

Neighborhood Building Blocks Fund - Public Input Sessions

Wilmington, September 15, 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.
- Provided overview of potential activities and project types.
- See also September 13 summary for Georgetown meeting, September 14 summary for Dover, and Power Point presentation.

Kathleen Jennings:

- We need to understand from the experts – the attendees – how to better strengthen communities and reduce crime.
- Background on establishment of NBBF, including law, economic development, housing, planning. "Anything that reduces crime is our job."
- Many things affect crime: Streetlights, cameras, playgrounds, activities, presence of people, vacant lots replaced with urban gardens, farmers markets, corner stores, greenspace, often with opportunities for nutrition counseling, walking and enjoying the playground and parks. Healthy trucks and education have been provided in Camden parks, as an example of educating and providing the community with opportunities for healthy living. Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED). Changes in the physical landscape (broken windows, boarding up and securing vacant houses, removing vacant buildings) can reduce crime.
- Beyond changing the physical environment, ensure that youth have something to do. Keep teenagers and school children active in productive ways, especially after school (3-7 p.m.) I.e.; sports, mentoring, educational activities, skill-building of all kinds, creative arts and giving them a safe haven. Higher graduation rates = lower crime.

Anas Ben Addi:

- Value of several departments joining forces (DEDO, DOJ, DSHA, OSP, as well as DNREC, DeIDOT and other agencies).
- Before 2008, there was not as much concern about a variety of housing opportunities. Now housing/public housing considers safety, education and transportation. Need to do "community

housing development”...more than individual housing, but rather 12, 14 20 housing adjacent or in a community.

- Strong Neighborhood Fund is a revolving fund to be used for the acquisition, renovation, and sale of vacant, abandoned, foreclosed or blighted property throughout the State.
- Downtown District Designation (DDD) helps developers and individuals redevelop both commercial and residential properties in designated downtown areas: Dover, Georgetown, Harrington, Milford, Seaford, Smyrna, and Wilmington.

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. Now, 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**.
- For a healthy, prosperous Delaware, downtowns need to be lifted up. The DDD has been critical for building business districts and their integrated housing.
- Some of these NBBF funds have been invested in planning and projects that will be synergistic with other state and local programs and activities.

Bernice Whaley:

- Economic development within small business and downtowns to spur opportunity.
- DEDO collaborates communities, local economic development agencies, as well as other statewide agencies.

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.
- Foundational component of strong downtowns are small businesses, thus Downtown Delaware focuses much on small business development.

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:

Dr. Ray Williams (Sr. Pastor of Harvest Community Center – corner of Lancaster and Woodlawn - and Harvest Christian Academy)

- Education and economics are top of need.
- 1-2 digit math and reading; before/after care; would like to purchase a gym to be open for 13-19 year olds from 4-9 p.m. because these kids don't have anything to do. Transportation is lacking. They need to provide training, activities, teaching...not just sports.
- Currently his church provides an evening for people to talk about/confess and bring their initiatives anonymously. They've had great successes in people getting out of crime.
- Provide us services so that territories can be safely crossed.
- Rehabbing facilities; buying houses and rehabbing to increase homeownership.
- Homeownership is key.
- Community policing with individuals (like Dr. Williams) to address issues "on the ground".

Bill Pearson (resident of Trinity Vicinity, member of UD) (See **ATTACHMENT B.**)

- Surveillance cameras and signage to let people know that they are being watched.
- Criminals do what they do because they won't be seen and because they can get away with it.
- Provided examples of wireless digital surveillance camera installation in Philadelphia. Promote the existence of wireless, digital surveillance cameras on street corners; accessible via Internet by Smart Phone.
- Crime Stoppers: People are rewarded anonymously by calling in issues.
- "Next Door" is a neighborhood software program that provides instant alerts created in California. Free program. Now 109 people engaged; 1600 neighbors are in Next Door in Wilmington. (<https://nextdoor.com/>)
- Described the Wilmington Citizens Police Academy (WCPA); three group meetings annually and an alumni association conceptualized; there are about 150 alumni at present.

