

Report

Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association

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Date of Board Approval: June 1, 2015

1. Stakeholder Involvement

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

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

PPERRIA continued to participate and hold annual neighborhood events, starting in April 2014 with the Annual Meeting. This event draws in neighbors who may not normally attend the monthly community meetings or committee meetings. Over 100 people attended the 2014 Annual Meeting. Most of these attendees cast their votes for new board representatives.

PPERRIA was involved in the Pratt Ice Cream Social in May 2014. Thirteen new members were signed up at this event that draws thousands of people from around the Twin Cities to support the Pratt Community school. Ten volunteers were engaged in order to sign these new members up at the event.

The Membership and Communications (MemComm) Committee continued the process of reaching out and building a relationship with the Glendale Community. Partnering with Luxton Park and individuals who have a vested interest in strengthening ties with Glendale residents, the MemComm committee continued their Task Force to help address the needs of the community and to find ways to work together in order to create a more robust neighborhood. This Glendale Outreach Task Force hosted a Housing Fair in May 2014 to engage the Glendale Residents and determine how best to make connections with the Glendale community. Around 50 people attended this event and 10 volunteers were engaged. In the Fall residents sought help and guidance in the resurrection of the Glendale Residents Council (GRC), which PPERRIA volunteers and the Task Force worked to help start. Unfortunately the GRC faced too many obstacles that the volunteers could not overcome. PPERRIA and Glendale residents are now exploring the idea of starting a Glendale-specific committee to achieve the goal of a stronger, healthier and more connected community in Prospect Park. MemComm also continued the monthly Lunch in the Park series, but added an evening component to better engage people who work during the day. A group meets every month at a local restaurant to share and meal and meet new neighbors without an agenda. This generally draws between 10-30 people each month.

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After looking at the communications and disparate information as well as inconsistent visual identity, the MemComm Committee began the Identity Task Force. This Task Force was charged with building a cohesive visual identity and communications plan for PPERRIA to alleviate confusion and barriers to participation for new residents. The Task Force sent out a survey that 177 people took part in and hosted a series of Focus Groups with the hired consultant that engaged around 20 people.

The Master Planning Committee and Zoning & Project Review Committee organized a community event to update neighbors on developments that are in the planning stages in Prospect Park. The event was held in partnership between the PPERRIA committees and the Prospect North organization. It was held on a Saturday morning and drew in 130 residents and interested individuals at Surly Brewery. These Development Overview events have proven to be successful and will likely be continued as more development is slated for the neighborhood.

Every year a volunteer committee organizes both an Earth Day clean up of the River and a neighborhood clean up day. They work with local businesses and residents to make Prospect Park a nicer place to live. The April clean up had ____ volunteers and the September clean up had ____ volunteers.

PPERRIA has financially supported the Community Gardens and the Summer Concert Series in the neighborhood. PPERRIA continued facilitating a lease for the Arthur Avenue Community Gardens and supported the purchase of materials to expand the gardens. The Summer Concert Series provides a way for neighbors to get together and enjoy a night of free music in their own back yard. The concerts expanded in 2014 to include 4 free performances, the final one being the largest and most multiculturally inclusive at Luxton Park. Over 800 people were in engaged in the concerts.

One special event in 2014 that will not be repeated was the 100th Anniversary of the Witch's Hat Water Tower. This weekend-long event included opening the Water Tower to the public for 2 days, events around it included home tours and highlighting homes over 100 years old in the neighborhood, a poetry reading, garden walk and an organized neighborhood garage sale day. These events together drew an estimated 3,000 people to Prospect Park over the course of 2 days. Hundreds of people and dozens of organizations were involved to make the event a success.

Outreach was continued through seeking opinions of Prospect Park residents on several projects being built or proposed in the neighborhood. PPERRIA is proud to invite any and all to committee meetings, and welcomed many people who wanted to provide input and opinions on projects that would affect their quality

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of life in regards to traffic, construction, parking and other potential pitfalls of any new building.

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

The MemComm Committee has worked to build a relationship with the Glendale Townhome residents. Glendale Townhomes include 184 public housing units in a 5 acre area. Up until recently (end of 2014/2015 PPERRIA year) there was no Glendale representation at the PPERRIA meetings. What first started out as a plan to get more East-African immigrants involved in PPERRIA became a larger project to help Glendale residents become connected to the projects that are happening in the neighborhood and be able to voice their opinions alongside their neighbors. With the help of a few Glendale residents PPERRIA is currently building these stronger connections and helping to amplify the voice of the Glendale residents as changes come to their community. There are many challenges in this, but PPERRIA is working to find ways to satisfy everyone.

