

Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc.
Community Participation Program

2011 ANNUAL REPORT
June 2011 - September 2012

1. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over the course of the last 16 months Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc. (EPNI) has engaged in an ever growing number of activities, navigated changing political boundaries, embraced new opportunities in the neighborhood, and forged new alliances all while addressing issues of ongoing organizational sustainability and reduced staff. It has been a momentous year, remarkable in many ways, especially for the external events that have triggered an avalanche of opportunities that will continue to impact the neighborhood and the organization for years to come.

Stadium Position Statement

With increased publicity regarding a new Vikings stadium Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc. was pressured to take a stand in support of a specific site as other neighborhoods and entities weighed in. EPNI did not think that it had the necessary information to make a decision that would support, or not, any of the suggested locations. Rather, the community was prepared to make a statement based on the ongoing education, planning and preparation that had been underway for years: In July 2011 EPNI issued: *The Metrodome, Prospects for a New Vikings Stadium, and the Future of Development in Elliot Park and Downtown East Neighborhoods*. This statement supported reinvestment and smart urban development in the district whether or not the Vikings stayed or moved out of the district. EPNI distributed it widely and we became aware of more voices across the city echoing the premise of the statement. Whatever might happen to the Metrodome it was paramount to many that attention be paid to reinvestment in the district in order to rebuild the neighborhood fabric.

Strategic Planning

For most of the year the Board of Directors was engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process. In July 2011 the board approved a strategic plan, a plan that emphasized efforts to develop housing opportunities in the neighborhood that would in turn result in resident investment and neighborhood stability; increased safety, wellness and vitality; cultural amenities and a growing sense of place; and new commerce bringing goods, services and jobs into the neighborhood. For the most part it was a confirming commitment to continue the work that had been ongoing for years and a validation of the importance of this work that had been undertaken

for so long by so many in an effort to stabilize and revitalize the neighborhood. Throughout the rest of the year staff worked with the board to define the milestones and goals. Staff then developed a comprehensive work plan for 2012. In the end, due to external events and approved funding for a new Vikings stadium, the work plan was revisited three times for minor adjustments and once for a serious overhaul. With this backdrop the work of the organization continued steadfast despite the changing winds, sustainability uncertainties and reduced staffing.

CPED Great Streets Grant

Work was completed on this grant project to formulate and begin implementation of a targeted catalytic redevelopment strategy for three priority sites along Chicago Avenue. The success of the project lay not in the completed deliverables but in the knowledge gleaned: That neighborhood development and reinvestment was increasingly and directly linked to the future status of the metro dome site.

CPED History Project & Report

Neighborhood history is important to the community and guides projects and development decisions. EPNI was pleased to work with CPED facilitating consultant work to research the role the medical community played from the early growth of Elliot Park to the present day. The research is documented in the final report, posted on the CPED website and linked from our website for public access: *Elliot Park: A Neighborhood Caring for It's Community. A History of Elliot Park's Healthcare and Social Services*. The report will provide the backdrop for future walking tours.

First Covenant Church/Salvation Army Temporary Shelter

EPNI began in 1976 with volunteers working together to stabilize the community, coordinate needed social services and to develop affordable housing opportunities. Years later the community has accomplished all of that and is now focused on creating a balance of housing opportunities that will help to grow the required demographics that will encourage small business growth and bring community based businesses and services back to the neighborhood. Hence, in 2010 when the Salvation Army wanted to locate a temporary winter homeless shelter at First Covenant Church EPNI brought them together with the community for a conversation about the project. The result was a respectful agreement for a one-season winter shelter and a reporting mechanism to keep the community connected. By the next year the need for the shelter had not only not declined but was growing and the church was seeking to provide a seasonal shelter for the next five years. Again EPNI brought the community together to participate in the discussion and the agreement process. This year when the church was asked by the Salvation Army to expand the season and open at least one month earlier, EPNI again facilitated the community conversation. It is clear that Elliot Park continues to be the neighborhood of choice for expanded social services and temporary-to-permanent housing solutions. We are currently exploring a forum for all downtown neighborhoods to come together and become better

informed about downtown homelessness and the work that is being done; to discuss the concerns about downtown homelessness; and, to participate in solutions that can be embraced by all of the downtown communities.