VaShun Turner (Arthur J. Turner Scholarship Foundation; Community Dream Team; recently elected)

- Recently engaged community residents to clean the streets; kids, adults, yellow trash can initiative in Hilltop area. Clean-ups have reduced crime.
- Kids are missing life skills issues. Need programs that address how to cook, wash clothes, survival.
- Plan with regard to housing: Kids are not going to community centers anymore. Fix vacant and abandoned houses to become places to learn life skills as an innovative way to "meet the kids where they are".

- Matt Lintner comment: What are we going to do about vacant lands? Land banking would allow city to control properties. Need proposals to rehab vacancies.

Bobbi Britain (Blueprint Community in Northeast Wilmington, APEX)

- Community (NE Wilmington) needs a comprehensive plan for healthy living.

Barbara Buzz (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation)

- 2015-2016 statewide program to provide pre-employment skill-building, internships.
- Integrate persons with a disability.
- Juvenile delinquency is addressed with rehab services, would like to expand their program. Kids need jobs, but first need social and soft skills and job training to prepare them.
- Seeking financial partners for DVR for expansion of services serving youth 14-24.
- Teach about expungement, etc., to help those with a criminal history.

AJ English (Goes into schools to do “hands on” with youth, in households, community centers, probation offices; started a program in VA, now in DE.)

- Instead of waiting for kids to become criminals, especially since the culture puts them at risk from the start, put programs in place proactively. Teach kids life skills. Teach them a trade. Give them a safe place to go during hours that they need a safe haven.
- Put mentors in place to help them.

Pastor Lottie Lee Davis (Jesus Coming church, 4th Street)

- Life skills for youth; church dining hall is used as a gym, for tutoring.
- Address the needs of the youth.
- One program requires parents to participate thus the parents are getting skills as well.
- Provide opportunities for work experience.
- Across from the church are seven vacant buildings/properties; children are helpful in cleaning trash from them. Children could be tasked with painting the buildings. Church is considering purchasing those properties to rehab into first floor retail/commercial and upper floor housing, and provide small business opportunities (like an incubator) and possibly training.

Emmanuel Magruder (Wells Fargo Bank; lives in W. Center City and is running for city council)

- Young people have lost hope and hope has been replaced by hate. Kids are angry because of circumstances they are in.
- Now beginning to address self-love.
- Need skill set to live, work, and read.
- Need mentors and cheerleaders and teachers (not only professional teachers) to encourage young people.

Priscilla Turgon (Project New Start re-entry program - PNS)

- Most participants are from Wilmington; 97% of graduates go to work.
- Judges refer to the PNS program.
- Three years out, 25-30% recidivism rate.

- Expand opportunities for Internet access. Kids need Internet access since kids are given computers and they cannot access Internet at home. (Schools and McDonald's are hot spots currently.)

Carvella Jackson (Harvest Community Center/Church)

- Need comprehensive training for parents.
- Mental health and drug addiction concerns...need "one stop" comprehensive centers to receive training. Children suffer from parents with these health problems and addictions.

Greta Colgan (Founded Lancaster Corridor Association - LCRA, Beyond the Studs, runs a small business on Lancaster Ave.)

- LCRA wanted to bring businesses to the area, which is crime-ridden, and the environment does not look happy/healthy.
- Arts community projects...could something like this be done on Lancaster Ave. area but with a technology focus? Church at one end could serve as an anchor. Charter school of Wilmington (technology-oriented) could be involved. Could be a "gateway to the city" that would foster businesses, and mentors as well.
- Fix sidewalks, incentivize paint/touch-up through façade improvement programs, and provide trash cans.

Rosalyn Ponzo (Girls Beauty Camp cosmetology school)

- Young girls can learn to take care of their own hair and overall hygiene. Children have never been taught some of these basic life skills.
- Mentoring young ladies about women leaders through a book.
- Has initiated a community fashion show (Hicks Anderson and Hilltop) for young ladies.

