

Community Participation Program 2013 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Bancroft Neighborhood Association (BNA)

Contact person: Luke Stultz

Date of Board Approval: May 8, 2014

1. Stakeholder Involvement

Reviewing your CPP activities in 2013, Please provide information about:

- **What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2013?**
 - In May, we worked with the MPD's 3rd Precinct for our Safety Event. This included door knocking and outreach through block clubs.
 - In July, we held our annual Ice Cream Social.
 - In August, we had three performances from Breaking Ice, to highlight issues in the community.
 - In September, we held a neighborhood-wide garage sale.
 - In November, we held our Annual Meeting.
- **How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2013?**

We worked with partner organizations in and around Bancroft neighborhood to strengthen capacity in this area. Some of the organizations we worked with are courageous heARTS, Pillsbury House + Theatre, El Colegio Charter School, and Bancroft Elementary.

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

Engaging people at events where there is food has been particularly helpful. Although we cannot buy food with CPP funds, having food has attracted a more diverse group of people. This allowed us to engage them in a non-threatening, non-meeting type of environment.

- **What did not work so well? Why?**

Holding a tenants rights workshop and a responsible landlord workshop didn't ever come to fruition. This was because the City began offering monthly workshops for free (which is great!) and it was decided that our resources would be best used elsewhere.

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

Approximately 350

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

Approximately 50

- How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?

Approximately 600

- How many people receive your print publications?

Each household in the Bancroft neighborhood receives our quarterly print newsletter, in addition to those outside of the neighborhood that request a copy (other neighborhood organizations, elected officials, etc.). There are 1,538 newsletters sent out quarterly.

- How many people receive your electronic communications?

Facebook: 370 followers
eNewsletter: 368 recipients

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2. 2013 Highlights

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

- What was the issue or opportunity the neighborhood was facing?
- Who was impacted?
- What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity?
- What was the outcome?

The BNA Green Initiatives Committee worked hard on the Meridian Garden during 2013. During the summer, committee members realized that the garden needed to be re-developed and more focus put on low-maintenance plants. This started the process of developing our Neighborhood Priority Plan. Through a series of meetings and face-to-face talks with neighborhood residents and businesses, the NPP plan was approved by the Community Council in December.

The re-developed Meridian Garden will be a friendlier place for all neighborhood residents to visit and relax, not just those that live next to the garden. We will hold at least one major event at the garden in 2014 when the project is complete.

2013 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2013:

- What were your organization's major accomplishments?
- How were individuals in your community directly impacted by your work?

Events: At the beginning of 2013, crime in Bancroft neighborhood had risen. Because of this, we had a great neighborhood-wide Safety Event in May. Residents were able to get their questions answered and left with specific crime prevention information. This event and the follow up by our Crime Prevention & Safety Committee helped Bancroft get to 100% of our blocks with an active block club leader by the end of 2013.

Our Ice Cream Social was held outside at Bethel Lutheran Church and was well-attended. In addition to food, we brought in the U of M Raptor Center to teach children and adults all about raptors. Through these and our many other events, the neighborhood is able to come together and talk about issues and concerns.

Great Streets Façade Grant: BNA awarded \$18,057.25 to local businesses in order to improve their façades and improve the look of the neighborhood as a whole. In addition, another \$26,000 was contracted for further improvements to be completed in 2014. Administering the

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façade improvement grant has helped BNA build our relationships with local businesses and our two local business associations.

Housing: BNA was part of the organizing committee for the South Minneapolis Housing Fair and also tabled at that event. At that event we gave out information about our NRP-funded Home Improvement Loan Program, which resulted in three new loans through TCF Bank.

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3. *Housing*

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

Approximately 17% of time was spent on housing-related activities in the neighborhood.

4. *Financial Reports*

Please provide an income and expense report for your organization for the year. (Please include all funding sources).

See attached.

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?

The two city departments that BNA worked with most were NCR and CPED. It was very easy to work with Rebecca at CPED. The Great Streets documents were clear and easy to read; the turnaround time for questions and grant disbursements were quick. There was a staff changeover in CPED that was clearly communicated and was a fairly smooth transition.

Working with NCR has not been as clear. The NCR staff has different answers to the same questions. It would be good if one clear message could come from the department, so we could alleviate extra work for neighborhood organizations. A couple examples of this is the Blueprint for Equity and the Neighborhood Priority Plan rollouts. We were told to allocate funds for the NPP months before we had any concrete information about what the program would entail.

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? 3

2. *City Communications – effectiveness*

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

The information from the City is useful, but not always understandable or consistent. There have been times when information coming from the NCR department was incorrect—one example is the Blueprint for Equity. At a board meeting we were told NCR would offer translation services only for them to later

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say they would not. It would be nice to get an update and correct information on what this program actually entails.

The Neighborhood Priority Plan rollout was unclear and inefficient. Several neighborhoods had their plans turned in and approved before our neighborhood got complete information on what the program was.

The role of the NCEC is still unclear. The city website goes in circles when looking for the role that the NCEC plays in relation to other City departments. It would be good to have an organizational chart that shows how the city departments and boards (such as NCEC) relate to each other and what areas they have influence over.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate overall communications from the City? 2

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.

Notifications on public hearings or meetings on topics that interest residents are often times sent out just before the event. This doesn't give us adequate time to get the information out to our residents and businesses. Additionally, it does no good to get a listing of legalese, statute numbers and titles without information about specific changes. If these changes were written in plain language, that clearly spelled out how residents and businesses would be affected, it would help.

An option to only receive information in electronic format and not in paper format would be helpful. A lot of material is printed and sent through USPS and could be emailed—job postings from the MPHA, the Minneapolis Connects newsletter, direct deposit receipts from the Finance Department, etc. By emailing notices about zoning law changes, you can easily link to what is being changed. At this time, we are receiving both print and email for some of the notices. This is a waste of time on the City's part to send it out and the neighborhood's part to have to deal with the waste. Additionally, it isn't environmentally friendly.

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? 3

4. **City Departments**

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

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City departments should provide certified interpreters for any meetings they come to present at. The interpreters should not only be certified but have ample background knowledge on the topic being discussed (i.e. should meet with the presenter prior to the meeting to be sure they understand the information). Having someone interpret because “they speak Spanish” isn’t good enough and shows a lack of respect for the people relying on that particular interpreter.

5. **City Assistance**

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

Offer translation and interpretation services from CERTIFIED interpreters and translators. Solely speaking a language does not make someone qualified to interpret. It would be best if the City adopted a policy that stated interpreters need to be certified in order to work at any City function.

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? 1

6. **Other comments?**

It’s important to realize that “equity” doesn’t just mean race. The fact that four of the five groups in the Blueprint for Equity are race-based (Seniors being the fifth) is concerning. A more realistic approach to equity would benefit the City and residents more than lumping all people of one race together and assuming they all have the same needs based on the color of their skin.