Elliot Park Housing Inventory

In an effort to increase a diversified housing inventory as directed in the Strategic Plan, and also to address community concerns about the growing influence of affordable/supported housing and social services in the neighborhood, EPNI worked with CURA and Humphrey Institute students to conduct an inventory of existing housing. The study mapped residential housing, types of housing, rental units, ownership units, institutional beds and more. The maps and graphs provide a realistic picture of current neighborhood housing and will help inform decisions about future housing, types of housing, and location of housing and best practices for land use.

Stadium Planning

With a new Vikings stadium underway EPNI was invited to serve on the City Stadium Implementation Committee which will generally be "...responsible for ensuring the highest quality stadium design; for developing a planning vision for the larger area surrounding the stadium that includes Elliot Park and that maximizes the one billion dollar investment for the City and all residents; and for developing a land-use strategy for managing pre-game events that ensures a great experience for fans and for the residents of Elliot Park and other surrounding neighborhoods." EPNI now also serves on two more of the City subcommittees: Stadium Planning and Stakeholder Experience. Additionally EPNI will serve on the 2025 Development Committee, a committee of the Downtown Council.

With support from the McKnight Foundation, and in agreement with CPED, EPNI has contracted with consultant Peter Brown to facilitate the work of the Stadium Implementation Committee. This partnership is a culmination of years of neighborhood planning, relationship building and dedicated vision by many who live and work in this community. We are pleased and proud to be involved and participating in this work that can ultimately turn neighborhood vision into reality.

CPED Parking Lot Study

The CPED Parking Lot Study is currently underway with EPNI serving in an advisory capacity. It is a long awaited study and a follow up to previous EPNI led CPED Great Streets Business grants. This work will: "...provide the City with a fiscal analysis of commercial parking lots on the east side of Downtown in order to determine development barriers...and evaluate the long-term potential for development on these parcels from a financial perspective. The framework for this analysis will be existing policies and zoning...A consultant will evaluate alternative property tax structures, creative development models, possible enforcement tools, and interim opportunities. The study will result in a list of strategies for the City to employ as well as best

practice scenarios for development." The final report will be available for use by the City Stadium Implementation Committee as they proceed with their planning work.

Parking Meters Updated

An ongoing long time conversation in Elliot Park has circled around neighborhood parking meters that required paid parking by residents and visitors alike from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m., seven days a week. As the city prepared to upgrade meters to a new centrally located automated system it presented an opportunity to facilitate a community conversation with the city department invested in managing the changes. City staff listened and made significant accommodations to improve the system. One resident noticed the difference immediately and sent this email, a fitting tribute to the work of EPNI in collaboration with Council Member Lisa Goodman:

"Hi David and Lisa,

I'm not sure who to thank but I'll start with you. The new meters, and meter enforcement times in particular, on Portland between 9th and 10th are fantastic. They reflect a more appropriate residential schedule, and a great compromise on maintaining an event schedule! We also were abuzz with how nice it is without those old lights and wires overhead on 9th St."

2. 2011 CPP SUBMISSION

Additional Outreach and Engagement Activities

- Facilitated an ongoing community dialogue with the new owners of the Madison School regarding building upgrades and exterior design with pending reinvestments to the entire property.
- Coordinated community support both for Aeon's \$54 million reinvestment in ten of their oldest neighborhood properties as well as for their continuing commitment to provide quality affordable housing to their residents.
- Introduced opportunities for Metro Transit to engage the community in conversations regarding traffic issues, busing needs and potential grid reconnections.
- Helped residents self-organize and apply for funding support to create street art at neighborhood intersections (Minneapolis Reclamation Project). While this initiative was not funded EPNI used the BLUH meeting format to encourage their work and to engage other community members to participate. Ultimately the organizers received support from a local market owner who allowed them to design and paint a mural on the back of the market facing a number of residential housing units..

