

Community Participation Program 2013 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc.

Contact person: Lynn Regnier

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1. Stakeholder Involvement

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

- What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2013?

EPNI 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, as well as Minneapolis Parks and Recreation and the Minneapolis Police Department. In 2013 approximately 1,200 neighborhood people came together for the free community picnic and enjoyed a celebration with games, music, kid's activities and more.

EPNI served on the City Stadium Implementation Committee (CSIC) which was "...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 neighborhood planning and visioning efforts were incorporated into the committee process and helped to guide design and planning for the stadium.

Staff served on the Board of Directors of the East Downtown Council and worked to: enhance visibility of the district-wide business based organization; grow membership; and, increase the leadership capacity of its members.

EPNI also served in an advisory capacity on the City Planning & Economic Development East Downtown Parking Lot Study. The study reviewed the excessive number of surface parking lots in the Downtown East and Elliot Park Neighborhoods, investigated their history and offered recommendations for encouraging development on these underutilized sites. The study has helped to advertise the lost tax base for the city as well as spotlight possibilities for future development.

EPNI encouraged increased participation by neighborhood institutions to serve on the Livability Task Force and connect with community residents. The task force ended

the year with the appointment of its first community based chair and relocated meetings to a larger community room in a neighborhood building. The volunteers will enlarge their efforts in 2014 to grow a system of community based block leaders who will help organize safety and clean-up teams to improve neighborhood life.

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 in 2012 to conduct an inventory of existing housing. The study mapped residential housing, types of housing, rental units, ownership units, institutional beds and more. In 2013 community volunteers used the maps and charts to inform their discussions about future housing development in the neighborhood. The EPNI Board of Directors then approved *A Guide for Future Residential Development in the Elliot Park Neighborhood*, to help the community make informed decisions regarding future housing opportunities in Elliot Park.

The BLUH Committee facilitated community support for the construction of a regulation sized soccer field on the west side of Elliot Park. This project was a collaboration between North Central University and the Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board. Construction of the new field is slated for completion in 2014. Park Commissioner Anita Tabb worked closely with the involved parties and the neighborhood on the development of this project.

- How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2013?

EPNI connects with the institutions and organizations that work directly with the under-represented to facilitate cooperative solutions to community needs between partners and city departments as required. Current collaborative relationships include: Five community institutions have representatives that serve on the EPNI Board of Directors; the Elliot Park Leadership Group, an informal gathering of neighborhood nonprofit leaders, meets quarterly to stay connected and informed; the EPNI Tailgating Task Force includes representatives from community nonprofits; the Night to Unite annual community event is planned in collaboration with four other institutions/nonprofits and EPNI serves as the fiscal agent; and, in 2013 EPNI successfully enlisted increased institutional presence on the Livability Task Force.

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

As noted in the above, EPNI continues to stay connected to the many institutions and nonprofits in the neighborhood and works to increase communication and collaborative partnerships between them and with neighborhood residents.

- What did not work so well? Why?

- How many people did you reach through direct contact (door knocking, meetings, one-on-ones, etc.)?
297 volunteers donated 2,170 hours to support the work of EPNI in 2013.
- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?
297
- How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?
Over 3,600
- How many people receive your print publications?
We do not publish a printed newsletter.
- How many people receive your electronic communications?
230 E-newsletters are sent monthly plus numerous email meeting notices. EPNI also maintains a website and Facebook presence.

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?

Friends of Franklin Steele Park

EPNI served as the fiscal agent for a community based effort to create the ‘Friends of Franklin Steele Park’. The effort was launched by a \$6,500 donation from the National Foundation for Affordable Housing Solutions, Inc., owners of the adjacent Madison School properties, to create a new nonprofit organization that would oversee programming and revitalization of the Franklin Steele Park.

The park is located in the southwest corner of the neighborhood, backed up to a freeway on the south with a three-lane roadway on the east. The Madison properties frame the northern park border. Franklin Steele Park is part of the Minneapolis Parks system but there is no park building housed on the property. Although park employees staff the site in the summer their presence was hardly noticed. The area is isolated and attracts loiterers, thus discouraging use by community residents.

A consultant was hired to work with the Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board to enhance visibility and programs at the park. They hosted a well-attended movie night, organized and advertised athletic games, and enhanced the work of the park staff. Overall the project was well-received and the park saw increased usage by community residents. While a nonprofit organization has not yet been officially created, plans are underway to continue the work with funds leftover from the 2013 project and to consider additional opportunities for park development in 2014.

