

Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Linden Hills Neighborhood Council

Contact person: Christy Prediger / 612-481-5574 / info@lindenhills.org

Date of Board Approval:

- ***Stakeholder Involvement***

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

- What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2014?

LHiNC reached out to all neighborhood residents to promote a sense of sharing and community through print and electronic media, and the use of neighborhood signage. We increased our use of social media through Facebook and Twitter, and started using NextDoor – a neighborhood social media forum, and continued to employ use of our. LHiNC continues to actively promote participation on its committees and attendance at its monthly Board Meetings. In October, the Annual Meeting was held at Linden Hills Park, rather than at Lake Harriet as in 2013, and the event was very well attended and seemed more appropriate and better accessible to all being held in the center of the neighborhood.

- How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2014?

The hand-delivery of the Linden Hills Line newsletter continues to be an effective tool for reaching all neighborhood residents, including seniors, renters and ethnic minorities. Also the increased use of the website, enewsletters, and social media supplements our newsletter with news on a more regular, day-to-day basis. All LHiNC meetings are open to the public.

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

We have seen that hand-delivery of our printed newsletter have been successful at reaching and engaging residents, perhaps because residents feel an effort was made to reach them where they live.

- What did not work so well? Why?

We have had difficulty recruiting volunteers for community events, other than the Linden Hills Festival. We may consider increasing attempts at direct contact, via phone calls or door knocking.

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

We reached several hundred people through our open board meetings and committee meetings, and over a hundred more stopped by the LHiNC booth at the Festival.

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

Approximately 40 people volunteered on LHiNC's board and committees, 24 people volunteered for the 2014 KiteFest helping with zero waste, cocoa and roasting marshmallows and 150 volunteers helped with the 2014 Linden Hills Festival.

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

In 2014, 4,000 attended the Linden Hills Festival, the Annual Meeting/Fall Fest saw several hundred attendees, and approximately 600 attended the screening of *Back to the Future* at Linden Hills Park.

- How many people receive your print publications?

Approximately 2,900 households receive the Linden Hills Line print newsletter. An additional 600 copies are placed in neighborhood businesses.

- How many people receive your electronic communications?

Approximately 1,400 people receive our e-newsletters.

- **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?

Highlight #1: New trees planted at Linden Hills Park

- The tree stock at Linden Hills Park was in need of rejuvenation. The tree population at the park consisted of numerous ash trees and several trees that were sick or dying. Also, trees were removed when the new tennis and athletic courts were installed.
- LHiNC issued a survey for neighborhood residents to suggest ideas for projects and priorities for the neighborhood.
- The survey results clearly showed a neighborhood preference for enhancement/preservation/stewardship of neighborhood green spaces and trees.
- LHiNC determined that a worthy project for its Neighborhood Priority Plan, designed with the input of this survey, would be the planting of new trees at the park, with the help and assistance of the MPRB Department of Forestry.
- The work was completed in summer, 2014, and serves to increase our urban forest, revitalize the tree stock at the park, and will provide beauty, shade, and ecological benefits to all neighbors for years to come.

Highlight #2: Protective baseball dugout fencing installed at Linden Hills Park

- It came to LHiNC's attention that the open dugout design at the park baseball fields was posing risks to players from foul balls and thrown bats.
- LHiNC worked with park director, Nelson Evenrud, the Southwest Athletic Council (SWAC), and Sixth District MPRB Commissioner Brad Bourne to find a solution to this dangerous situation.
- A plan was developed to install protective fencing in front of the dugouts, the cost for which was shared by LHiNC, SWAC, and the MPRB.
- The two-phase installation consisted of installing partial retaining walls, followed by the installation of a stretch of protective fencing on two fields (final fencing to be installed in spring, 2015).
- Hundreds of young ball players will benefit each summer as this safety hazard has been eliminated.

- **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?

