

Community Participation Program 2013 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Beltrami Neighborhood Council

Contact person: Vanessa Haight, Staffer

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1. Stakeholder Involvement

Reviewing your CPP activities in 2013, Please provide information about:

- What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2013?
 - 1) Community Garden: The Beltrami Neighborhood Council (BNC) continued to lease plots in our community garden.
 - 2) Neighborhood Festival: We held a neighborhood festival in Beltrami Park with food, games, and fun. It was a great way for neighbors to come together and build relationships.
 - 3) We developed and implemented a BNC Neighborhood Commercial Matching Grants Program.
 - 4) We continued to offer Housing Loans. In 2013, 2 loans were closed totally \$11,401.95 in improvements.
 - 5) The BNC engaged residents (door knocking, meetings, etc.) regarding the MNDOT Sound Wall proposal.
 - 6) The BNC responded to concerns regarding the roundabout (one-on-ones, emails, phone calls, meetings).
 - 7) The BNC participated in the Northeast Park Community Advisory Committee.
 - 8) The BNC attended local events (Third Ward Neighborhood Fest, etc.) to talk with the community about Beltrami.
- How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2013?

The Beltrami Neighborhood Council is diverse in its representation. All board members work hard to reach out to their neighbors and invite them to attend meetings. In 2013, two new board members were added: two women of different races and ages.

The BNC continued to lease plots in our community garden. The garden plots are used by a diverse group of people, including: Caucasian, Black, and Asian. We have a Polish immigrant and we have students. We have one garden plot offered at a reduced rate (EBT). The age range for the gardeners is quite diverse, from mid twenties to 70+ years old.

- Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful? Why?
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The BNC door knocked residents to dispense information regarding the proposed sound wall and ask for a vote against the project. The BNC was successful in organizing the neighborhood and preventing the sound wall project from moving forward.

- What did not work so well? Why?

Getting people to the regular BNC meetings (when there is no pressing issue) has proven difficult. Going forward, we hope to define what “underrepresented” means for Beltrami using data analysis and mapping. After we have a better understanding of what groups are underrepresented, we will develop strategies to better these groups.

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

Sound wall: Door knocking on 3 occasions, 42 houses, calls to owners and residents who had not yet voted (2-3 attempts), neighborhood meeting, and a meeting with owners and residents eligible to vote for wall .

Roundabout Meetings: In partnership with CPED, an estimated 20 people attended neighborhood meetings regarding the roundabout project.

Regular BNC Board Meetings: On average, the BNC had 1-3 visitors or residents in addition to regular Board Member attendance.

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

Approximately 15 individuals volunteered in organization activities (meetings, festival, etc.).

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

Festival: 150
Garden: 25
Business Grants: 2
Housing Loans: 2
Roundabout Meetings: 20

- How many people receive your print publications?

Newsletters are mailed to all addresses (521) in Beltrami through USPS First Class Mail.

- How many people receive your electronic communications?

Our email distribution list includes 108 individuals. We also have a website, Facebook and Twitter account that we utilize for electronic communications.

2. 2013 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? I-35W Sound wall construction.
- Who was impacted? Residents adjacent or in close proximity to ROW.
- What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity? See below
- What was the outcome? Achieved goal of preventing sound wall construction.

Starting in November of 2011, some residents along the I-35W corridor were notified that Hennepin County, MNDOT and City of Mpls will be adding a new lane along I-35W Northbound between 4th Street SE and Johnson Street, and a new ramp from 4th street to Northbound I-35W. The initial roll-out of information for the affected residents did not go well. MNDOT planned the following meeting to let the neighborhoods know.

A 20-foot high wall is proposed to be built as part of the Fourth Street South on-ramp to 35-W project. MnDOT, Hennepin County and City of Minneapolis representatives will be available to answer questions. Copies of the postcard ballot will be available at the meeting.

According to the FHWA rules, not voting is counted as a yes vote: NO VOTE = NO, YES VOTE = YES, NOT VOTING = YES.

I-35W Noise Barriers
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING
December 14, 2011
5:30-7:00 Open House
6:00 Presentation with Q/A
Logan Recreation Center
Gymnasium 690 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis

The overall project, a joint effort of Hennepin County, MnDOT and the City of Minneapolis:

- Will add a new ramp from 4th Street South to northbound I-35W
- Will add a lane on northbound I-35W between 4th Street SE and Johnson Street exit
- May install noise barriers (depending on results of voting)
- Is scheduled for completion in November 2012

Noise barrier decision process

- Noise analysis performed according to Federal Highway Administration rules
 - Cost effectiveness has been determined, based on noise reduction levels and cost to build walls
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- Voting by property owners and residents who would receive a reduction in noise of 5 dBA or more.
- Noise barriers will be constructed unless votes for a given wall are 51% against construction

For more information, contact:

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or visit the project web site:

www.hennepin.us(Search: 4th Street South ramp)

During this meeting, MNDOT discovered that the majority of the residents were very upset, and decided to postpone any further forward motion on this project until Spring of 2013, to give themselves time to come up with a better way to get the word out to the neighborhoods.

