

Community Participation Program (CPP) 2012 Annual Report

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

Contact: **Anthony Beard, President**

Date of Board Review: **Wednesday, April 3rd, 2013**

1. Stakeholder Involvement

Reviewing your submission for CPP funds in 2012, Please provide information about:

- What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2012?

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: NE Parade, NE Ride, Waite Park School Carnival, NE Community & School BBQ, WP Parks & Recreation's 'Movies in the Park', Community Garden Day, and the Waite Park Fall Festival & Pushcart Derby.

- How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2012?

Specific efforts to reach under-represented groups within Waite Park did not differ from recent years past. 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, discussions pertaining to doing so did occur in 2012, with the intention of taking tangible steps in 2013.

- 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.

- 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

Community Participation Program (CPP) 2012 Annual Report
approached by a neighbor would be in excess of 500 or more people.

Community Participation Program (CPP) 2012 Annual Report

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

Between 40-80 people.

- How many individuals participated in activities?

Between 300-500 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 900 unique visitors (on average) to our Web site each month, 257 Facebook 'likes', and approximately 519 Twitter followers as of December 2012.

2. *2012 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 Minneapolis neighborhoods face. However, creating a sense of community and bringing neighbors together is a constant objective.

In September of 2012, the WPCC held the annual Waite Park Fall Festival and 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 2012:

- **Improved 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 new, 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 a 33% increase in participating teams in the Pushcart Derby race, with \$400 awarded to winning competitors (supplied by roughly \$1,700 raised in unrestricted WPCC fundraising during the event).

Community Participation Program (CPP) 2012 Annual Report

Though no official total was determined for overall festival participants, the general estimation by WPCC board and volunteers was that turnout was more favorable than in past years.

Additionally in September, the Waite Park RecPlus group, roughly 30 kids ranging in age 5 - 12 and approximately five accompanying staff, walked from the Waite Recreation Center to the Waite Park Community Garden to harvest remaining grapes. This was the second year for this adventure which brings young people into the garden for a tour to identify plants, smell the herbs, and observe other features of the garden such as the leaf eater mason bees and blue bird houses. At the end the visit parents arrived to pick up their kids at the garden. All-in-all this one event engaged over 50 adults and children alike, while engaging youth in the Waite Park neighborhood by way of a long standing neighborhood asset.

3. 2012 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2012:

There are two key accomplishments that can be identified from 2012.

Improved organizational capacity and efficiency

- **Successfully completed 2012-13 CPP process and was awarded contract with the City of Minneapolis.**
- **A Finance Committee was created to help review past budgets and expenses, and help prepare a financially sound plan for the WPCC.**
- **Established a Neighborhood Priority Plan (NPP) Committee for overseeing plan development process, which continues into 2013.**
- **Drafted and approved ADA and EOE policies.**
- **Three WPCC Directors attended a conference hosted by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits to explore topics such as: board governance, organizational purpose and vision, improving stakeholder engagement, and identifying funding sources.**

Continued effort to build community:

- **As before mentioned, the WPCC has continued to be a source of sponsorship and event organization; designed to create opportunities for neighbors to get to know one another and aid in fostering a sense of community.**

Community Participation Program (CPP) 2012 Annual Report

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 \$34,000 in home remodeling loans agreements were made in 2012, with the help of GMHC, to Waite Park residents.**
- **A combined \$1,650 was dispersed in homeowner security rebates and block club grants.**
- **Approximately 75 'Welcome Packs' were distributed to new homeowners within Waite Park in 2012.**
- **National Night Out gift bags were given to block party organizers with items for door prizes, information on rebate programs and other opportunities for neighbors via the WPCC.**
- **Helped facilitate open communication between homeowners and a newly established business property.**

5. *Financial Reports*

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

See attachment.

Community Participation Program (CPP) 2012 Annual Report

City Interactions Feedback 2012

1. *Impact*

What interactions with City departments occupied a major part of your time? What worked well? What could be improved?

Preparing the 2012-13 CPP Proposal occupied the greatest amount of our time in 2012. Robert Thompson took time out of his schedule to attend a WPC board meeting and field questions regarding the process and documents required. Robert is a highly valued asset to the CPP program and Minneapolis neighborhoods.

Other attempts were made to utilize NCR staff, however communication and follow-through was lacking and ultimately ineffective. Bringing other NCR staff up to the expertise and level of service that Robert is able to deliver should be a priority.

2. *City Communications - effectiveness*

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

The Minneapolis inTouch Email newsletter has been helpful as well as updates from our Ward 1 Councilman. However, at times, notices from City departments (including, but not limited to, NCR) can create cause for alarm, when in fact after further information is learned, was no great concern at all. The recommendation would be to better evaluate outgoing communications and how neighborhood organizations may respond before final release.

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.

This can always be improved. Giving neighborhoods adequate time to evaluate and respond to potential policy changes, etc, is crucial for a cooperative City government.

4. *City Departments*

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

See item 1.

5. *City Assistance*

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

See item 1.

Community Participation Program (CPP) 2012 Annual Report

6. *Other comments?*

Other comments from the WPCC board includes praise from one of our two attendees of the Community Connections Conference; “worked well.”