

Community Participation Program 2012 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Linden Hills Neighborhood Council

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Date of Board Approval: _____

1. Stakeholder Involvement

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

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

During 2012 LHiNC actively worked with City of Minneapolis Staff to explore the development of a Small Area Plan for the neighborhood. Residents and business owners were encouraged to apply to serve on a Steering Committee for the purpose of engaging and informing neighborhood residents about the process. Meetings of the Steering Committee were, and continue to be, open to the public. In 2012, LHiNC hosted a Small Area Plan informational Open House, followed by an open community vote, at which 109 residents voted in favor, and 33 were opposed to LHiNC funding the development of a Small Area Plan. LHiNC continues to have a significant role in this 12- to 18-month open process and has involved the community in the process since its inception.

LHiNC reached out to all neighborhood residents to promote a sense of sharing and community through print and electronic media, and the use of neighborhood signage. We increased our use of social media through Facebook and Twitter. In 2012 LHiNC also interviewed candidates and selected a vendor for the redesign of the lindenhills.org website with the goal of making the site a more engaging and effective tool for communication. LHiNC continues to actively promote participation on its committees and attendance at its monthly Board Meetings. In October, our Annual Meeting was held in conjunction with Fall Fest at Linden Hills Park. Residents were invited to attend and vote in LHiNC elections, to learn about LHiNC's active programs, and to enjoy the fellowship of other residents.

LHiNC will pursue its Neighborhood Priority Plan in 2013, surveying the community at major neighborhood events such as the Linden Hills Spring Festival.

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

LHiNC's Sustainable Communities Committee has started to discuss how to approach an Aging-in-Place initiative for the neighborhood. In 2012 LHiNC began work to identify a web designer to redesign our website in the attempt to reach

a more diverse audience, and we enhanced our use of social media. The hand-delivery of the Linden Hills Line newsletter, including several special editions which covered significant neighborhood news, continues to be an effective tool for reaching all neighborhood residents, including seniors, renters and ethnic minorities.

We have yet to ask the NCR for case studies and examples of success stories in other neighborhoods, but will follow up with the NCR.

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

We have seen that special editions and hand-delivery of our printed newsletter have been successful at reaching and engaging residents, perhaps because residents feel an effort was made to reach them where they live.

- What did not work so well? Why?

We currently are challenged with low membership numbers on LHiNC Committees. We think our efforts to recruit new members and volunteers have not worked especially well, and that our recruitment strategies need to be improved upon. The reason may be that we have not adequately attempted to make direct, personal contact with potential members, with phone calls or in-person recruitment.

- How many people did you reach through direct contact (door knocking, meetings, one-on-ones, etc.)?

We reached over 3,000 people through our open board meetings, committee meetings, open houses, and activities at Linden Hills Park including Winterfest, the Festival, the Corn Feed, and Fall Fest.

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

Approximately 35 people volunteered on LHiNC's board and committees, and 150 volunteers helped with the 2012 Linden Hills Festival.

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

The Linden Hills Festival draws around 3,000 people. Approximately 400-500 people attend the Corn Feed.

- How many people receive your print publications?

Approximately 2,900 households receive the Linden Hills Line print newsletter.

- How many people receive your electronic communications?

Approximately 1,400 people receive our e-newsletters.

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?

Highlight #1: Small Area Plan

- The selection of a Steering Committee for the Small Area Plan process, and the community vote in support of the development of a Small Area Plan were highlights of 2012.
- The entire community is affected by the Small Area Plan process, as all residents are encouraged to participate in open meetings and workshops. Further, the Small Area Plan will help shape the design and use of the neighborhood's commercial areas, thereby having an effect on all residents.
- LHiNC took steps to ensure all residents were properly informed and welcomed in the process, by making news of the Small Area Plan available in print newsletters, e-newsletters, on LHiNC's website and through social media and neighborhood flyers.
- The outcome is a healthy and open process underway, and a Small Area Plan for the neighborhood's commercial areas in the future.

