

Community Participation Program (CPP) 2013-14 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: **Waite Park Community Council (WPCC)**

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Date of Board Review: **Wednesday, March 4th, 2015**

1. Stakeholder Involvement

- What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2013-14?

The WPCC held monthly board meetings to address neighborhood issues and related business, and to serve as a forum for Waite Park neighbors and other Northeast stakeholders.

Further engagement with the neighborhood was done by way of sponsored (with funds and/or volunteer assistance) or hosted events such as: NEighbors Sale Days, NE Ride, Waite Park School Carnival, NE Community & School BBQ, WP Parks & Recreation's 'Movies in the Park', Community Garden events, and the Waite Park Fall Festival & Pushcart Derby.

- How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2013-14?

In March of 2013 while developing our NPP, we did reach out to the most concentrated area of Waite Park with the greatest racial diversity and percentage of rental properties. This was done by hosting a meeting on the East side of the neighborhood, directly adjacent to this diverse section, on a different time and day than we normally meet –hoping this would be a more convenient time for people to attend. We distributed flyers to the area and advertised the meeting in the WP Voice newsletter. Sadly not one neighbor attended.

Specific efforts to reach under-represented groups within Waite Park did not differ from years previous to 2013, in 2014. Outside of well-promoted meetings and events such as are mentioned in the question above, there were no specific efforts made to reach under-engaged neighbors. However, the WPCC will continue to evaluate and experiment with new ways to better reach these groups in an on-going basis.

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

If anything has been learned about the successes of the past with regards to better engaging neighbors (whether they are typically under-engaged or not), it could be summed up as in this way: do more neighborhood events, and make board meetings more relevant and topical. Evidence of this began to develop in 2014 after shifting most board business to our monthly Thursday night meetings and dedicating our monthly Wednesday night meetings to a single topic of discussion we felt the neighborhood would be interested in.

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This resulted in an immediate increase in attendance of Wednesday night neighborhood meetings, with many neighbors being first time attendees.

- What did not work so well? Why?

Traditionally held board meetings have perhaps spent too much time on issues that don't appear to attract the interest of the neighborhood at large. While some issues such as board governance, operating finances, and the like are all important business, they (usually) do not entice neighbors to get involved.

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

While this question is difficult to quantify, the WPCC estimates that by way of neighborhood and committee meetings, special events, or simply being approached by a neighbor would be in excess of 700 or more people per year.

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

Between 40-80 people.

- How many individuals participated in organization activities?

Between 600-1,000 people.

- How many people receive your print publications?

Approximately 2,300 on a bimonthly basis, at minimum.

- How many people receive your electronic communications?

Approximately 1,800 unique visits (on average) to our Web site each month as of 2014 with a significant uptick beginning in October (visits grew to over 3,200 in December). Regarding social media, we hit 478 Facebook 'likes' (an 86% increase from 2012) and grew to approximately 717 Twitter followers (a 38% increase from 2012) as of the end of December 2014.

2. 2013-14 Highlights

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

While the Waite Park neighborhood is not without it's own challenges, we are very fortunate to not be facing many of the types of difficult issues other

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Minneapolis neighborhoods face. However, creating a sense of community and bringing neighbors together is a constant objective.

Fall Festival 30th Anniversary

In September of 2013, the WPCC held the 30th Anniversary of the Waite Park Fall Festival and the 5th Annual Pushcart Derby. As many neighborhoods surely understand, doing all that is possible to encourage a positive turnout is a challenge in and of itself. We believe three major factors helped expand participation and the overall success of this event in 2013:

- Promotion of the event by way of traditional print materials, Web and social media, cross-promotion during other NE events, and leveraging the power of other NE stakeholders and partnerships to reach a greater audience.**
- A more visible and conducive location for the event.**
- Continued development of the Pushcart Derby portion of the event and outreach to encourage block clubs and other NE organizations to form teams to compete.**

The positive results were reflected in continued participation by neighbors in the Pushcart Derby race, with \$400 awarded to winning competitors (supplied by unrestricted WPCC funds raised during the event).

Though no official total was determined for overall festival participants, the general estimation by WPCC board and volunteers was that turnout was favorable and well celebrated.

WPCC Social: Movie in the Park

In June of 2014, the WPCC co-hosted the event “Movie in the Park” along with the WP Parks and Recreation department. The WPCC saw this as an excellent opportunity to get neighbors together to socialize and have fun before the movie began at sunset.

Many neighbors turned out for the event and engaged one another while playing yard games (one of which was a huge home-made Jenga game), enjoying a free desert, or watching their children take their turn in the bouncy house (generously supplied by Castle Building & Remodeling). Neighbors were also able to learn more about WPCC programs available to them, such as our Security Rebate Program, Block Club Grants and low-interest Home Remodeling Loan Program.

The WPCC saw this event as great success due to the increased engagement amongst neighbors prior to the show time as well as increased awareness of the WPCC’s activities and programs available to them.

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3. 2013-14 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2013-14:

- Amended the official bylaws of the WPCC (last revised in 2003). Made considerable language improvements, clearer and more consistent policy, and cleaned up errors that had crept in over many years of prior changes.
- Developed a neighborhood-wide survey that was mailed to all Waite Park residents and businesses and solicited their feedback on the condition of the neighborhood, their desired priorities for the neighborhood, their awareness of programs available, and a sampling of demographic information. 15% of those solicited responded by returning the printed survey or completed the survey online. The information collected was analyzed and used to directly inform the WPCC's direction in drafting Waite Park's Neighborhood Priority Plan.
- In 2013 began hosting a social hour prior to the WPCC's Annual Meeting. With improved promotion, the lure of a great spread from the Eastside Coop and home baked treats, as well as the appearance of several NE stakeholders, the WPCC saw a considerable increase in attendance over recent years past. At the 2014 meeting, all 15 WPCC director seats were filled for the first time in many years.
- Successfully developed a Neighborhood Priority Plan approved by the Waite Park neighborhood, Waite Park Community Council and City of Minneapolis.
- Helped to facilitate feedback regarding improvements to playground equipment and the pool at Waite Park and ensure the Minneapolis Parks department understood and executed a plan that addressed the needs and desires of the neighborhood.
- Created and compiled a WPCC Director's Manual containing resources ranging from board duties, fiduciary responsibilities, governance, and much more. All directors were issued one for personal reference.
- "Remodeled" the WPCC "office" by gutting the space completely and furnishing with new office furniture and equipment, making the space much more usable and inviting.

4. Housing

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

The WPCC estimates that over 50% of its program offerings, board discussions and related activities focus on housing or homeowner issues.

- Over \$126,000 in home remodeling loans and emergency repair loans have been closed since 2010.
- A combined \$2,392 was dispersed in homeowner security rebates and block club grants between 2013 and 2014.
- Approximately 180 'Welcome Packs' were distributed to new homeowners within Waite Park between 2013 and 2014.

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5. *Financial Reports*

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

See attachments for 2013-2014.