- Introduced North Central University staff to Parks Commissioner, Anita Tabb, and facilitated (ongoing) efforts to renovate and jointly fund a regulation sized soccer field in Elliot Park.
- Facilitated the Livability Task Force work. What began as a residents-only group has increased to include representation and support from five community institutions that regularly attend meetings and work together with residents to identify and resolve crime, safety and property issues.
- Organized a community forum with the Mayor for a report and feedback about the newly approved stadium bill. More than 100 people participated in the discussion, and at least 50% were people who had not previously participated in an Elliot Park meeting.
- Collaborated with the Elliot Park Leadership Group (EPLG) to organize the 4th annual Night to Unite event, which began as a merging of the traditional neighborhood cleanup and National Night Out (NNO). EPLG leaders combined the two events to incorporate the involvement of North Central University students who are not in school during the August NNO event. Led by Aeon, House of Charity, NCU, EPNI, and Catholic Charities the event now includes support from three additional community institutions and the Minneapolis Police Department. This year almost 1,600 neighborhood people came together for the free community picnic and enjoyed a celebration with games, music, kids activities and more.
- Worked with the East Downtown Council marketing committee to promote and grow the organization membership and support for neighborhood development.
- Encouraged community responses to the varied redistricting maps that were produced and distributed over the months. While we were not able to succeed in keeping the entire neighborhood intact within one ward we were initially successful in helping to keep the entire HCMC campus in the same ward. Eventually that boundary was redrawn and HCMC in the end was split between two wards, as was the Elliot Park neighborhood.
- Coordinated a task force to review bylaws and to work specifically to increase neighborhood institutional and business presence on the board. New board members elected to serve at the annual meeting included representatives from: Aeon, North Central University and Augustana Care Center.
- Adopted an ADA Policy and updated the EEO Policy.
- Developed an Elliot Park E-newsletter to keep people informed about community events and to provide a communication tool to help organizations promote their activities.
- Developed a Facebook page and updated the EPNI website for increased communication.

3. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

- A. 13 Board Members. 2 vacancies.
- B. In 2011 - 290 volunteers donated 2,174 hours to support the work of EPNI.
- C. Approximately 50 people attended our annual meeting.

- D. EPNI now sends out a monthly e-newsletter (begun in October 2011) and the subscriber list has steadily grown to include 138 participants.
- E. See B.

4. FINANCIAL REPORTS ATTACHED

~~INTERACTIONS WITH CITY DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER JURISDICTIONS~~

1. IMPACT

- A. EPNI staff meets monthly with CPED Planning staff. This long-time ongoing conversation has helped to develop a strong respectful relationship that has resulted in the recently completed B4n zoning; the currently under way Parking Lot Study; and, collaborative development of principles guiding the work of the City Stadium Implementation Committee.
- B. Collaborated with CPED staff on the neighborhood history project as above.
- C. Completed the CPED Great Streets Chicago Avenue redevelopment grant as above.
- D. Signed an agreement with CPED to hire a Consultant to facilitate the work of the Stadium Implementation Committee (with a grant from The McKnight Foundation).
- E. Initiated meetings and communications with staff in Mayor Rybak's office.
- F. Worked with the Mayor's office, CPED staff and city council members to lobby successfully for East Downtown Council representation on the City Stadium Committee.
- G. Facilitated various community meetings with Metro Transit, the Department of Traffic and Transportation and Minneapolis Parks and Recreation.
- H. Met with County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin regarding stadium development and transportation and with county transportation staff regarding resurfacing projects on Park and Portland Avenues.

2. CITY COMMUNICATIONS - EFFECTIVENESS

We receive an assortment of e-newsletters and announcement and find them to be the most effective and easy to share with the community.

3. CITY COMMUNICATIONS - TIMELINESS

The sooner that we receive notification of events, meetings and activities the sooner we can share the news with our community.

4. CITY DEPARTMENTS

We are pleased with the relationships that we have with city departments and they function well for us in our community.

5. CITY ASSISTANCE

I have found that the communication from NCR to the neighborhood is relevant and welcome. I have found staff to be informed and eager to help.