Highlight #2: Neighborhood Bike Lanes

- A neighborhood stakeholder group approached LHiNC asking for its support of bike lanes in the neighborhood. The neighborhood has many bikers on its streets, but the environment is not seen as bike friendly.
- Bicycle enthusiasts in the neighborhood, as well as those who commute through the neighborhood will be affected by the increased visibility and safety the bike lanes will offer.
- LHiNC participated in several meetings with key stakeholder groups, followed by a community Open House to share information about bike lane possibilities in the neighborhood. As a result of these meetings, LHiNC offered its support and partial funding for the project.
- The outcome is increased safety and support for an alternative method of transportation and source of enjoyment. This summer, bike lanes will be applied to 44th Street between France and Upton Aves, Upton/Sheridan Aves between 47th and 42nd Sts, and on 42nd St between Sheridan Ave and Lake Harriet.

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?

Accomplishments

- Selecting a Steering Committee for the Linden Hills Small Area Plan, and hosting an informational Open House, followed by a community vote.
- Reimbursing neighborhood residents for completed solar projects through LHiNC's Solar Grant program.
- Donating funds in the form of grants to organizations/projects that make Linden Hills a better place to live and work, such as: Minneapolis Pops Orchestra, Linden Hills Park, Linden Hills Chamber Orchestra, Linden Hills Power & Light.
- Donating funds in the form of scholarships to students of Southwest High School.
- Continuing collaboration with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to offer family-friendly, open-to-all programs and events at Linden Hills Park
- Participating in the MPRB's Park Stewards program to protect and preserve the William Berry Woods, a unique and valuable native plant community in Linden Hills.
- Partnering with the MPRB, East Harriet-Farmstead Neighborhood Association, and the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis on the Roberts Revitalization Project to develop and implement a long-term management plan to enhance and protect the Sanctuary as a natural and undeveloped area for birds.
- Bringing over 3,000 people together to enjoy the Spring Festival at Linden Hills Park, with the help of approximately 150 volunteers and many donations and sponsorships from area businesses and residents.
- Facilitating the annual Linden Hills neighborhood garage sales: with over 100 registered sales, the event brought shoppers from outside the community into the neighborhood, and promoted a sense of neighborhood unity and fun.
- Maintaining open communications with Linden Hills residents, through the bi-monthly newsletter, monthly e-news, email distribution list, social media, website, flyers and signage, and open Board and Committee Meetings.
- Sustaining and expanding our neighborhood's commitment to waste reduction and management by adopting a Zero Waste policy for all LHiNC-sponsored events.
- Continuing and expanding our commitment to protect and enhance the urban forest through grants to plant and sustain trees and understory plants.
- Building and sustaining partnerships with other agencies and organizations (such as Linden Hills Power & Light, East Harriet-Farmstead Neighborhood Association, Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, and the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board) to collaborate on projects and programs that benefit our neighborhood and the City.

4. *Housing*

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

LHiNC spent approximately 5% of its time on housing-related activities, as it continues to offer low-interest, home-improvement loans to residents, and it has an active Zoning Committee that weighs in on building variance requests.

5. *Financial Reports*

Please provide an income and expense report for your organization for the year.
(Please include all funding sources).

See separate document.

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?

We consulted several times on important matters with Robert Thompson from the NCR department. In all cases, these interactions were very timely, helpful and beneficial. We are also working closely with the City Planning Department on the development of a Small Area Plan. The Planning Department's guidance is essential to the success of these efforts, and we have recently emphasized the Steering Committee's expectation to be more actively involved in the process in order to improve the effectiveness of Committee and community meetings and to ensure leadership and input from the Steering Committee in shaping and implementing the planning process

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? 4 ?

2. ***City Communications - effectiveness***

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

Yes

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate overall communications from the City? 3 ?

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.

Yes, we receive adequate notice of activities in the 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?

LHiNC receives invaluable assistance from Robert Thompson, Neighborhood Relations Department. His assistance has been essential to a Board containing so many new members. However, there would seem to be many topics and activities about which the work and experience of the City's numerous neighborhood organizations could be usefully pooled and shared. Examples of this are 1) the creation and maintenance of a neighborhood organization website, and 2) suggested possible revisions to an organization's governing documents.

5. City Assistance

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

Our neighborhood would benefit from hearing more about successes achieved in other neighborhoods, and opportunities for sharing resources.

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? 4

6. Other comments?

Please provide information as soon as possible about neighborhood funding for 2014 and beyond.