Daniel Robinson (concerned citizen from Browntown district)

- Need stronger civic association; stronger block captains, mentors, role models in Browntown community.
- Increase homeownership. Stronger leaders are needed.
- Volunteers with kids in a "Hope Zone" type area in Southbridge. Crime was down during the four years that he volunteered there several years ago. Wilmington needs more Hope Zones.

Neil Reeves, Founder and CEO of Fathers Mentoring Fathers

- Engage fathers more in the communities.
- "When fathers are at the peak of their game, families are at the peak of their game also." Many fathers remain at "the base of the mountain" and never climb out of destructive behavior.
- Fire stations are near our homes, and we pay for fire stations to ensure safety of every home, for that protects us all. We need a similar model for fathers/mentoring to protect our families and neighborhoods.

Pastor Lewis (also participant of a civic association)

- Worked with Matt Denn on a community project and crime was negligible.
- Deals with trauma and children.

Sarah Lester (Cornerstone West CDC)

- Confirming that the NBBF funds that were used for surveillance in Lincoln/Union business district have been effective.
- A (police?) presence in the corridor would be effective
- CPTED would be helpful. (Just ran a local Build a Better Block initiative.)
- Pop Up program in business districts could be effective in providing opportunities for small businesses and recruitment of business.

Maria Matos (runs Latin Community Center)

- Landlords have vacant properties...write off for property owners...eliminate vacant properties
- Enforce laws...put trash in trash cans.
- Increase homeownership.
- Be serious about education.
- Bring back community policing; require police officers to live in the city.
- Give funds to the charter schools.

Melva Robinson (Safe Home Services, Inc., Safe Journey Home for re-entry; home on East side that is used for transitional needs)

- Youth and middle aged (30-40 year olds) that need jobs, have records.
- Need better understanding of how to navigate the disability benefits, social security benefits, budgets, etc.
- Concern about investors. What are the investors going to do with their house purchases? Are they really investing for good community value or for personal gain? Investors purchase, rehab, and sell for great profit. How do we enable people to invest in their own communities and increase homeownership?

Helen Fuhrmann, (Quaker Hill Neighborhood Association)

- Does anyone know how much it cost to “turn Camden around”?
 - Kathleen Jennings will respond individually.
- Suggestion: Baltimore model...program picks up a child from birth to age 18, requires parents to be in school, in training, in rehab, at work (and off the street). Community centers could be used and expanded upon.
- Local community school run by local teachers, comprehensive program utilizing volunteers, retirees; offering arts, singing, music lessons, laptops, etc.

Christian Willauer (Director of Community and Economic Development, Cornerstone CDC)

- Strength of the DDD is that it is a significant incentive for development.
- Neighborhoods have done a lot with Blueprint Communities for neighborhood-based plans. Implement the plans.
- Prioritize communities that have already developed a neighborhood plan/strategy/vision, and direct funds toward implementation to see the plans come to reality. NBBF is perfect way to provide implementation funding.
- Coordination of youth centers.

- Jim Sills commented regarding the Harvest Church pastor...the comment the pastor made regarding repeatedly giving funds to the “same agencies” that are perhaps politically connected. In response, Dr. Williams, Pastor of Harvest Church clarified that he would like to see funds extended to programs and entities that have proven records...”fresh faces”...”younger” organizations that have not been funded previously, perhaps like Harvest Church that has a ten year record of success. In addition, come up with broader strategies that will combine efforts of many to address the needs of many.

