

Community Participation Program 2012 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc.

Contact person: Lynn Regnier, Executive Director

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1. Stakeholder Involvement

Reviewing your CPP activities in 2012, Please provide information about:

- What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2012?

EPNI facilitated an ongoing community dialogue with the new owners of the Madison School regarding building upgrades and exterior design with pending reinvestments to the entire property.

The BLUH Committee coordinated community support both for Aeon's \$54 million reinvestment in ten of their oldest neighborhood properties as well as for their continuing commitment to provide quality affordable housing to their residents.

Staff introduced opportunities for Metro Transit to engage the community in conversations regarding traffic issues, busing needs and potential grid reconnections.

Worked with residents to self-organize and apply for funding support to create street art at neighborhood intersections (Minneapolis Reclamation Project). While this initiative was not funded EPNI used the BLUH meeting format to encourage their work and to engage other community members to participate. Ultimately the organizers received support from a local market owner who allowed them to design and paint a mural on the back of the market facing a number of residential housing units..

Introduced North Central University staff to Parks Commissioner, Anita Tabb, and facilitated ongoing efforts to renovate and jointly fund a regulation sized soccer field in Elliot Park.

Organized and hosted a community forum with the Mayor about the newly approved stadium bill that impacts the Elliot Park and Downtown East neighborhoods. More than 100 people participated in the discussion, and at least 50% were people who had not previously participated in an Elliot Park meeting.

Collaborated with the Elliot Park Leadership Group (EPLG) to organize the 4th annual Night to Unite event, which began as a merging of the traditional neighborhood cleanup and National Night Out (NNO). EPLG leaders combined the two events to incorporate the involvement of North Central University students who are not in school during the August NNO event. Led by Aeon, House of Charity, NCU, EPNI, and Catholic Charities the event now includes support from three additional community institutions, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation and the Minneapolis Police Department. In 2012 approximately 1,600 neighborhood people came together for the free community picnic and enjoyed a celebration with games, music, kid's activities and more.

Worked with the East Downtown Council marketing committee to promote and grow organization membership and support for neighborhood development.

Encouraged the community to review and respond to the ward redistricting process and to the varied redistricting maps that were produced and distributed over many months. While we were not able to succeed in keeping the entire neighborhood intact within one ward we were initially successful in helping to keep the entire HCMC campus in the same ward. Eventually that boundary was redrawn and HCMC in the end was split between two wards, as was the Elliot Park neighborhood.

Coordinated a task force to review EPNI bylaws and specifically worked to increase the presence of neighborhood institutions and business on the board. The effort was successful and new board members elected to serve at the annual meeting included representatives from Aeon, North Central University and Augustana Care Center.

Developed an Elliot Park E-newsletter and Facebook page to keep people informed about community events and to provide a communication tool to help organizations promote their activities and to diversify communication opportunities.

Due to overflow needs for more shelters following the Peavey Plaza summer encampments EPNI facilitated community support for a request from the First Covenant Church and the Salvation Army to open the emergency seasonal homeless shelter a month early.

- How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2012?

We work with the institutions and organizations that work directly with the under-represented and facilitate cooperative solutions to community needs between partners and city departments as required.

- Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful? Why?

EPNI has a long history of staying connected to the people who are doing the work and of facilitating relationships with community stakeholders.

- What did not work so well? Why?
- How many people did you reach through direct contact (door knocking, meetings, one-on-ones, etc.)?

376 volunteers contributed 2,433 hours to support neighborhood work in 2012.

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

376

- How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?

Over 2,500

- How many people receive your print publications?

We do not publish a printed newsletter.

- How many people receive your electronic communications?

147 Enewsletters are sent monthly plus numerous email meeting notices. Unknown numbers visit our website and Facebook pages.

2. 2012 Highlights

Please describe one or two major highlights, and if possible, please include digital photos or illustrations:

- What was the issue or opportunity the neighborhood was facing?
- Who was impacted?
- What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity?
- What was the outcome?

Stadium District Planning

With a new Vikings stadium underway EPNI lobbied to serve on the City Stadium Implementation Committee which is to be "...responsible for ensuring the highest quality stadium design; for developing a planning vision for the larger area surrounding the stadium that includes Elliot Park and that maximizes the one billion dollar investment for the City and all residents; and for developing a land-use strategy for managing pre-game events that ensures a great experience for fans and for the residents of Elliot Park and other surrounding neighborhoods."

