

Minutes

Prospect Park East River Road NRP - 2 Steering Committee Meeting of February 21, 2005 at Luxton Park

1. The meeting was called to order by Steve Cross, co-chair of the steering committee, at 7:30 pm in the multi-purpose room at Luxton Park Community Center. There were 12 people present. (See attached sign in sheet.)
2. Chair noted that the agenda has been changed from what had been planned at the Feb 7 meeting. The two people coming from CPED to give information on housing options could not attend due to the Presidents' Day holiday. Therefore that agenda item was moved to the March 7 meeting. The attached agenda was approved.
3. Chair asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes of the last meeting. Dick Poppele moved that a list of meeting attendees be part of the official minutes, retroactive to Jan 1, 2005. The motion passed with no opposition. There were no corrections to the minutes and they were adopted.
4. Chair explained his handout (attached) of a proposed "dot-mocracy", which he wanted to test at this meeting. If the committee had trouble understanding it, it would need to be changed. Steve emphasized that the 55 items on it were not final, but were based on prior discussions. He proposed that sheets for each item would be placed on the walls at the neighborhood meeting. As people checked in they would be given 10 dots to vote with. A person could distribute the dots on 10 different sheets, put them all on one, or any option in between. The purpose would be to try to assess neighborhood priorities.

The first page of the handout, items 1- 15, is comprised of programs. The top 4 are for housing, which must take 70% of the NRP funds in Phase 2. The bottom of the page has all "other" (non-housing) programs. Chair asked for translation.

Page two of the handout concerns money – how people want to distribute the available money on affordable housing programs, home improvement programs, and all other programs. He noted that the boxes contain helpful hints, not directions. Page 3 listed many program options for affordable housing and home improvement programs.

He suggested that at the meeting there would be brief explanations of programs (1-1 ½ hours) and then ½ to 1 hour for people to vote with their dots. Chair asked for translation.

This is the same basic process the neighborhood used to reallocate approx. \$500,000 a few years ago. He asked the group if, based on this paper and his explanation, they were confused or could vote intelligently.

A broad discussion followed. Several thought that 55 items were too many. The question was asked if there were any home improvement options that were not part of affordable housing. The point was made that a number of people in the neighborhood are expecting home improvement program, perhaps on a 1st come, 1st served basis or a lottery. Another point was made that not all of the housing options listed are needed because unless the funds are distributed on some sort of needs basis, it would not be a good use of public funds. The question was asked if affordable housing means new units, or if it could

mean substantial improvements to substandard units (bringing them up to a minimum standard and thereby providing “new” affordable units to the neighborhood). There is not enough money for more than 1 or 2 new units, even if the land was free and therefore it makes no sense to consider building new units. It was stated that people understand that there must be some kind of income or assets restriction for a home improvement program. Money could be distributed as grants or loans and there could be a restriction (such as the recipient could not move within a specified time period or would have to pay it back). It was noted that most of the housing proposals received were for home improvement, and not specifically intended to raise substandard housing to affordable housing.

At this point the chair asked for translation and if there were any questions from the Somali women. There were none.

More discussion followed as to the format of the neighborhood meeting. Attempt to gain general information, give good explanations of some programs that may require it, such as the SWIM proposal and the historic district - some people may not be familiar with what has already gone on. It was pointed out that it could take a long time to explain this to a large group; however, it is necessary to present options people can understand in a short amount of time. Can we realistically expect that we can interpret the results with validity? If not, we are leaving ourselves wide open to criticism.

Dick Poppele passed around a survey (attached) he came up with to use at the meeting to gather information – not necessarily for NRP. His intention is to find out what priorities the neighborhood has, and what are the goals – what people want to see happen. Other items could be added to his list. Some felt this option would actually be better than the 55 item handout already considered – it is simpler and has broad categories. The Somali women were asked what they thought and they replied that they prefer these broad categories. The other option was too hard to understand. The question was asked how the meeting would be carried out and much discussion followed. Some felt it was not necessary to limit the possibilities to those proposals that have been received, but to include broad categories, funded or not, that could be used further along in the process as other needs and other money may become evident. Barb Lickness had last time recommended that the options not be defined in too much detail. Not many proposals were actually received.

The question was asked, since there is not much money, is it necessary to vote on all these proposals? It was noted that there is enough money to have a positive impact on the neighborhood, so the committee should come out with a total package that may not incorporate all the proposals, but which is based on input from the meetings and has the support of the community. Then we can be satisfied that we have done a good job.

It was eventually determined that the 1st neighborhood meeting should probably be to come up with the goals and philosophy of the new action plan, rather than to decide on particular programs. There was discussion on whether it would be possible to still stick with the current meeting dates in April and May. Eventually it was decided that the April meeting date would be kept, but the 2nd meeting date would be determined later.

5. At this point the committee discussed the proposed ad (attached) for the SE Angle. Since the meeting format has changed, the ad will need to be re-written. An announcement will be put in the SE Angle that a neighborhood meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 20 at 7 pm at Luxton Park. The announcement will state that there will be another meeting at a date to be determined for the final vote. The deadline for the ad is

March 9 for the “April” issue to be delivered on or after March 18. The committee can look over the new ad at the next meeting. (It was stated that a reminder ad will be placed in the May issue, however, that issue will not be delivered until April 22.)

6. The next meeting will be on Monday, March 7 at 7:30 pm. Two people from CPED will be present to give information on housing options. Also at the next meeting, the committee will need to decide what goals should be presented at the neighborhood meeting. It was noted that it would be possible to set up an action plan even before that meeting and determine the neighborhood priorities at the meeting. It was suggested that someone look at action plans from other neighborhoods. Dick said he had looked at a couple and they are very general. Dick and Steve will look into getting plans from other neighborhoods. Also at the next meeting, Ann Munt will give an overview of the SWIM proposal, including such information as what funding other than NRP might be available. The Somali representatives were asked to consider what goals they may have and bring them forward at the next meeting.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

8. The meeting attendees were:

Mana Abdullahi

Shukri Dirie

Layla Bayer

Dean Lund

Betts Zerby

Dick Poppele

Ginia Klamecki

Steve Cross

Joyce Barta

Amina Mohamed

2 people who did not sign in