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: Mark Reed, Lyons Bail Bonds; George Krepanski, Tyrone Perry, Sharon Biddle of Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware); Bill Pearson, Trinity Vicinity PA Ave. and Rt. 92; A.J. English and Cheryl English, English Lessons Youth Mentoring; Rosalyn Ponzo, Girls Beauty Camp; Pastor I. McIff; Pastor Lottie Lee Davis, Be Ready CDC; Vandrick Robinson, Browntown Community; Neil Reeves, Fathers Mentoring Fathers; Carvella Jacksen, Faith Harvest Worship Center; Wayne and Barbara Smith, New Eden CDC; Priscilla Turgon, Project New Start Inc.; Jessica Molina, AECOM); Dr. Ray Williams, Pastor, Harvest CDC; Maria Matos, Latin American Community Center; Sarah Lester, West Side Grows Together; Mary Jo DiAngelo, Latin American Community Center; Helen Fuhrmann, Quaker Hill Neighborhood Association; Shulce Arthur, concerned citizen; Brea Arthur, community; Tom Fruehstorfer, Planner, City of Newark; Bobbi Britton, Blueprint Community of Northeast Wilmington; Rick Ferrell, Retail Market Answers, LLC; Barbara Boese, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; VaShun Turner, Arthur J. Turner Scholarship Foundation; Virgil Pacelli, Artisan Dental Lab; Greta Colgan, Lancaster Corridor Association, Beyond the Studs; John Flaherty, public; Johane Cherico, Latin American Community Center; K. Emmanuel Magruder, Wells Fargo Bank; Melva Robinson, Safe Home Services, Inc., Christian Willauer, Cornerstone West CDC

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

Staff present: David Edgell (OSPC), Herb Inden (OSPC), Diane Laird (DEDO), 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>

ATTACHMENT B

Ideas to Help Stop (minimize) Crime

Delaware Attorney General Matt Denn's request to Delaware Citizens
The News Journal - Wednesday, 9/14/2016

Premise: Criminals do what they do because they believe:

- 1- They won't be seen and
- 2- They will get away with it.

Five ideas are proposed here:

1- Promote and expand the concept of neighbor's, living on a street corner, purchasing and installing; Wireless, Internet enabled, Digital Surveillance Cameras, that may be accessible by our local public safety officials. Note: this idea requires neighborhood signage. Sign's throughout the neighborhood; alerting criminals that their presence, actions, etc; in this particular neighborhood is being recorded by surveillance cameras and monitored by the local public safety officials. Note these cameras are available at local retail stores; Staples, Best Buy, etc. for appr. \$100.00 per camera, including the hard drive and Internet access code.

2- Promote the (free) Internet - Neighborhood software program, "NextDoor". Created and monitored out of California. This free web based program encourages neighbor's to get to know each other, dialogue on a daily basis, socialize, communicate, collaborate, etc. This program defines neighborhood's through out our country and invites them to join "NextDoor" based on two major rules: 1- You must live in the house you say you live in and 2- You must use your real name. Trinity Vicinity (TV) neighborhood, joined Jan. 13, 2013 and now (Sept. 2016) has over 109+ residents, with the ability to text each other on a daily basis (including "Alerts"). Additionally, 14? other nearby Wilmington neighborhood's have joined NextDoor, with an estimated 1500+ Wilmington neighbor's having the ability to text each other instantly. Note: each neighborhood has designated "Leads" who have the responsibility to monitor individual(s) dialogue, comments, etc, based on published rules created by the NextDoor company in Calif. A summary of TV NextDoor is available upon request plus a live demo may be arranged at an agreed upon date.

3- Conduct a Wilmington Citizens' Police Academy (WCPA) class at least three times per year; including, graduates being offered the opportunity to join a Wilmington CPA Alumni Association. Create a nonprofit corporation, highlighting how graduates of WCPAA may volunteer their time to assist our WPD. Note, there is a County in Florida that has two police officers working full time to schedule over 200 graduate volunteers.

4- Have, the News Journal (TNJ) publicize all arrest, which resulted in our WPD using **anonymous**; multimedia, surveillance cameras, neighborhood networks and individuals receiving monies anonymously, for alerting our WPD of crimes being committed (this eliminates "snitches get stitches" belief).

5- Reward citizens anonymously, who spend their (personal) money on promoting public safety (reference #1 and #2) using the "Crime Stoppers" philosophy and documented "Rewards List". Note: please contact the local Crime Stoppers Representative to obtain a copy of this document.

Sincerely,
Bill Pearson - iamwlp@gmail.com
Resident - Trinity Vicinity Wilmington, DE
September 14, 2016

This document was presented to: Delaware Attorney General, Matt Denn at a public meeting, September 15, 2016, held at West End Neighborhood House, 701 N. Lincoln St. Wilmington, DE