While the stadium district is mainly in the Downtown East neighborhood, Elliot Park has long been aware that what happens there does not stay there. The fortunes and misfortunes of each neighborhood are intertwined by their geographic isolation on the eastern edge of the downtown core. For many years EPNI has engaged its community in numerous planning and design efforts to envision a neighborhood that is free of the pervasive neglect and lack of investment that has characterized this area for so very long.

In addition to serving on the City Stadium Implementation Committee EPNI now also serves on two more of the City subcommittees: Stadium Planning and Stakeholder Experience. Additionally EPNI serves on the 2025 Development Committee, a committee of the Downtown Council, and as an advisory member of a committee guiding the work of CPED's Parking Lot Study. Recently EPNI also connected to serve on the Downtown School Committee, a joint committee of the North Loop and Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association neighborhoods, working to research, promote and secure a downtown educational facility to support family living in the downtown communities.

Another strong relationship has developed in recent years as the East Downtown Council (EDC) and EPNI collaborated on economic development efforts in the district. The EDC membership represents businesses in both the Downtown East and Elliot Park neighborhoods and they were eager to be involved with the work of the City Stadium Implementation Committee. EPNI strongly agreed that the district business community needed to participate and lobbied on their behalf to secure them an appointed seat on the committee.

EPNI's sphere of influence is growing and these many partnerships are a culmination of years of neighborhood planning, relationship building and dedicated vision by many who live and work in this community. We are pleased to be involved and participating in all of this work that can ultimately turn neighborhood vision into reality.

Elliot Park Housing Inventory

In an effort to increase a diversified housing inventory as directed in the Strategic Plan, and also to address community concerns about the growing influence of affordable/supported housing and social services in the neighborhood, EPNI worked with CURA and Humphrey Institute students to conduct an inventory of existing housing. The study mapped residential housing, types of housing, rental units, ownership units, institutional beds and more.

The maps and graphs provide a realistic picture of current neighborhood housing and will help inform decisions about future housing, types of housing, location of housing and best practices for land use. The information gleaned from this study will be particularly useful in the months ahead as work continues to increase housing opportunities in the area and will help to define goals and form strategies to guide future neighborhood development.

3. 2012 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2012:

- What were your organization's major accomplishments?
- How were individuals in your community directly impacted by your work?

Livability Task Force

EPNI organized in 1976 as community residents and workers became increasingly concerned about issues related to crime, safety and negligent property management in the neighborhood. Their early work focused on efforts to alleviate these problems and to improve neighborhood conditions for everyone. Later, with the infusion of NRP resources, EPNI hired staff that worked with volunteers specifically on these issues. More recently, as funding resources have dwindled, EPNI no longer can dedicate one staff person solely to this topic but has, instead, encouraged volunteers to self-organize around their particular interests.

While there have been some self-organizing success models in the neighborhood, such as the Friends of Triangle Park and the Elliot Park Leadership Group, the efforts surrounding crime and safety have been haphazard and guided by an issue-specific constituency that disengages as soon as their particular concern has been resolved. In 2011 EPNI created a Livability Task Force out of the BLUH Committee to provide a forum for discussion on these issues. Former groups had consisted mainly of residential volunteers but in 2012 EPNI worked to add representation as well from community institutions and organizations, some of which had their own security personnel on staff.

This new model has been successful and has helped infuse community institutional resources into the work of the task force. In 2012 three organizations and a business joined forces to hire security staff to patrol troublesome streets and they succeeded in reducing the loitering and drug deals that had marked that area. EPNI continues to advance the work of the Livability Task Force and facilitates monthly meetings. What began as a residents-only group has increased to include representation and support from five community institutions and organizations that regularly attend meetings and work together with the Minneapolis Police Department to identify and resolve crime, safety and property issues.

New Neighborhood Parking Meters and Metered Hours

Often in community development work the least apparent changes are the ones that have significant impact. As a downtown residential neighborhood, Elliot Park had been plagued for decades by street parking meters that required 50 cent an hour rates every day from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. This policy was part of the original legislation regarding the construction of the Metrodome in 1980. A major portion of the meter revenues in the "influence zone" of the Metrodome (which included all of Elliot Park neighborhood) went to the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission, the owners and landlords of the Metrodome.

For years EPNI has objected to this punitive parking meter policy, peculiar to the Elliot Park neighborhood. In 2012 it coincidentally occurred that new "multi-space" parking meters were to be installed in Elliot Park, and legislation was being developed to define the building of a new Vikings stadium on the Metrodome site. EPNI, with the backing of Seventh Ward Council Member Lisa Goodman, lobbied to have the new meters reflect the new realities of Elliot Park as a residential neighborhood.