In June 2013, the neighborhoods started to get more information regarding the new procedures for voting on the sound walls. MNDOT sent out voting packages to affected residents as they did in 2011, but changed the way the envelopes looked to make them more visible to residents. Numerous mailings were sent in order to get as many votes as possible. MNDOT worked very closely with the neighborhoods to make the information as accessible as possible. In the Beltrami neighborhood specifically (who decided as a whole that they didn't have the sound wall erected), Scott Pedersen worked with resident Sonya Burke to go door knocking three times. He also went into the neighborhood once by himself. As a result of the updated procedures and the door knocking efforts, the neighborhood's ultimate goal of NOT have the sound wall built was successful.

See attached map outlining properties affected and targeted in outreach.

3. 2013 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2013:

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

Two major accomplishments for the BNC in 2013 include the Business Grant Program and our Neighborhood Festival.

Business Grant:

The BNC Neighborhood Commercial Matching Grants Program provided dollar-to-dollar matching grants of up to \$1,000 per business or property for a variety of eligible improvements to the façade of the commercial property. Loan application packets were distributed to all Beltrami Businesses. Two businesses applied and were approved for the full \$1,000 in matching grant.

The business owners directly benefited from the grant program as a financial means to make needed upgrades to their façade. The immediate neighbors, the Beltrami Neighborhood, and the wider community benefited from these improvements as well.

Neighborhood Festival:

The BNC's annual Neighborhood Festival continues to be a highlighted accomplishment. Neighbors came together at Beltrami Park to enjoy conversation, games and ice cream. Providing an opportunity for residents to mingle and build relationships has proven successful in engaging residents in a casual format outside of regular BNC meetings.

4. *Housing*

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

The BNC spends an estimated 10% of its time on housing-related activities through monthly Board meetings, housing committee meetings, and housing loan activity.

5. *Financial Reports*

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

See attached.

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?

The Beltrami Neighborhood Council utilizes NCR staff (Jack Whitehurst, Judy Duffey, Robert Thompson) on a regular basis for advice, clarification, and general assistance. NCR has been responsive to our requests and is seen as an essential partner in neighborhood organizing.

We do suggest that NCR clarifies its scope of work and what services it offers. An explanation of NCEC would also be appreciated.

Regarding the roundabout project, Public Works staff was responsive and helpful. Public Works reached out to both the BNC and the neighborhood and the BNC think the interaction went well.

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? 3

2. *City Communications - effectiveness*

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

Information received from CPED is cryptic and hard to understand. Almost all notices require a call or email to City Hall for interpretation. Our most engaged residents (board and staff) do not understand the notice, let alone the general public. In addition, we receive very little notice for hearings. The BNC would like to see notices that are written in plain language (in addition to the code reference), sent both through the USPS and e-mail, with additional notice time. We often receive notices just a few days before the actual hearing, allowing us no time to organize our neighborhood in response. We would also like a courtesy call from City staff regarding any issue directly affecting the Beltrami neighborhood.

Day to day communications from NCR are both understandable and useful. We would like to have more information regarding NCR in general. We would also like to have a better understanding of NCR's and the neighborhood's role in engaging residents in filling City boards and commissions.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate overall communications from the City? 2

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 have said this before: We don't know the process of how the City notifies a neighborhood of activities. What does "activities" means?

On a scale of 1 to5, 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 wish the City departments would view the BNC and other neighborhood organizations as partners. Ideally, we would like to see and hear from representatives from the City departments on a regular basis. Instead, the norm is to not hear from City departments unless there is a problem or we request information.

We rely on our City Council member to help us gain access to City staff and departments.

5. ***City Assistance***

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

Again, we would like to know what NCR has to offer. We would love assistance with groups we struggle to engage, such as renters and those who speak no or little English.

The BNC would also like to know how NCR envisions our role in community participation.

On a scale of 1 to5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the assistance provided to your neighborhood by NCR? ___4___

6. ***Other comments?***

The questions asked in the CPP Annual Report seem to be the same or very similar each year. We do not seem to get any feedback on our suggestions or concerns. We would suggest a conversation in addition to this reporting form.