

**South Main Revitalization Planning Area
Meeting with Neighborhood Pastors
November 30, 2004**

PASTORS PRESENT Pastor Edward Copeland (New Zion Missionary Baptist Church), Father Luke Poczworowski (St. Anthony's Church), Father Tim Piasecki (Sts. Peter and Paul Church), Pastor John Sentner (Providence Missionary Baptist Church), Pastor Bennie Reed (True Vine Baptist Church), Pastor Frank Nesbitt (Miles Memorial CME Church)

OTHERS PRESENT Roger Sexton and Lori Carlson (SWIFTT); Ald. Victory Bell; Henrietta Dotson-Williams; Vicki Manson, Dorothy Reddic, Lucia McFarlane and Ginny Gregory (City of Rockford)

STRENGTHS / ASSETS

- ◆ Underused resources: Mandeville Park, Montague Branch Library, 2 schools. It was noted that Washington Communication Academy has state-of-the-art computer labs and video equipment, a gym and a swimming pool. This is a resource that the neighborhood should be able to take advantage of but can't because it shuts down at 3:30.
- ◆ More people are homeowners than 10 years ago, and incomes are going up.
- ◆ People seem to be improving their homes, especially with new siding.
- ◆ Vacant land; specifically mentioned Barber-Colman Village. The Booker Washington campus is also an asset.
- ◆ Museums – Tinker Cottage, Ethnic Museum and Graham-Ginestra – that bring people here from all parts of the City.
- ◆ Sts. Peter & Paul, St. Elizabeth's, St. Anthony's, etc., all representing a rich ethnic diversity within the neighborhood.
- ◆ Quiet, peaceful neighborhood.
- ◆ Improvements to church property – shows signs of change in attitude – this is no longer just a stepping stone to other parts of the City.
- ◆ Klehm.
- ◆ Clubs – St. Ambrogio and Lithuanian Club.

NEEDS / WEAKNESSES

- ◆ Swimming pools, recreation. Consider extending the planning area to include Washington, although West Street does create a natural boundary. Bring School District in to be involved. (Discussion of how we selected the boundaries.)

- ♦ Important for churches and organizations in the neighborhood to realize there will be opportunities for new home ownership and for small businesses. City needs to market its housing and ED Programs.
- ♦ Is there a way to speed up the City's land acquisition process? Followed by the question, does the City really want the land or just to get it cleared? (Vicki explained what the process is.)
- ♦ Need way to deal with negligent landlords. Mentioned 3 lots across from Bove's/Ferri's Market.
- ♦ Quality rental housing needed: New construction duplexes.
- ♦ Realtor redlining; won't even bring people to SW Rockford.
- ♦ Need uniform code enforcement of buildings.
- ♦ Neighborhood Watch groups facilitated by City with reps from different departments (assigned to specific staff).
- ♦ Landlord/Tenant referral resource. [Dorothy mentioned that Human Services is planning to become a housing resource center to hand out information, including landlords they have *not* had problems with.]
- ♦ Publicize goals / message with regards to Neighborhood Standards so people understand why it's being done, how they may have been cited, how they can file a complaint, etc.
- ♦ Cost to remove debris. – cleanup needed, regularly. Big problem with people dumping on other people's property.
- ♦ Publicize how to report code violations, including Neighborhood Standards issues.
- ♦ Liquor stores on South Main Street.

IDEAS

- ♦ TA Center being created by SWIFTT to become a visible anchor to train block captains.
- ♦ Publicize SWIFTT at Montague Branch, etc.
- ♦ St. Anthony's, etc. willing to include flyers in their Sunday bulletins.

CONCERNS ABOUT INDIVIDUAL CHURCH PROPERTY

- ♦ Curb and gutters at New Zion / drainage issues. Also would like to close Weldon Street so they can expand across the street. They own property on both sides.

- ♦ Curb cuts for the disabled – need to find more money to speed up the process of installing these citywide.
- ♦ White house on West Street facing Washington School has been vacant for 3 years.
- ♦ House on Weldon at the alley behind New Zion also vacant but looks good enough it should be rehabbed.
- ♦ More Hispanic representation and information in Spanish.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- ♦ The following pastors signed up to participate in future [possibly monthly] meetings:
 - ♦ Rev. Copeland
 - ♦ Father Luke
 - ♦ Father Tim
 - ♦ Rev. Reed
 - ♦ Rev. Nesbitt