Relocation of EPNI offices

The 2013 Work Plan included a directive to create a sustainability plan for the organization by the end of the year, a plan that included an evaluation of the current office site and recommendations for possible relocation. The relocation effort was jumpstarted in March after the landlord suddenly increased the monthly rent by 40%. A search of the neighborhood quickly demonstrated the dearth of available properties. EPNI found a suitable location but it would not be available for a number of months and required some build out to accommodate our needs.

Meanwhile, we began the work of assessing EPNI furnishings, mountainous files and miscellaneous ‘artifacts’ that had accumulated over the more than thirty years that the organization had been housed in two adjoining storefronts. Months of ongoing work ensued, purging files and furnishings and connecting with numerous nonprofit friends to share the excess. While we waited to move we found new homes for numerous desks, chairs, file cabinets, tables, boxes of accumulated office supplies and countless objects, both useful and/or decorative.

In the process of downsizing to much smaller space we advertised our need for furnishings that would fit the new space and we were fortunate that Valspar donated several office suites and other furnishings. EPNI finally relocated in August and managed to navigate through this five-month process without disrupting the ongoing work of the organization. Furthermore, we recycled much of the accumulated office collections for ongoing use throughout the community and reduced overhead expenses by \$5,000 annually.

3. 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?

EPNI Tailgating Task Force

In March 2012 the State of Minnesota, the City of Minneapolis, the Minnesota Vikings and the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission signed and supported the *Overview of Stadium Development and Operating Terms-Minneapolis Downtown East Site* (Term Sheet).

The Term Sheet references Tailgating on page 10 of that agreement as follows: *As a part of the definitive documents, the City and the Team will work together to expand the current tailgating boundaries on surface parking lots generally East and South of the Stadium understanding that certain areas will not be practical for tailgating. Once tailgating areas have been specifically identified and agreed upon, the City will amend City Ordinance Title 13.319.310 to include such areas. In addition, the City and Team will explore tailgating areas along current and future LRT lines. It is expected that any costs (e.g., cleaning) associated with tailgating on surface parking lots will be paid for by the owners of such lots.* This agreement preceded the stadium legislation that was enacted in May, 2012 by the Minnesota State Legislature: H.F. No. 2958. Tailgating is not referenced in the legislation.

In September, 2012 the City of Minneapolis convened the City Stadium Implementation Committee for the purpose of reviewing the design and development of the Vikings Stadium. At the last meeting of this committee, in July, 2013, the Minneapolis Vikings presented a Fan Report and the findings of a fan survey regarding game day tailgating and requested that the current tailgating zone be expanded as defined in the Term Sheet. The committee unanimously approved the following motion: *That the Stadium Implementation Committee urge the city of Minneapolis to work with the Minnesota Vikings on an expanded tailgating resolution that is fair to Minneapolis, its neighborhoods, the Vikings and their fans.*

Subsequently, in October and November of 2013 the City of Minneapolis and EPNI each convened their own Tailgating Committees. (EPNI also serves on the City Tailgating Task Force.)

EPNI brought together institutional stakeholders to work with residents to review the possibilities, the potential ramifications and to develop creative solutions that might otherwise work in place of traditional parking lot tailgating parties. This task force continues its work and meets regularly with the Vikings in anticipation of creating a recommendation for city review. Tailgating decisions made now will impact the Elliot Park neighborhood far into the future and task force members are diligent in their efforts to make the right decisions on behalf of their community.

4. *Housing*

What percentage of time did your organization spend on housing-related activities?
55%-60%

5. *Financial Reports*

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

Throughout the year staff met with CPED Planning staff, county staff, Metro Transit, the Department of Traffic and Transportation and with Minneapolis Parks and Recreation as needed and required by community events and activities.

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? 4

2. ***City Communications - effectiveness***

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

Communications from the City are understandable and useful and help us to keep our community informed about the issues and concerns that are relevant to them.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate overall communications from the City? 4

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.

We receive City notices of activities that are relevant to our neighborhood.

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?

We continue to be very pleased with the relationships that we have developed with City departments and staff and they are extremely cooperative and helpful.

5. ***City Assistance***

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

We continue to receive support and advice from NCR staff and appreciate their timely responses to our questions.

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? ___4___

6. ***Other comments?***