

Neighborhood Building Blocks Fund - Public Input Sessions

Dover, September 14, 2016

Overview/Presentation:

Matt Lintner:

- Offered summary of Fund followed by introductions of NBBF board and staff members present.
- Explained role of agencies that comprise NBBF board of directors.
- How can the agencies and programs work together with more collaboration with reference to community development, particularly as it relates to crime prevention in Delaware's hardest hit and highest crime downtown areas?
- These public input sessions offer opportunity to talk about issues and opportunities in an effort to bring people together and better address crime in our hardest hit communities statewide.
- Provided overview of purpose of the fund: Strengthen neighborhoods and prevent crime; improved crime prevention and citizen empowerment
- (See also September 13 notes for Georgetown meeting and Power Point presentation.)

AJ Roop:

- Crime Strategies UNIT of the DOJ created recently to proactively address crime and strategies to prevent crime. New projects: nuisance abatement issues; SEPTED – empowering communities to engage in correcting situations in safety, such as correcting lighting, buildings are in good condition, it will help to keep crime down; after school programs are helpful (3-7 pm.) such as sports, tutoring, creative arts;

Connie Holland:

- Land use is paramount and a cohesive plan is critical: county to county, to city, to state, etc. Zoning is for health, safety and welfare of community. Comprehensive plans are the vision for the community much like a home-based budget, and these plans have the mission for the development of the land. After creating comp plans, OSPC found that they weren't being implemented.
- "Healthy" communities were then pursued, which considers the World Health Organization's definition.
 - World Health Organization definition of "healthy communities". See **ATTACHMENT A**.
- Provided explanation of Downtown Development Districts (DDD) program and locations: Dover, Georgetown, Harrington, Milford, Seaford, Smyrna, Wilmington.
- Some of these NBBF funds have been invested in planning and projects that will be synergistic with other state and local programs and activities.

Marlena Gibson:

- Represents the State Housing finance agency.
- Rehabilitation of housing and new housing is good but housing alone is not enough. We must consider blight and vacancy. Support strategic efforts for challenged housing areas in blighted, distressed areas.

- Considering now the synergies of housing, projects, activities, needs, appropriateness, etc.
- Strong Neighborhoods Funds: Addresses demolition, acquisition, rehabilitation; vacant and abandoned properties often by non-profit housing developers
- DDD: Spurs private investment in designated downtowns and neighborhoods; rebate program for real property investments to address physical properties; available for homeowner and commercial property owner. Owners and tenants are both eligible. Wide variety of small/large projects.
- Seeking effective layering between Strong Neighborhoods Fund, DDD funds, and NBBF.

Bernice Whaley:

- Economic development within small business and downtowns to spur opportunity.

Diane Laird:

- Provided overview of Downtown Delaware that includes designated Main Street communities, commercial district affiliates, and small business owners. Designated contacts within these communities are eligible to apply for funds.

Matt Lintner provided overview of priority types of proposals: (See Power Point, slide 11)

- address unmet needs of high crime areas statewide
- improve resources and opportunities for at-risk juveniles and adolescents
- increase the use of planning that incorporates crime prevention strategies
- complement projects funded by DSHA's Strong Neighborhoods Revolving Housing Fund
- support revitalization strategies in and around Delaware's Downtown Development Districts
- support community planning consistent with OSPC Healthy Communities principles
- support communities in DEDO's Main Street Program
- Questions posed for comment:
 - What strategies or types of programs have been demonstrated to be effective at preventing crime and strengthening neighborhoods?
 - How can we improve Delaware's use of those successful strategies and improve the community development process?

Public input from attendees:

Ken Abraham (Citizens for Criminal Justice)

- Single most effective way to end crime is to end the war on drugs. DE has legalized the sale of medical marijuana. The illegal sale of marijuana is a problem in DE.
- Planning and zoning...good to see comprehensive effort. But it will not work as well as it might if the drug problem were solved.
- Too many citizens see police as the enemy; caseloads of judges in DE are too large and they don't have adequate information for fair sentencing.

