

Community Participation Program 2013 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization:

Contact person: Jessica Buchberger

Date of Board Approval: _____

1. Stakeholder Involvement

Reviewing your CPP activities in 2013, Please provide information about:

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

PPERRIA continued to participate and hold annual neighborhood events, starting in April 2013 with the Annual Meeting. This meeting draws in neighbors who may not normally attend the monthly community meetings or committee meetings. Over 80 people came to the Annual Meeting and cast their votes for board representatives. New residents came to this meeting, and 10 became new PPERRIA members.

PPERRIA was involved with was the Pratt Ice Cream Social. Fifteen new members were signed up at this event that draws in thousands of people from around the Twin Cities to support the Pratt Community School. Several volunteers were engaged in order to sign these new members up at the event.

The Membership and Communications (MemComm) committee participated in distributing resource packages to students living in Prospect Park. This welcomed new residents, strengthened the relationship with the U of M, and got information about PPERRIA out to renters.

The MemComm Committee also began the process of reaching out and building a relationship with the Glendale Community in the Northwest portion of the residential neighborhood. Partnering with Luxton Park and individuals who have an interest in strengthening ties with Glendale residents, the MemComm committee created a Task Force to better address the needs of the community and find ways to help strengthen the ties between the two groups in order to create a more robust neighborhood.

The Master Planning Committee organized a community event to update neighbors on developments that are either planning to build or expressing an interest to build in the Prospect Park/East River Road neighborhood that drew in 55 people, many of whom do not come to regular committee or community meetings every month. This event took place on a Saturday, involved developers and residents, and looked at the changing face of Prospect Park along University Avenue.

PPERRIA began a casual get-together on the first Thursday of every month called Lunch in the Park. This is an opportunity to meet neighbors over lunch while supporting a local restaurant and has proven to be very successful, with 20-30 people attending each lunch.

Every year a volunteer organizes both a Earth Day clean up of the River and a neighborhood clean up day, working with local businesses and residents to make Prospect Park a nicer place to live. This year because of the snow in April, the clean up of the river was halted until September, when PPERRIA teamed up with the U of M for their Homecoming service event, Thank U. Residents of Prospect Park worked with 20 U of M students to clean up the shared riverbank between the University and the neighborhood. The same weekend PPERRIA conducted a neighborhood clean up with 25 volunteers.

PPERRIA financially supported the Community Gardens and the Summer Concert Series that were organized in the neighborhood. The Gardens' organizers continue to come to meetings and give updates on the progress of installing a water system in the gardens on Arthur Avenue. PPERRIA also facilitated in signing a lease for the land the garden is on in order to continue to foster the community building and healthy living a community garden brings to the neighborhood. The Summer Concert Series provides a way for neighbors to get together and enjoy a free night of live music in their own backyard. The concerts are going to expand in the coming year to more broadly include all corners of the neighborhood and a variety of musical interests.

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

Projects PPERRIA began conducting outreach on in 2013 and plan on continuing in 2014 are exploring the viability of a solar garden in the University District; pulling together a broader team of editors for the newsletter, recruiting a diverse Board of Directors that better represents the demographics in Prospect Park, recruiting a team of people for a development committee and advisory group for our Prospect Park Forward Fund, and bringing in new or lapsed members of under-represented areas of Prospect Park to give opinions on projects and work with developers in order to make an efficient neighborhood.

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

The MemComm committee is working to build a relationship with the Glendale Community, which has 184 public housing units in a 5-acre area

and no 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 get more involved in the neighborhood. The committee began a Task Force with PPERRIA members, representation from Luxton Park and the Glendale Neighborhood Resident Council to perform a needs-assessment with the Neighborhood Community Relations Department of the City of Minneapolis in order to create a more successful and long-lasting relationship between the two distinct communities.

The Zoning and Project Review Committee has reached out to residents of the East River Mews area of the neighborhood, a group that has not been well-represented at PPERRIA meetings. A new development is being built near that section of the neighborhood that would significantly impact parking in the River Mews, and residents of the Mews have been invited to be a part of the Task Forces that meet with the developers to ensure their concerns are heard and addressed.

The PPERRIA Sound Wall Task Force is a group of people who spent 2012 and much of 2013 working to fix the problem of amplified sound coming from the highway due to a design flaw. They worked with MnDoT to find a solution that could be installed quickly and cost efficiently. During a final discussion with MnDoT the task force found the neighborhood could have influence on the design aspect of the sound wall solution, but with the understanding that if a special design was included it would take a few months longer. The community meeting that debated the two sides of the issue was one of the most well-attended meetings in 2013, and those most affected by the noise amplification were sought out to give their opinions and reflect on how it has impacted their quality of life.

