

Minutes

Prospect Park East River Road NRP - 2 Steering Committee Meeting of Tuesday, May 31, 2005 at Luxton Park

1. 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 31 people present. Barb Lickness from NRP and Don Snyder from Minneapolis Finance were in attendance. (See attached sign in sheet and item 11.) Translation into Somali was provided.
2. The proposed agenda (attached) was approved.
3. The minutes of the last meeting were discussed. A concern was raised about whether there are plans to place an early access vote on Pratt transition funding on the June 29 agenda. The idea discussed at the last meeting was to keep the Pratt item in the Action Plan as well as vote on it as an early access item, both at the same meeting. The purpose of this is to speed up the early access process in the event it is needed due to an unforeseen delay in approval of the whole Action Plan. It was noted that this discussion belongs in agenda item 5 and would be discussed at that time. Mary Alice Kopf moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Dean Lund. The motion was approved.
4. There was a presentation by Alan Arthur, President of Central Community Housing Trust, who was invited by Steve Ficker. CCHT is a non profit organization which has been providing affordable housing for about 20 years. Alan's aim was to show how his or some other similar organization could work with the neighborhood to provide affordable housing that fits with the community's goals. He told the group that in 1986 the convention center was built and the city lost 270 units of affordable housing. Central Community Housing Trust has provided 1200 units, serving the homeless and those needing affordable rents. They have three main strategies: 1) Affordable housing real estate development (they are a real estate developer), 2) Asset management – they plan to oversee housing for the long term, 50-100 years, and 3) Connecting residents to services. Central Community Housing Trust is one of the top providers of Affordable housing in the state of Minnesota and also operates in other states. Alan says they are known for the quality of their housing and management.

Central Community Housing Trust has a philosophy that housing is not just the buildings. They use the behavior design approach to new urbanism (which he pointed out is not new at all) to provide connections to parks, goods, and services, and to foster psychological ownership. Good design is not just how a building looks, but how it works, how people use it. An example of this approach is the front porch, which provides a necessary connection between public and private space. He cited an example of fostering psychological ownership in subsidized: A row of housing units had a fence between the yard and the street, but between the front entries and the fence was a “no man's land” of bare dirt. Fences were added to divide the space into private yards for each unit and almost immediately, residents planted grass, flowers and bushes, presumably because it felt like their own space. Alan said he could probably point out 10 changes that could be made at Glendale that would provide similar benefits. He cited two books: [A Pattern Language](#) and [Creating Defensive Space](#). Alan thinks there are opportunities in Prospect Park, perhaps along University Avenue, or north of University near the industrial area. He mentioned projects at Franklin and Portland (the Gateway project) and a site two blocks south of the east side of the Metrodome (East Village) as examples for the committee to look at. Information and pictures of these projects are available on the website: www.ccht.org.

Question: How would they help us? Would we ask them to buy a site and “fix it”, find sites in the

neighborhood, etc. Note: NRP funds are very limited. He said if interested, someone should call him and have CCHT take a look. NRP funds are a small part of the picture. They are a tool to help neighborhoods fix blighted sites.

Question: What is the percentage of affordable housing in the complexes they build? Some complexes are mixed – some market rate, some affordable, some commercial. The definition of “affordable” is not set, but generally, 40% of the units are affordable to families with incomes less than \$30,000 and 60% are affordable to families with incomes of \$30-\$45,000. Market rate units are affordable to families at 80% of Metro Median Income (MMI).

Question: Are there single family homes, or apartments for large families? There are very few single family homes. Some units have 3-4 bedrooms, but they are always full and there is not much turnover. Check the website for current information or call 612-341-3148.

5. The main item on the agenda was to discuss and approve Housing items for the Action Plan: the loan program, the grant program and the SWIM proposal (the historic district proposal has already been finalized). Items for discussion included the terms such as dollar amounts, match requirements, household income limits, types of permissible repairs, etc. See attached draft. (Draft was also available on the website.)

Barb Lickness was asked whether this would meet NRP guidelines and she said yes. It fits into NRP’s 15 definitions of housing and housing related activities. She and Don Snyder explained that landscaping, such as sod and trees, is not counted as housing unless it is part of a capital expenditure such as repairing a foundation. The general rule is that 20% of the expense can be for landscaping and anything more than that may be considered on a case by case basis. Other landscaping, for example Buckthorn or diseased tree removal, can be part of an Action Plan strategy and funded by NRP, but it would not count toward the requirement of 70% of funds for housing.

