if they were able to keep up, and they indicated that there was no problem.

4. Dick referred everyone to the handout entitled, "Items to consider for NRP meeting of February 7". (See attached.) He prepared this handout using the proposals submitted to the committee and attempted to

include the main thrust of each housing-related proposal. A point was made that he could have included the Somali home ownership education proposal. Barb said it would definitely be included in housing and it was added under Point 1.

A point was made that since there is not much money to work with, building new housing is not practical and perhaps should not be included as a possibility. Also, the committee should strongly consider a revolving fund method of funding (rather than grants) because such funding would be sustainable and possibly cause fewer hard feelings between residents.

One member said he preferred a home improvement revolving loan program, with loans given to the lowest property values first, since this would serve as an affordable housing initiative, however, that is for the community to decide.

Barb Lickness pointed out that these fine details such as the maximum amount of loans or grants, whether or not a match is required, etc. should be worked out later. Strategies can be written in a generic way with latitude to implement them as best fits the situation at the time.

So the question to consider is: “What do we want to present to the community?” “What information do we want from them?” Perhaps, “What are the big issues?” It was noted that proposals only came in from a limited number of people. Perhaps the committee should list the possibilities and the strategies that were important to the community last time, and let the community decide if they still hold true today.

This could be used as a comprehensive planning document – even if there are strategies listed with no funding. Funding could be re-directed from elsewhere or money could be obtained from sources other than NRP.

One question to ask the community is whether they want to spend more than the minimum requirement of 70% on housing. The current allotment for this neighborhood is \$347,866. The 70% required to be allocated to housing comes to \$243,506. (\$14,412 has already been directed to Administration for Phase II development.)

At this point the committee went through the handout, adding clarification and assigning committee members to get more information. See the appended worksheet prepared by Barb Lickness based on Dick’s handout and the committee’s discussion.

Barb again cautioned against putting in too much detail – do not ask the community if a bank or nonprofit should be used – this is better decided in a small committee that can look into the best way to do it after the plan is approved. Combine proposals in broad areas. For example, under the housing improvement strategy would be loans, grants, development, and education.

One member asked that the committee narrow the possibilities to realistic options. Some people may question why some proposals are eliminated as unfeasible – this could be explained at the meeting.

It was suggested that the committee obtain information from people who already know (for example, local banks). Barb volunteered to get Don Snyder to come to the next meeting to help the committee refine the home improvement options. He works with the CPED staff and knows about hundreds of different programs, how they are structured, defined, etc. He could also speak to the neighborhood if needed.

It was noted that there is some tension between NRP and CPED concerning what types of programs qualify as housing. Concerning the Historic District proposal, NRP says it qualifies while CPED says it does not. It would perhaps be beneficial to contract the Heritage Preservation Committee and ensure that they are a willing partner. Joe Ring said he would bring information on this proposal.

Amina Mohamed and Ann Munt will put together information on the Somali home ownership program. Barb noted that during Phase I there were very few Somali immigrants and therefore there is no established program that fits their particular cultural need. There are programs available for Native Americans and such a program would need to be tailored for Somalis.

5. The next meeting will be held on Monday, February 21. Don Snyder will come to help organize the home improvement section. Steve Cross will have ideas on how to make money choices and on the non-housing proposals.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm.

7. The meeting attendees were:

Mana Abdullahi

Shukri Dirie

Dean Lund

Joe Ring

Ann Munt

Betts Zerby

Dick Poppele

Ginia Klamecki

Steve Cross

Harrison Nelson

Joyce Barta

Ambaro Barre

Hawo Shiikh Farah

Hawo Warsame Creedi

Barb Lickness

Elhan Hashi

Khadja Sheikh

Amina Mohamed