

Windom Community Council (WCC)

2011 Annual Report to Neighborhood and Community Relations

Accomplishments

Windom Community Council's major accomplishments in 2011 included the engagement, planning and implementation of the first Windom Community Garden. WCC worked with MNDOT to obtain a permit to use a portion of the land on 62nd and Nicollet Ave. for the garden site.

The Windom Community Garden's mission is to create a gardening space that provides opportunities for people to grow their own food, increase healthy activity, get to know their neighbors, learn from each other and create a productive and beautiful commons in an urban area.

The goals of the Windom Community Garden include:

1. Growing healthy produce for families in the community
2. Providing an educational opportunity for children
3. Provides gardening opportunity for townhome and apartment residents without yards for home gardening.
4. Will foster a sense of community among a diverse, transient population.

In July 2011 the WCC worked with NEHBA (Nicollet East Harriet Business Association) to begin early preparation of a Road Project Handbook to support local businesses. WCC also engaged the Humphrey School of Public Affairs Urban Planning students to create a Business Retention Strategy for Lyndale Avenue businesses to use during bridge outage and road construction. By being an active partner with NEHBA the Windom Community Council was able to keep in close communications with Windom business owners and actively help promote shopping local. WCC strongly believes that a vibrant and involved business district is as important as dedicated neighborhood residents, school and park staff. By these entities working better together will only lead to a stronger neighborhood, in which will lead to a stronger city.

2011 CPP Submission

The Windom Community Council actively provided the outreaches and engaged residents, local businesses and community groups in 2011 as outlined by the WCC CPP submission by:

- **Communications** – Including the 3 printed Windom Newsletters that were mailed to each Windom resident; the website; and the Windom Neighborhood facebook page. The facebook page was a huge success with now almost 200 people on the page that continue to be actively engaged in community happenings. The newsletter continues to be successful in sharing the neighborhood's concerns, developments and offering businesses to advertise their services and residents a chance to write their stories.
- **WCC & NEHBA** – WCC had a goal to increase the Windom businesses to joining the Nicollet East Harriet Business Association and work together to acquire Business District Leaders to help with the communications of strategic planning within the city's programs. In December of 2011 WCC reached its goal with the help of the Experience Southwest holiday campaign that WCC actively promoted.

- **Annual Events** – WCC carried out all the 2011 neighborhood events that included:
 1. Tots Rock – March 2011 – a dance party for children ages 6 months to 7years which provides families with a safe, all inclusive opportunity to socialize with neighbors while spending time together. Event attendance: 125 families
 2. Windom Festival – August 2011 – a neighborhood celebration that highlights the diverse population of residents and unique cultural businesses in the neighborhood. This event takes place at the Windom Dual Spanish Immersion School and Windom Community Center partnering with the school, the park and many local businesses makes this event a huge community success. Event attendance: 500 people
 3. Windom’s Holiday Stop & Shop – December – In 2011 a decision was made to help with the National campaign for Small Business Saturday that took place on Saturday, November 26th 2011 by encouraging Windom residents to shop local during the largest shopping weekend of the year. This was a successful event, however the residents and business owners feedback was that they enjoyed the Windom Holiday Stop & Shop feel from the previous year better.
- **Windom Annual Meeting** – May 2011 – A postcard mailing to all Windom residents inviting them to attend the Museum of Russian Art for a community update with special city guests and a social hour. In 2011 we handed out surveys and received valuable information on what resident priorities are for the neighborhood. Event attendance: 53

The Windom Community Council was very successful in 2011 with increasing the attendance in neighborhood events as well as engaging Windom businesses to be actively involved in these events by sponsorship or volunteer commitment.

The WCC also was successful in partnering with The Center for Energy and Environment on the Community Energy Services program that provided homeowners information and services on how to save energy and money throughout the year. WCC had 76 household participate in this program.

One of the areas that the WCC was not able to accomplish much of was in the planning and implementing of the gateway from Richfield into the City of Minneapolis. In the year 2012/2013 we plan to work with local businesses, MNDot and other community organizations to design and implement the Gateway Project that funds are set aside for.

Stakeholder Involvement

The WCC reached out to involve under –represented communities in 2011 by:

- Actively communicating with property management of the four apartment complexes that Windom houses and providing them with neighborhood event posters to promote community happenings on their bulletin boards.
- Delivering the Windom Newsletter to all Windom residents and hand delivering to all Windom businesses in the area.
- Partnering with the Windom Spanish Dual Immersion School to translate event fliers to be sent home with Spanish speaking students.
- Partnering with the Windom Community Center and the Mpls Park and Recreation Board in offering senior activities and dining options.

- Engaging renters in the Windom Gables townhomes to assist in the planning and implementing of the newly formed Windom Community Garden.

The Windom Community Council was successful in engaging residents with the Windom Community Garden and as it continues to grow we anticipate more engagement in the future. One of the ways we promoted this initiative was through the Windom facebook page showcasing photos of the different stages of planning and implementing the Windom Community Garden space in its current location.

Other information regarding the WCC organization in 2011:

One of the challenges that the Windom Community Council faces is recruiting board and committee members.

- A. WCC currently serves 10 board members with 5 vacancies.
- B. In the last year we have had approximately 12 individuals who have participated in committee meetings. As of right now the WCC standing committees include: Festival, Communications, NRP/CPP, Business District, and Windom Community Garden committee.
- C. In May 2011 there were 53 people in attendance at the WCC Annual Meeting.
- D. The Windom Newsletter goes out 2100 residents and approximately 80 are hand delivered to other businesses and organizations.
- E. Throughout the 2011 year the WCC had approximately 40 volunteers participate in organizational activities.

Financial Reports

See Attached

Interactions with City Departments and other jurisdictions:

1. Impact

What interactions occupied a major part of your time? What worked well, what could be improved?

- The CPP application and guideline process was time consuming. Understanding the changes happening in the new program, educating the WCC Board, and completing the paperwork was a challenge considering that the board only meets once a month.
- The NCR specialist was helpful in answering questions and meeting with board members to educate and assist this process.

2. *City Communications-Effectiveness*

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

- Newsletters from our City Council member John Quincy and the Minneapolis In Touch monthly update is a great resource for city wide and ward information.
- The NCR Department has been consistent in providing our neighborhood with updated information via email.

3. *City Communications – Timeliness*

Do you receive adequate notice of City activities in your neighborhood?

- The WCC believes we have received adequate notice from all city departments in the past year relating to the Windom neighborhood.
- Regarding the Lyndale & Nicollet Ave. construction WCC relied heavily on NEHBA providing us with updated construction information on a monthly basis. The City should acknowledge this Business organization as being a strong partner in the community.

4. *City Departments-*

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

- WCC would love to see a representative from each City Department come out once during the year and attend a Board meeting to meet, inform and answer any questions the neighborhoods may have.

5. *City Assistance-*

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

- Serve as a liaison or facilitator when attempting to create dialogue with City departments.
- Allow a small percentage of the CPP to go toward food as this is a big expense in bringing the community together.
- Offer a monthly workshop on a variety of topics. This would be educational and allow neighborhoods a forum for interaction and idea sharing. Record the minutes and post them online for others to access.

6. *Other Comments?*

The WCC looks forward to working with the NCR department and having as much involvement in the NUSA Conference coming to our City in May 2013.