

Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Bottineau Neighborhood Association

Contact person: Nancy Przymus

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1. Stakeholder Involvement

Reviewing your CPP activities in 2014, Please provide information about:

- What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2014?
 - 1) Mulberry Community Garden support and interface with gardeners from March through October.
 - 2) Flower Power beautification effort in May 2014 whereby residents are given flowers to plant in boxes and front yards throughout the neighborhood to beautify Bottineau.
 - 3) Earth Day River clean up and Neighborhood CleanSweep held April 26.
 - 4) NERIDE bicycle stop was sponsored in the neighborhood on June 14th. BNA engaged Bottineau family bicyclists BNA continues to improve bicycle safety in the neighborhood.
 - 5) 9 blocks participated in National Night Out this year. Last year 6 blocks participated so we enjoyed a 33% increase.
 - 6) Supported the MPRB effort at the Ice Cream Social. Bottineau's booth engaged people around healthy foods and nutrition.
 - 7) July through December a new committee was formed to work on air pollution problems in the neighborhood. EEQL-Eastside Environmental Quality of Life committee works with Marshall Terrace neighborhood and residents from Sheridan and Logan Park to address and identify air quality problems.
 - 8) Youth were experiencing bicycle thefts at the park so Bottineau purchased, at a discount they received from the neighborhood bicycle shop, U bolt locks to be shared among the youth at the park to lower the incidence of bike theft and to encourage bicycling.
 - 9) 2 Board members served on the Lowry Avenue Re-Design Community Involvement Committee and reported back to the neighborhood community meetings the progress and plans that were being suggested by Hennepin County. In turn, community members were encouraged to contact the Lowry Avenue county planning staff with input.
 - 10) Children's reading program was held weekly from January 1st to April 18th 2014.
 - 11) New website was designed and implemented in 2014 making a positive and user friendly interface with the public. Face book and email blasts continue to inform the community.
 - 12) The Bottineau Gazette was published 12 times and mailed to all residents and businesses in Bottineau neighborhood.

13) Halloween Pumpkin Carving event is an annual pumpkin give-away and pumpkin seed roasting explosion. This event reaches beyond the neighborhood boundary but children of all groups love to participate and so do the parents.

14) Residents weed the rain gardens each year that were planted in Bottineau Park and at the corner of 24th Ave NE and 2nd St NE.

- How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2014?
- 1) On Friday evenings from 6 to 7 PM, 4-7 volunteers from Bottineau neighborhood and 1-2 from Sheridan neighborhood met with Somali families for a reading program. The program lasted from January thru April. The toddlers were read to and the older children read to the volunteers. Volunteers helped with English pronunciation and vocabulary. The Somali moms were present and those who could read English also read to the children. Some lasting friendships were made. 1 of the Somali moms volunteered to be on the Lowry Ave NE re-design committee.
- 2) Bottineau worked with the promotion of a Somali artist initiative to publicize the event held December 14th 2014 at 1818 University Ave NE
- 3) The new website home page has the mission of the neighborhood in four languages, English, Somali, Hmong and Spanish.

- Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful? Why?
 - 1) Prompt responses to the email requests and google voice are important.
 - 2) Phone calls were necessary to engage the Somali community and door knocking with a Somali speaking resident in the predominately Somali apartment complexes really increased the participation in the reading program. We started with 3 families and expanded to 13 families and extra children from the complexes showed up after door knocking. Giving away books to the families really improved repeat participation. At the end of each reading session each child could take home a book to keep.

- What did not work so well? Why? Passing out flyers in the Somali apartment complexes did nothing. To engage the first Somali family staff had to stand outside the security building until someone would talk about the program. After the first contact was made, the City NCR department sent Rabia Abdullahi to work with staff at a neighborhood festival and that worked well.

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

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?
141
- How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?
1081
- How many people receive your print publications?
901 monthly

- How many people receive your electronic communications?

