

Community Participation Program
Neighborhood Annual Report for 7/1/12 - 12/31/13

Neighborhood Organization: Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association
Contact Person: Scott McLaughlin
Email: scottymac215@gmail.com
Phone: 612.239.5368

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1. Stakeholder Involvement

What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2013?

The Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association (BMNA) worked hard this past year to involve residents in the decision making process of the neighborhood and to provide opportunities for residents to voice opinions and concerns. We continued to meet openly and publicly each month and encouraged community participation. One strategy that increased our meeting numbers involved preparing agendas further ahead of meetings and spreading the details to stakeholders. We also had several committees that were made up of residents not necessarily on the board of directors but rather had an interest in a specific purpose.

As usual we organized several major annual neighborhood events, giving the board opportunities to engage residents beyond monthly meetings. These included the Annual Meeting, Ice Cream Social, Fall Harvest Dinner, Saturnalia, Neighborhood Garage Sale, Garden Tour and the Sip and Stroll.

How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2013?

Through discussions with board members at our retreat we brainstormed ways to reach out to younger, older, and non-white members of the neighborhood. One strategy we identified was to look at each of our neighborhood events and target these groups to increase participation. It seems that neighbors who come to the events often become more engaged volunteers with time.

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

Data supports the notion that younger members of our neighborhood increasingly use social media to communicate rather than one-on-one interaction. We are continuing efforts to increase facebook, email, and twitter use with our communications.

What did not work so well? Why?

In general, board recruitment has been difficult. Lack of training in volunteer coordination and community organizing at the leadership level of the organization is missing.

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

We estimate that throughout the year we probably make direct contact with 250 residents through meetings and public information sessions. We decided at our board retreat to make a conscious effort to increase participation of our board members at social organization events to provide more opportunity for face to face discussions with residents.

How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

Counting board member volunteers we estimate roughly 150 various individuals provide time and talent to the organization as volunteers. We have begun an effort to better track this information.

How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?

If we add up the estimates provided by our neighborhood coordinator regarding participation at events we arrive at a number close to 2,500. Of course, some of these participants are counted more than once as they likely participate in more than one event.

How many people receive your print publications?

Every household in Bryn Mawr, roughly 1,400, receives a print copy of our monthly 'Bugle'. Additional copies are made available at some of our highly visited small businesses.

How many people receive your electronic communications? All residents have access to the 'Bugle' and additional information and links via our web page BMNA.org. We reach out to over 750 members by email, about 450 use the electronic bulletin board NextDoor Bryn Mawr, and our Facebook page has over 275 members. We have 72 followers on Twitter.

2. 2013 Highlights

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

One of the worst tragedies in the history of our neighborhood, and the city, was the Accent Signage shooting on September 27, 2012. Seven individuals lost their lives that day and the Bryn Mawr neighborhood was profoundly impacted.

The Executive Board of the BMNA met on the next day and discussed ways to support each other and our residents in the days ahead. Listening to the families of the victims and many of our residents was important in understanding how to respond to this senseless act of violence. A thoughtful and moving piece was written

in the Bugle by 3 board members, a vigil was organized, a documentary tribute to our longstanding UPS driver Keith Basinsky was created, and a group of residents began work on a long term effort to remember this tragedy. The "Garden of Hope and Healing" is in the final stages of planning and will be developed in the near future. The following poem was written by a neighbor:

"A poem of remembrance" by Scott Monge, Area 5

*The ascending towers stand in eastern view
Embracing the seasons in industrious aff air,*

*Yet on this autumn day and its rain overdue
Our western hills labored warmer in southern flair.*

*The great northern migration seemingly silent
Over the signage to aid those unseeing*

*As the reasoning of the birds flew absent,
In the menacing shadows of on man's being.*

*Shuffled in these shadows and employment of tomorrow
A storm broke out in unyielding consequence,*

*Thundering in triggered blasts of mounting sorrow,
Until destruction within silenced its own residence .*

*Through the changing colors of reason ;
Each leaf will reveal its circumstance ,*

*Though in this storm, those who were stricken to outrun...
Lay in the vital color drawn from their stance.*

*Throughout these hills and the hearts of kin
Beholding impassioned harmony in loving creed ,*

*The sirens were unconquerable in our western twin;
That in our prayers this reality would recede .*

*Upon the parched earth as if returning to dust,
Within this unbidden migration of those from their nest;*

*We mournfully pray will be guided in our faith we entrust
As the sorrowed leaves of autumn now gather and rest .*

3. 2013 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2013.

The BMNA Board created and led a much needed Board Development Retreat held at the Minneapolis NCR office in early 2013. It was attended by all but 3 of our board members and was a very positive and constructive use of our time, considering most of our board has turned over since our last board development meeting several years ago.

In July of 2012 the BMNA brought back to life the neighborhood "Garden Tour" after a 4-year absence. A dozen gardens were highlighted and despite high temperatures over 350 attended! There are some very nice color photos available in the August Bugle at BMNA.org. The event brought a new level of energy to our community garden group and a more stable framework for the maintenance of our many community gardens.

Our neighborhood coordinator, Patty Wycoff, was instrumental in improving our "Sip and Stroll" small business event. About 250 residents walked about on a pleasant evening socializing and learning a great deal about what our small business community has to give to Bryn Mawr. Fifteen (15) of these businesses kept their doors open late for the event.

Another noteworthy statistic resulted from our "get out the vote" campaign, which led to possibly the highest voter turnout rate in the city: nearly 92%.

4. Housing

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

Our efforts in housing used about 15% of our resources. The final phase of our rain garden program and participation in the Hennepin County Penn Avenue Community Works Project were the primary areas of work in housing.

5. Financial Reports

Please provide an income and expense report for your organization for the year.

Attached you will find an income and expense report for this entire 18 month period. Also included is an itemized list of expenses.

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?

Besides much communication we Neighborhood and Community Relations, we spent the majority of city communication with the mayor's office and city council, CPED, Public Works and Minneapolis Public Schools. It is probably worth noting that we collaborate often with the Minneapolis Park Board. We have found city employees very cooperative and helpful in our work. Sometimes it can be difficult to connect with and find the right person on a particular project.

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?

Mostly. In cases when the reports are complicated and technical we have been fortunate to get assistance from a neighbor in Bryn Mawr. Otherwise our experience has been that most city employees take the time to explain issues for understanding.

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

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 feel fortunate to being well connected to the city.

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? ___ 5 ___

4. City Departments

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

A group of us discussed this question recently and thought it would be useful for the city to regularly present small workshops for neighborhood groups on how our city works, call it Minneapolis City Government 101. New board members of neighborhood groups and others might be asked to attend.

5. City Assistance

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

It would be nice to keep making efforts to streamline the CPP/NPP process and insist on more face-to-face contact with stakeholders on this program, especially with officers of the BMNA.

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 ___