The PPERRIA Sound Wall Task Force was a group of people who spent years working to fix the problem of amplified sound coming from the highway due to a design flaw. they worked with MnDoT and elected officials to find a solution that could be installed quickly and cost efficiently. This Task Force hosted special meetings in 2014 to expedite the fix and worked with lawmakers to ensure it was satisfactorily installed. This issue impacted many people on either side of the highway and the Task Force engaged as many of them as possible.

We did have a few students become involved through a class that asked students to attend neighborhood meetings to find out how neighborhood associations worked with Urban Planning. One student who attended expressed an interest in learning more and exploring Solar Gardens for Prospect Park. He brought his student friends to events and was a great way to connect with the younger renters in the neighborhood. Hiring interns and hosting multi-generational events is a great way to get students at least present in the neighborhood.

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

We had a lot of luck in reaching out to the Glendale Community because leaders from the Townhomes reached out to our Task Force, and because the Task Force was already enabled they were able to respond quickly to the requests from the community leaders and give advice on how to work with the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority.

Having a monthly community meeting is an asset to reaching out to underrepresented groups, since there is always a place for them to come find out what is happening and can give them a platform for any issue they feel is important to the neighborhood.

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

Again, it is difficult to reach renters and students in the neighborhood. Because of the short-term stay that students have each year it can be difficult to identify students and get them to 'buy in' to the neighborhood groups. With longer-term renters there is still a feeling that neighborhood associations are for homeowners, which is a perception issue that PPERRIA must address in the coming years.

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

Between 6 committees, at least 5 task forces and a community meeting, PPERRIA's average monthly connection is 150 people. The committees meet between 10 and 12 months out of the year and continue engaging between meetings through emails and phone calls.

There are several events throughout the year that allow PPERRIA to make direct contact with members. The Annual Meeting, pratt Ice Cream Social, the monthly Lunch in the Park/Happy Hour events, the summer concert series, the Earth Day cleanup and neighborhood clean up, working with the U of M on some volunteers projects, the Annual Garage Sale weekend, National Night Out and Community Garden support are all examples of how PPERRIA reaches people outside of committee work. The amount of people that are directly contacted through these events around 2,000.

- **How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?**

Around 150 individual volunteers were active each month in PPERRIA's various committees, events and representing PPERRIA to partner organizations.

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

With all of the events listed above and adding in the Tower 100 event, over 6,000 people participated in PPERRIA's 2014 activities.

- **How many people receive your print publications?**

At the beginning of 2014 around 160 people received print publications. Due to lack of volunteers to edit the newsletter, it has gone to online distribution only.

- **How many people receive your electronic communications?**

420 people receive the newsletter by email, over 1000 receive the daily e-list updates that are volunteer-run. 96 people 'like' the Facebook page and the PPERRIA Twitter feed has 78 followers.

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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 once-in-a-lifetime event that happened in Prospect Park in 2014 was the Witch's Hat Tower 100 year celebration. The Witch's Hat Tower is an undeniable landmark that defines the Prospect Park neighborhood. It has stood for 100 years now, and has been a symbol of the neighborhood throughout the century. Volunteers used the 100th anniversary to open the Tower to the public for 2 days, staffing the tower, selling commemorative t-shirts and maps, and using it as a way to tell the history of some of the homes in the neighborhood. Other groups used the weekend to host public art and performance art nearby. The first annual Garage Sale Days took place over this weekend to take advantage of the increased foot traffic--over 3000 people attended from all over the world! It was a huge success and definitely a highlight for the community.

Several things that have been anticipated for years came to the neighborhood in 2014. The Green Line started running, which has impacted traffic in the neighborhood. There were opening-weekend events throughout the neighborhood, and the end of construction and start of it running has brought businesses to the University area. The Surly Destination Brewery has also opened, a structure that has been anticipated for years. The Surly staff and management have been good neighbors and have been able to organize their volunteer group, Surly Gives A Damn, to help with projects in the neighborhood. Examples of when they helped are in building raised beds for the Community Garden and assisting with the Earth Day Clean Up. While some questions are still being raised about increased traffic, noise and the relationship between the Surly customers and the neighborhood, the Surly staff has proven to be great at communicating with PPERRIA.

3. 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?**

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Sound Wall Solution Implemented: This project has greatly reduced noise pollution in the neighborhood. It took many volunteer hours and constant communication with MNDOT to complete. While the study is still open in order to test the effect of the solution, many residents have noticed a decrease in highway noise in their homes.

