

Minutes

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

The meeting was called to order by Dick Poppele, co-chair of the Steering Committee, at 7:35 pm in the multi-purpose room at Luxton Park Community Center. There were five people present. (See attached sign in sheet and item 6.) It was noted that attendance was low, probably due in part to the PPERRIA Board training scheduled for the same time.

A motion was made by Steve Cross to approve the minutes of the April 18th Steering Committee meeting and the April 20th Neighborhood meeting. Copies of both had been circulated ahead of time. The minutes were corrected and approved as corrected.

The committee discussed the results of the Neighborhood meeting (see last page of minutes from April 20th). The sentiment of the neighborhood on the allocation of funds was clear: 70% of the money should go to housing and 30% to other programs. It was also clear that the special housing programs (SWIM and the Historic District) had significant neighborhood support. Education was also shown to be important.

The question now is: what does this mean in the writing of the action plan? Barb Lickness had emphasized the need to keep it simple – not to spell out all the details but to leave them for a later process. Dick said that he had just read the NRP 1 Action Plan and most of the items were written very broadly. Most of the work was left to volunteers and most items did not need NRP funds. A significant amount of money was originally allocated to housing – \$1.2 million.

To help get the process going, Dick wrote a rough draft of an Action Plan. It is set up in three main sections: Education and Human Services, Housing, and Livability. Each section has an overview, an objective and a strategy. In most cases the strategies are very non-specific. It was noted that the dollar amounts for each section are only suggestions. In some cases, more was suggested than the amount requested; in other cases less was suggested. People may come to the next neighborhood meeting with new proposals, so it may be best to allow extra funds for that. It was noted that at the April 20 meeting, it was said that people could bring up new proposals. If those programs fall under one of the categories in the draft Action Plan, that would be easy to handle. If something very different comes up, the neighborhood could only tentatively approve it. Notification would again need to be given and have another vote would need to take place.

More discussion on the money allocation followed. It was concluded that the money will have to be worked out at the end of the process, and even after the Action Plan is approved, money can still be reallocated if necessary. Since most amounts will be under \$25,000, PPERRIA can do it. It was suggested that

PPERRIA work out the details of the specific proposals and money allocations. They will have time and many meetings available in which to get input and make the decisions. Non-funded items should be kept in the Action Plan – the city agencies will get copies of the plan and will know what the neighborhood wants. One example is traffic remediation.

Dick suggested that the committee put its effort into the housing portion of the plan. There were two specific proposals; the Historic District and SWIM. The SWIM request was relatively large and would take 25% of the housing money. More information is needed on whether they really need \$50,000. They will need to come and give details to justify that amount. For the rest of the housing funds, it appears that the neighborhood favors some kind of home improvement program.

The draft action plan contains a list of possible assumptions about the neighborhood. These assumptions are not mutually exclusive. They provide ways to look the neighborhood's needs. Based on these assumptions, strategies were suggested. Information-gathering meetings could be devoted to these assumptions to verify, modify, or disprove them. Example: If it is correct to assume that future development and University expansion will continue in the Motley neighborhood, then it would be a waste of money to rehabilitate rental homes there and effort should be concentrated in the more stable areas of the neighborhood. University representatives and developers could be invited to a meeting to check the validity of that assumption. Discussion on the Motley area followed.

It was noted that the dot-mocracy results showed little interest in housing; however 70% of the money must go there. Discussion on interest rates followed. It was generally agreed that it would be best to use an existing program, perhaps modified to suit the needs of this neighborhood, rather than administer our own program. Interest could be set at a low rate, even if that means the program would not break even. The goal is to make the neighborhood better.

Discussion followed on whether it would be best to take the plan to the neighborhood pretty much as it is written, or if more fact-finding meetings should be held. It would be a lot of work to gather more information, and since attendance at the committee meetings is falling off, it is questionable whether the committee is up to it.

The Administration section of the plan is the only part that is missing. Steve Cross volunteered to write it.

There was a suggestion to partner with the Como neighborhood on a program to

link health and occupancy code enforcement with loans or grants to improve properties. Another suggestion was made to have both loans and grants available.

The big question was how to proceed from here – pick out one or two assumptions and get information?

Mary Alice volunteered to get specific information from the city. The committee had good input from Don Snyder, but it was all verbal – the committee would like specifics on paper, especially on the interest rates that can be set.

Betts volunteered to work on the Education and Human Services section. She will use Dick's draft as a starting point.

It is necessary to begin working with the school board on early access funds for Pratt. The school board needs the assurance that the transition funds are available or they will not budget for the position. Betts is on the Pratt Council and is working on this with Susan Larson-Fleming and Jerry Stein.

The next meeting will be on Monday, May 16 at 7:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

The meeting attendees were:

Dick Poppele
Steve Cross
Betts Zerby
Mary Alice Kopf
Joyce Barta