A question was asked regarding sweat equity. Don said it should be removed from the Action Plan language because labor has no value assigned to it by NRP. If a homeowner or other person wishes to do some of the labor, they can be reimbursed for materials but not time or effort. If a 50% match is required, it must be 50% of the money expended. The owner can, however, provide labor to keep the cost down.

A question was asked whether it is good to have two loan programs. Barb pointed out that if they are funded as separate strategies in the action plan, then if one program runs out of money and the neighborhood wants to shift money to it from the other program, it would require a plan modification. That involves quite a bit of time for the city, neighborhood, and staff. She recommended avoiding that scenario by putting both housing programs under one strategy with the same objective. Then the money can be allocated as needed. She also recommended against specifying a particular NRP fund in the action plan. The best fund to use for a particular program would be better worked out later.

A concern was again raised about not allowing sweat equity because some people cannot afford to match 50%. The group then discussed how the grant/forgivable loan program meets that need. A person could even apply to both programs, using the grant for the 50% match needed for the loan.

A question was asked about the Metro Median Income figures – where to get them, how family size affects them, etc. It is not available on the city or NRP websites, but Don Snyder has access to it. He will e-mail it to Joyce who will e-mail it to the committee members. Barb recommended that the group

focus on what is necessary to stabilize the housing stock and not target people.

It was noted that it will be very important to let people know about the programs.

The question was asked why only exterior work was specified for the loan program. The answer given was that exterior work would allow the whole neighborhood to benefit from each home repaired (meaning aesthetics, not just property values). Loans could be targeted to blighted properties. Don said the city has a system for scoring properties. If the goal is to improve housing stock, some areas could be added: structure, heating, electrical, etc. The idea is to fund necessary improvements, not optional items such as new kitchen counters.

It was asked whether the neighborhood was losing owner-occupied housing. That information is available on the NRP website for 1990 and 2000. There have been significant changes in the neighborhood since then, however, notably the addition of three large student housing complexes. Providing incentive to convert rental into owner occupied housing might have more impact on the neighborhood than fixing up the exterior of a few properties, but there is not much money to do that. The neighborhood could put that idea in the plan and use marketing to encourage the use of other available resources. .

6. The amount of funding for programs was discussed. The SWIM proposers had been asked to trim their budget and it was reduced to \$35,000. It was suggested to fund the loan and grant programs together. The amount will be about \$180,000 and funds would go to whichever program needed it. The projected amount for administrative needs was not available yet. By the next meeting, the numbers from NRP will be double checked and the administrative estimate will be finished.

7. Publicity for the June 29 meeting was discussed. It was decided to use a one page, double sided mailer to reach every household. A draft of this mailer will be circulated before the next meeting. The meeting will also be advertised in the PPERIA newsletter and the SE Angle. Ann Munt will arrange for translation of the flyer into Somali and it will be distributed at Glendale.

8. A question was asked whether a proposal concerning the Central Community Housing Trust would be added to the Action Plan. Chair said it could go into the plan as an unfunded strategy and the neighborhood could work with them. The question was asked whether we are enhancing affordable housing with the grants and loans in the plan so far. Barb told the group that the state legislation regulating NRP makes no mention of affordable housing whatsoever. Expenditures on affordable housing are encouraged but not required. The amount this neighborhood put into affordable housing will be researched.

9. The next meeting will be on Monday, June 6 at 7:00 pm. The entire Action Plan will be discussed, as well as plans to publicize the meeting and to finalize any remaining details. If anyone has something to add to the plan or any language to enhance it, they are requested to bring their suggestions forward.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

11. The meeting attendees were:

Zahra Osman
Mana Abdullahi
Shukri Dirie

Shamso Ahmed
Kari Simonson
Dean Lund
Ann Munt
Betts Zerby
Dick Poppele
Andy Mickel
Mary Alice Kopf
Steve Cross
Joyce Barta
Steve Ficker
Jane Hanger Seeley
Amina Mohamed
Hersiya Jama
Mana Ali
Hawa Geddi
Faduma Mohamed
Falhado Hassan Yusef
Madino Warsame
Halimo Samoter
Halimo Yusef
Holuire Xeslin
Sheurso Axmed
Jamed Eleni
Fadumo Hasli
Shulti Monahed