Phone calls: 35-55 per month to residents or external inquiries

Texts:

Email: 144 neighborhood residents are on the contact list 1-3 blasts per month

Facebook:

99 people are friends on Facebook

128 Likes increased 43 over 2013

540 Page visits

24 Referrals from external sites

Website became active September 1st

821 Users

1024 Sessions

1950 Pageviews

1.9 Page views per session

2. **2014 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 **EEQL** is the most impactful new effort or highlight this year. Four joint neighborhood meetings have been held either at Bottineau or Marshall Terrace. Environmental employees from the City of Minneapolis, MPCA, Hennepin County and Minneapolis Health Department have been guest speakers. The company most likely responsible for the noxious gasses has been meeting with EEQL and is working with the community to address the problem. The EEQL is a group of residents that continues to meet, monitor and address the air pollution problems in the community. So far the group has succeeded in getting the MPCA to keep the air monitor at the site. It was slated to be removed in September of 2014 and the group got an extension to end of 2014. Also the MPCA agreed to 24 hour air grabs every 6 days and found a major violation of air quality standards in December of 2014. At that time the MPCA agreed to extend the air monitor until December of 2015 and encouraged the group to begin environmental health studies to determine the effects of air pollution on the population in question.

The longer term impactful effort is the **Mississippi River Clean Up** each year. Bottineau worked to expand these efforts by collaborating with the Northeast RiverKeepers, a volunteer group dedicated to improving the health of the Mississippi River. Over 60 volunteers worked in honor of Earth Day to clean up the river. BNA and the Northeast RiverKeepers are applying for grants to further the clean-up work, improve shoreline stabilization, and to root out buckthorn and plant native species in the part of the Mississippi known as the Upper Pool. The impacts have been that the groups are cooperating more closely and expanding the education outreach in 2015 to include help from the Mississippi River Fund, the National Park Service, Three Rivers Park District and the MPRB.

2014 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2014:

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

BNA did an RFP and found a qualified web designer to make an affordable new website. The web designer trained staff to maintain it. This has greatly improved the professionalism of the neighborhood image and fulfilled a neighborhood community direction that BNA first heard about in 2013. The neighborhood residents and realtors really appreciate having this website as a resource for the community.

3. *Housing*

What percentage of time did your organization spend on housing-related activities?
5% of staff time dealt with housing issues. Primarily, problem landlord issues are the bulk of the requests that staff receives. In addition, developers of new housing have met with the BNA board and staff regarding new housing starts on vacant lots. BNA's housing loan program is completely exhausted as NRP I and NRP II housing dollars have all been contracted and spent on neighborhood improvements.

4. *Financial Reports*

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

Please see separate sheet.

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?

Environmental Regulatory Services, Jim Doten and Margaret Taylor, and Community Crime Prevention Specialist, Susan Webb, were the bulk of the interactions. It is pretty obvious to most people these employees are working more than 40 hours a week and are stretched pretty thin. Both departments were very helpful and increased our knowledge of remedies that could be sought for environmental problems and crime situations. Our NCR staff person Stacy Sorenson has been very helpful and gives us timely information. NCR contractor, Joe Horan has been greatly helpful with the NRP funding and contact modifications. Michelle Howard from Solid Waste and Recycling is great to work with regarding the CleanSweep. Bottineau did not have any problems working with city staff.

It often takes some days to get a response from city staff. BNA believes this is due to city staff work load.

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?

Yes

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.

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BNA does not get notified of developer intentions in a timely fashion. It is insulting to neighborhood residents that the only time a new development can be reviewed is at 8 AM on a Monday morning in the rain at the site of the new house being built with the plans laid out on the trunk of the developer's vehicle. How can reasonable people be expected to review such a plan in those circumstances. It is blatantly clear that the City does not want input. CPED planners should be directed to alert the neighborhood of any developments as soon as they are being discussed with the developers. Residents should have a say in the process. CPED is very helpful to developers both large and small alike.

BNA has not heard any complaints about basic communications like snowplowing or towing or air pollution alerts.

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? ___0 CPED & 5 the rest___

4. *City Departments*

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

The online forms should work as advertised and allow for editing. The interface with the City website has improved but needs more attention. It was good to see that 33 plus IT staff are being hired by the City and that some IT services are being brought back in house and under the control of government professionals.

CPED should be a partner with neighborhoods as well as developers.

5. *City Assistance*

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

NCR should provide free translation of materials into other languages for community engagement purposes.

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? ___5___

6. *Other comments?*