

MEETING RECORD

Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting October 14, 2014

Citizens Advisory Committee in Attendance: Gure Ali, Adam Dow, Peter Flanders, Kelli Aiken, Belinda Gerry, Joe Gray, David Jacobs-Pratt, Rob Kilgore, Adam Lee, Dean Lachance, Tom Poulin, Larry Pelletier, Doris Russell, Theresa Smith, Mitch Thomas, Judy Webber, Rick Whiting.

Consultants: Frank O'Hara and Sarah Curran

Community Development Staff: Reine Mynahan

Welcome:

Mayor Jonathan Labonte and Committee Chair Adam Lee welcomed the new CAC members to the first meeting. Mayor Labonte's words to the group stemmed from his experience in the New Auburn neighborhood where he is now seeing second generation of poverty in his neighborhood and disinvestment in properties. He is encouraging the committee to look at the challenges and seeking ways to rebuild the neighborhoods into strong ones, connecting with neighbors, and finding ways to engage volunteers and investors to create a positive change.

Introductions:

CAC members introduced themselves, shared with the committee why they became part of this group and what each has to offer.

Consolidated Plan Overview:

Reine Mynahan explained the purpose of the Consolidated Plan, the role of the advisory committee, what the contents of a Consolidated Plan would include, and described the consultations that would occur in the coming weeks. Reine gave an overview of information that is in the binders, providing a bit of history of the Community Development Program.

Process of Neighborhood Change:

Frank O'Hara's presentation focus on the stages of neighborhood change , the loss of in-town population in the last decade, particularly homeowners, and the challenges that low demand for housing brings—low home values, higher vacancy rates, and more social issues. To recapture a neighborhood, we need to build on strengths by starting in areas that can be turned around fastest, and targeting public investments to make the area attractive. Frank explained that there will be 2 parts to an overall strategy,

a Community Development section that has activities that fit the program eligibility requirements, and a municipal section that the City can pursue outside the Community Development Program.

Neighborhood Outreach:

The City will solicit citizen participation at in this process by holding neighborhood meetings in each of the three target areas. Committee members were encouraged to approach one or two of their fellow citizens to attend the meetings.

Bates College Student Survey:

Three members of the Bates College survey team explained their role in undertaking a neighborhood survey. Nine students who are Environmental Studies majors are working on this project as part of their capstone senior project. Three students have responsibility for each of the target areas, Downtown, New Auburn and Union Street. The field work is currently under way through the month of October, in November the students will analyze the surveys, and provide results to the CAC at the December 2nd meeting. CAC recommended to the students that they attempt to increase the number of people they are surveying, and to reach an equal number of homeowners. Reine mentioned she would bring a sign-up sheet to the neighborhood meetings to see if there was interest expressed in participating in the interview process.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reine Mynahan, Community Development Director