A community forum was held at which officials from the City's Parking Services division of Public Works were invited to listen to the community's objections to serving as a "meter farm" for the Metrodome. A task force of EPNI volunteers conferred with Parking Services directors to agree to more neighborhood-friendly parking meter policies and practices.

With the installation throughout Elliot Park of the new multi-space meters last summer parking regulations now offer a flexibility that accommodates the needs of the neighborhood first rather than the needs of the Stadium Authority and stadium patrons. Hourly rates have dropped to 25 cents and enforcement hours have been reduced to the five workdays of the week between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. The computerized meters can be programmed to require three dollar an hour rates two hours preceding and two hours after a scheduled stadium event. The condominium and rental residents of the neighborhood are the real winners. No longer do those who have to use street parking for themselves or for visitors and guests have to rely on rationed critical parking permits.

A reasonable parking meter pattern is able to accommodate both the residential needs and the institutional/stadium needs in the district. Residents no longer have to pump the parking meters until ten o'clock at night even on Saturdays and Sundays. EPNI did not really expect much acknowledgement of this change but the following email from a resident at the Rappahannock Condominiums likely reflects the appreciation felt by many in the neighborhood:

From: Ryan

Sent: Tuesday, August 14, 2012 10:27 AM

To: davidfields@elliottpark.org; Lisa.Goodman@minneapolismn.gov

Subject: New meters!! :-)

Hi David and Lisa,

I'm not sure who to thank but I'll start with you. The new meters, and meter enforcement times in particular, on Portland between 9th and 10th are fantastic. They reflect a more appropriate residential schedule, and a great compromise on maintaining an event schedule! We also were abuzz with how nice it is without those old lights and wires overhead on 9th St.

Cloud 9 on 9th

Ryan

4. *Housing*

What percentage of time did your organization spend on housing-related activities?
55%

5. *Financial Reports*

Please provide an income and expense report for your organization for the year.
(Please include all funding sources).
Attached at end of this report.

In addition to your annual report, please take time to describe your interactions with City departments and other jurisdictions.

1. *Impact*

What interactions with City departments occupied a major part of your time?
What worked well? What could be improved?

EPNI meets monthly with CPED Planning staff. This long-time ongoing conversation has helped to develop a strong respectful relationship that in 2012 included: completion of a historic research project resulting in the publication of *Elliot Park, A Neighborhood Caring for Its Community: A History of Elliot Park's Healthcare and Social Services*; service on the advisory committee for the currently under way CPED Parking Lot Study; signing of an agreement with CPED to hire a Consultant to facilitate the work of the Stadium Implementation Committee (with a grant from The McKnight Foundation); service on the City Stadium Implementation Committee and subcommittees; and, collaborative development with CPED staff of the vision and principles guiding the work of the City Stadium Implementation Committee.

Initiated meetings and communications with staff in Mayor Rybak's office regarding the new Vikings stadium development and worked with the Mayor's office, CPED staff and city council members to lobby successfully for East Downtown Council representation on the City Stadium Implementation Committee.

Staff facilitated various community meetings with Metro Transit, the Department of Traffic and Transportation and with Minneapolis Parks and Recreation.

EPNI met with County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin regarding stadium development and transportation and with county transportation staff regarding resurfacing projects on Park and Portland Avenues.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate your overall experience with your interactions with the City? ____ 5__

2. *City Communications - effectiveness*

Is the information that you receive from the City understandable and useful?

Communications from the City are understandable and useful and help us to keep our community informed about the issues and concerns that are relevant to them.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate overall communications from the City? ____ 4__

3. *City Communications - timeliness*

Do you receive adequate notice of City activities in your neighborhood? If not, did your organization inform somebody at the City of this? Did the City respond in a positive manner? Please explain.

We receive City notices of activities that are relevant to our neighborhood.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the timeliness of communications from the City? ___3___

4. City Departments

How can City departments improve the way in which they function in your neighborhood?

We continue to be very pleased with the relationships that we have developed with City departments and staff and they are extremely cooperative and helpful.

5. City Assistance

How can the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department improve the assistance it provides to your organization as a community participation group?

As the duties of NCR increase it is harder to receive timely responses to our questions and requests for information.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the assistance provided to your neighborhood by NCR? ___3___

6. Other comments?