Accomplishments

- Donations in the form of grants to organizations/projects that make Linden Hills a better place to live, such as: Minneapolis Pops Orchestra, Linden Hills Park, Linden Hills Chamber Orchestra, and the Southwest Community Education Green Team and Study Buddies program.
- Donations of scholarships to students of Southwest High School.
- Continued collaboration with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board to offer family-friendly, open-to-all programs and events at Linden Hills Park, including a free movie in the park.
- Bringing over 4,000 people together to enjoy the Spring Festival at Linden Hills Park, featuring neighborhood restaurants and food purveyors, with the help of approximately 150 volunteers and many donations and sponsorships from area businesses and residents.
- Facilitation of the annual Linden Hills neighborhood garage sales: with over 75 registered sales, the event brought shoppers from outside the community into the neighborhood, and promoted a sense of neighborhood unity and fun.
- Collaboration with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and the East Harriet-Farmstead neighborhood to plan and execute the annual Lake Harriet Winter Kite Festival, which is free, open to all.
- Open communication with Linden Hills residents, through the bi-monthly newsletter, monthly e-news, email distribution list, social media, website, flyers and signage, and open Board and Committee Meetings.
- Continued commitment to waste reduction and management by adopting a Zero Waste policy for all LHiNC-sponsored events.
- Continued commitment to protect and enhance the urban forest through grants to plant and sustain trees and understory plants.
- Partnerships with other agencies and organizations (such as Linden Hills Power & Light, East Harriet-Farmstead Neighborhood Association, Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, and the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board) to collaborate on projects and programs that benefit our neighborhood and the City.
- The LHiNC Environment & Sustainability Committee worked with the Southwest Community Education Green Team to continue the maintenance program for the Trolley Path Gardens north of 44th St between Xerxes and Zenith Aves. Much work continues to eliminate destructive invasive plants, and to plant native plants, attractive to birds and butterflies. An adjacent neighbor has volunteered to provide the Green Team with the needed access to water for the ongoing watering of new plants.

- On November 13, 2014, the LHiNC Environment & Sustainability Committee hosted an Environmental Town Hall at Linden Hills Park, featuring Representative Frank Hornstein, Hennepin County Commissioner Marion Greene, and 13th Ward Minneapolis Council Member Linea Palmisano. 35 people attended the event to learn about topics such as climate change, renewable energy, waste reduction, public transportation, and storm water and ground water management.
- In 2014, the LHiNC Environment & Sustainability Committee began buying down the cost of Home Energy Audits for Linden Hills residents from \$70 to \$35.

- ***Housing***

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

LHiNC spent approximately 15% of its time on housing-related activities. In 2014, LHiNC revived its Housing Committee to consider housing-related issues such as senior housing and renters' issues. The Housing Committee worked to develop a Linden Hills Little Homes tour, the date of which will be in 2015, which aims to promote the livability of homes of 2,000 square feet or less, and emphasize that larger housing is not necessarily better. LHiNC has an active Zoning Committee that weighs in on residential building matters and variance requests.

- ***Financial Reports***

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

Please see separate document.

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?

Representatives from the NCR department have attended LHiNC meetings to offer guidance on neighborhood boards' roles and responsibilities. The NCR has also been helpful in guiding the understanding of NRP/ CPP funds available to the neighborhood.

LHiNC and the Zoning Committee interact significantly with CPED on housing and land use issues. The staff is always helpful and accommodating.

Our City Council representative, Linea Palmisano, and her office are always helpful and quick to respond. They attend LHiNC meetings are very communicative and responsive about neighborhood concerns.

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? 5

2. ***City Communications – effectiveness***

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

The information received from the City has been understandable and useful.

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

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 have found city communications to be helpful and timely.

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? 5

4. ***City Departments***

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

Our organization would benefit from the availability of training sessions for neighborhood board members on additional topics.

5. *City Assistance*

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

Visit a board meeting for annual board member training/advice. Encourage neighborhoods to collaborate / share best practices. The Ward 13 Summit on March 19 will be beneficial to all.

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?*