Kick Off of Identity Study: After many months of preparation and searching, the MemComm Committee started the Identity Task Force. This Task Force has identified and hired a consultant to distill the characteristics of the neighborhood and PPERRIA into a cohesive visual identity with clear guidelines for communication. This project will be completed in the 2015/2016 year and will help transform how PPERRIA communicates with residents.

Renewed Ties with Glendale Residents: The open lines of communication between Glendale and PPERRIA are helping to erase barriers in the community. The people of Glendale have access to PPERRIA's resources and PPERRIA can represent the whole community, instead of just a portion.

Community Concerts: These are a great way to get people together in the neighborhood. Four concerts were scheduled and had great turnout in the 2014 season. Events like these let neighbors get to know one another and build community.

Federal Historic District Designation Nomination: After 20 years the Historic District Committee is getting ready to wind down their meetings, because Prospect Park has been nominated to the Federal Historic District Register. This is an honorary marker to note where historic neighborhoods are throughout the country. A lot of hard work and communication went into this project over 2 decades by a large group of residents.

Community Garden Growth: The Community Gardens have grown from 2 garden locations to 3, with the largest being right off of the Light Rail station in Prospect Park. These gardens are a great way for neighbors to meet, get new neighbors involved in community activities, and they are devising a way to support the Glendale Food Shelf in the coming year(s).

Partnered with the Textile Center: The Textile Center organized 2 community events in 2014 in order to build community while teaching attendees about dye gardens, felting and the sources of many textiles. PPERRIA helped support and advertise these events, which several hundred people participated in.

Developers continue to work with PPERRIA's Zoning and Project Review Committee. This seemingly small thing has huge impacts in our neighborhood. By working with developers before plans are finalized there ends up being a more

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cohesive and liveable community. Volunteers continue to be available on short notice to meet with developers and give input from a community perspective.

4. *Housing*

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

Between Zoning and Project Review and working with the Glendale Community on MPHA's plans for reconstructing the townhomes, an estimated 8-10% of time was spent on housing related activities.

5. *Financial Reports*

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

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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?

Many people involved with the Z&PR committee go to public hearings and work with City Planners on the developments coming to the neighborhood. It would be extremely helpful for one or two planners to be assigned to the Prospect Park district so they have retention of knowledge, instead of new planners needing to be updated on every aspect of development in the area. This is time-consuming and can be frustrating every time a new project begins or a City Planner is moved to a different project.

NCR has been extremely responsive to inquiries, e-mails and phone calls. PPERRIA would like to especially highlight the service of Michelle Chavez, who has been a great advisor and helpful when navigating tricky situations that require diplomacy and an outside eye. We have also worked with Jack Whitehurst, Robert Thompson, Bob Cooper and Judy Duffey and have been impressed with the quick responses and efficiency of the interactions.

Many Prospect Park residents reach out to cam Gordon and Robin Garwood to gain assistance on various projects and problems the neighborhood is facing.

The Parks and Recreation Board is difficult to work with on a regular basis. We know that the City of Minneapolis does not run the MPRB, but it's still worth noting that people have been given wrong information about the neighborhood, our parks are not kept up very well, and our Park commissioner does not tend to return phone calls or emails in a timely manner. However, the staff at the Luxton Park Recreation Center have been amazing to work with and care very deeply about this community.

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?

_____3.5_____

2. *City Communications – effectiveness*

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

The announcements, new programs, snow emergencies and other information mailings are put together well and distributed widely.

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On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate overall communications from the City? _____4.5_____

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.

It would be good to receive more notice of public hearings--sometimes there is 3 weeks notice, others 1 week or less. There are also inconsistencies between what is announced via e-mail and what is announced by mail.

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? _____3.5_____

4. City Departments

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

We would like if there were 1-2 City Planners assigned to the neighborhood in order to establish a better rapport and make sure there doesn't have to be an 'educational period' for new planners for every development.

Public Works has started to do more in the neighborhood, but has not had great communication with the residents. We have had to reach out to them through Cam Gordon to get answers to simple questions, which was frustrating and time consuming.

5. City Assistance

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

Access to Translation and Interpretive services in order to engage with East African and Hmong communities in the neighborhood would be a great asset. Telling neighborhoods how to access those tools in the monthly newsletter would be great.

We are looking forward to the Learning Labs this summer. It's seems like a great way to get acquainted with ideas and duties for people who are new to neighborhood associations.

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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? _____4.5_____

6. Other comments?