- Community level....more feet on the street are needed, such as “Neighborhood Watches”; in Dover PD plays basketball with kids and citizens and this creates good rapport.
- In Dover on New Street: blighted houses have been removed and the area has vastly improved.
- Angel Program/Gloucester initiative (ask Major Purcell and Dover PD; NCC looking at it now)
 - <http://paarius.org/gloucester/>

Jim Purcell (Communities in Schools in DE – Integrated student supports model; establishing relationship with a caring adult and ensure that services get to students, via the school, the “hub” of our communities using site coordinators.)

- Tier I – Crime prevention, college readiness, Food Bank, create connections with Jr. Achievement.
- Tier II – Group interventions via speakers in group settings empowering students to go back into community more successfully.
- Tier III - Health and social services and faith-based initiatives. Case plan developed for each student.

Anne Smith (Martin Luther King Jr. Education and Community Center; partner with Dover Housing Authority)

- Services are bundled.
- Preventing crime: real problem lies with the family; cannot address crime without addressing the parents. People need healthy homes, free from molds, insects, and a healthy attitude. How do we produce healthy parents? Funds are needed to learn how to be a healthy parent. Home economics teaching/learning is gone – it’s not available anymore. This would help people learn about how to have healthy relationships and dating, for instance.
- Teens would like to learn a skill and interact with people, learn what it means to work and how to spend their money wisely.

Julie Logan (Individual; previously state employed, now receiver of social services assistance; two children)

- “It starts at home.” Children used to be creative and over time, children were changed; some succeeded, some made wrong choices, often poor choices of friends. Most of the parents did not have money and had poor health habits, no transportation, poor food choices for themselves and children, no after school activities.
- Boys/Girls Club and Boy Scouts should allow free passes/attendance, and provide a shuttle bus for transportation. This would provide things to do...fix the little kids before they make the poor choices.
- Nip the tiny crimes, start young and hold the youngsters accountable.
- Provide free breakfast for every child in school.
- Consider Del Tech culinary school to teach youth.

Alan Justis (team coordinator for Boys/Girls Club)

- Team program is completely free (12 and up); markets in local school districts; provides food, field trips, prevention education; programs begins 4:30-5 p.m., BGC would pick up the kids from school/home.
- Additional funding would allow for transportation.
- One transportation pickup is now at Simon Circle.

Simone Roper (Boys/Girls Club representative)

- Community center is needed in Dover and each city/community for GED and where parents can go for parenting classes.
 - Comment by Connie Holland: OSPC is researching hospitals in Virginia, California that have wellness centers available to address community/family issues.

AJ Roop (DOJ Crime Strategies Unit) posed questions to teens:

- What things occurred in your life to make BGC available to you? How can other kids access?
- Not everyone likes basketball...what should be offered for young kids to involve them and get kids to buy into these opportunities?
 - *Teens did not respond specifically to these questions.*

Chanda (Individual with three boys and two girls; in Delaware for three years now; four of her kids have been in BGC and many have utilized transportation.)

- It starts at home with young kids.
- Hard for parents to oversee kids when they are working.
- Additional transportation options would help. Kent County gym available to youth Tuesday nights and Sunday morning and at other times, only for adults to attend gym. Skating rink give passes, but transportation is lacking. Teenagers may like bowling but transportation is lacking.
- Arts programs; music lessons would be valued.
- Boys & Girls Club (BGC) works well in the summer; organized league sports are very expensive.
- Sponsors and mentors would help. Big Brothers/Sisters possibly very helpful, mentor two days a week. Is DSU a possibility? Students as mentors, possibly help with transportation.
- Showing need is necessary for BGC to respond re: transportation.
 - Connie Holland: Habitat for Humanity skills to participate. Good jobs in construction currently. Need to education younger population in building the community and homes.
- Chanda was a NYC resident in the 80's; more police involvement at younger age; community policing was successful then and she believes would be successful again.

Joe Myer (NCALL and Restoring Central Dover)

- Six work groups currently that address housing, safety, economic development, and other issues.
- What are best practices for providing workforce training in construction? NCALL would be responsive but don't know how to do it.

- James Sills asked how mini-grants have been dispersed by NCALL. Possible opportunity for citizen groups and police through mini-grants? Mr. Myer explained that NCALL's mini-grant opportunities that have been funded through seed-money through corporations. Six work groups talk about needs and develop a proposal. Steering committee reviews two page grant applications: façade cleaning, clean-up date (The Bridge FM radio station clean up), street lights added with matching funds from the city, murals, community dinners accompanied with health education, community gardens.

Mark Reed (Individual, DSU graduate, owns a bail bonds company.)

- Encouraged the young people present by explaining that they can run a business just like he does.
- People commit crimes because they lack something...food, money, things to do, etc.
- Is there a program for teens to learn entrepreneurship?
- Huge drug epidemic in Delaware exacerbated by loss of DuPont, Chrysler, GM jobs.
- Often people are finding a way to survive by selling drugs.
- Reach the people where they are.
- Increase mentorship, increase funds to small businesses that are more labor-engaged, working with their hands, give kids responsibility and hold them accountable.
 - Bernice Whaley commented about Junior Achievement of Delaware and its teaching for career pathways.

Receipt of applications is targeted for this fall (later October/November).

Presentation/audio of meeting: <http://dedo.delaware.gov/Small-Business/Downtown-Delaware>

For information: <http://dedo.delaware.gov/Small-Business/Downtown-Delaware> or contact Diane Laird: Diane.Laird@state.de.us or 302-577-8477

Guest Attendees: Suchy Hiraesave (Boys & Girls Clubs of DE - BGCDE); Steve Twilley, Downtown Milford Inc.; Joe Myer, NCALL, Restoring Central Dover; Jim Purcell, Communities in Schools, DE; Ken Abraham, Citizens for Criminal Justice; Anne Smith, Martin Luther King, Jr. Education and Community Center; George Krupanski, Simone Roper, Carlos Thomas, Xavier Fagans, Kylene Thomas, Trey Voshell, Demetrious Trisvan, Allen Justis; Ryan Dougherty, and Benjamin Moses (BGCDE); Mark Reed, Lyons Bail Bonds; Julie Logan

Board members present: Bernice Whaley (NBBF Board Chair), Connie Holland (OSPC), Kathleen Jennings (DOJ Matt Lintner (DOJ), Greg Patterson (DOJ), James Sills (Member at large)

Staff present: David Edgell (OSPC), Marlena Gibson (DSHA), Diane Laird (DEDO), Larry Lewis, Esq. (DOJ), AJ Roop (DOJ)

ATTACHMENT A

Definition of a “Healthy Community”

According to the World Health Organization, health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of infirmity. A **healthy community** is one that continuously creates and improves both its physical and social environments, helping people to support one another in aspects of daily life and to develop to their fullest potential. Healthy places are those designed and built to improve the quality of life for all people who live, work, worship, learn, and play within their borders -- where every person is free to make choices amid a variety of healthy, available, accessible, and affordable options.¹

Healthy Communities are based on the following principles²:

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.
- Social, environmental and economic factors are important determinants of human health and are inter-related.
- People cannot achieve their fullest potential unless they are able to take control of those things which determine their well-being.
- All sectors of the community are inter-related; sectors need to share their knowledge, expertise and perspectives and work together to create a healthy community.

Qualities of a Healthy Community include:

- Clean and safe physical environment
- Peace, equity and social justice
- Adequate access to food, water, shelter, income, safety, work and recreation for all
- Adequate access to health care services
- Opportunities for learning and skill development
- Strong, mutually supportive relationships and networks
- Workplaces that are supportive of individual and family well-being
- Wide participation of residents in decision-making
- Strong local cultural and spiritual heritage
- Diverse and vital economy
- Protection of the natural environment
- Responsible use of resources to ensure long term sustainability

¹ Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/about.htm>

² Adapted from Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition <http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/what-makes-a-healthy-community>