PPERRIA continues to reach out to students and renters who live in the neighborhood. The Executive Committee has met with the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA) and expressed interest to the organizers for students to be more involved with committees and community projects.

- ≡ Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful? Why?
- As in the past, the most effective way for people to begin getting involved is inviting them to take part in a discussion around a topic that affects them directly. Residents from the River Mews are attending more PPERRIA committee meetings. The community information meetings updating the neighborhood on the developers' plans for the neighborhood are going to be repeated because they give residents a chance to catch up on the fast-paced changes occurring in the area, and allow them to give feedback on what they would like to see more or less of without taking on the responsibilities and commitments of committee work.
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≡ What did not work so well? Why?
Reaching out to renters and students has proven to be the most difficult, mainly because of the volunteer time it takes to reach out and meet them. There does not seem to be one strategy that works well, but rather a myriad of activities that could draw more people into PPERRIA. This takes a lot of volunteer time and effort that does not always draw more people in and can discourage the people taking the time to reach out. PPERRIA finds involving these groups extremely worthwhile, since they make up a large percentage of the neighborhood, and will continue to try new ways to involve renters and students in 2014.

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

Between 6 committees, at least 3 task forces, and a community meeting, PPERRIA's average monthly connection is 128 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 event, the summer concert series, the Earth Day clean up and neighborhood cleanup, working with the U of M on volunteer projects, National Night Out and community garden support are all examples of how we reach people outside of committee work. The amount of people that are directly contacted through these events is well over 1000.

≡ How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?
Around 100 individual volunteers are active each year through different committees, events, and representing PPERRIA to partner organizations.

≡ How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?
Around 300 individuals actively participated in PPERRIA activities.

≡ How many people receive your print publications?
165 people and businesses are sent a print version of the newsletter.

≡ How many people receive your electronic communications?
300 people receive the newsletter by email, over 900 receive the daily e-list updates that are volunteer-run.

2. 2013 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?

There are several intersections in Prospect Park that are not very safe for bikers and pedestrians, but by far the most dangerous is where Bedford & University Ave intersect. This area is wide, has the LRT rail running through the middle, is confusing to drivers about where to stop or how to proceed through the intersection, and is overall a hazard to those who are not just driving straight down University. The area is also an eyesore, with minimal landscaping and no fixtures that welcome people into Minneapolis from Saint Paul. In order to address this PPERRIA's Master Planning committee hired Cuningham Consultants to find viable solutions to the problems the intersection had.

The Cuningham representative worked with the Master Planning committee and a group who lives on 4th Street, an oft-forgotten and neglected area of Prospect Park that faces several challenges with development. After getting a better idea of the issues, the Cuningham group presented possible solutions to the Master Planning committee, who provided feedback. The potential fix to the street and landscaping ideas were presented at a community meeting in January 2014 in order to gather feedback about what would work and what would not. Overall the plans the Master Planning committee chose seemed to please most residents, and the committee will be moving forward with the next steps of implementing some of these changes by working with the City Council office.

In late 2012 the longtime PPERRIA newsletter editor resigned. Another volunteer stepped up and completely revitalized the publication. The newsletter that now goes out every month is a work of art that also works to keep people informed on the various activities of the organization.

Give to the Max Day has proven to be a time when PPERRIA members go above and beyond in order to support the neighborhood. In one day and with no matching grants, PPERRIA raised almost \$5,000 from residents. This went into the Prospect Park Forward Fund, which is a general reserve fund for the time being—though it has the potential to be an endowment fund.

3. 2013 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2013:

- ≡ *What were your organization's major accomplishments?*
- ≡ *How were individuals in your community directly impacted by your work?*

The MemComm committee successfully authored and illustrated a poster about Prospect Park that will be on display at the LRT station in the neighborhood. This information will allow people visiting the neighborhood to have an insight into the neighborhood and how rich its history is.

The Zoning and Project Review Committee effectively reviewed a number of projects in a timely manner, including large-scale projects by large developers. They provided insight on how the projects and developments would impact the neighborhood, gave constructive feedback on how to make buildings better for the community, and provided letters of support for zoning variances they supported. Some of these projects include the Surly Brewery, 22 on the River (a rehab of the old Good Samaritan Site), providing a forum for discussion in regards to the relocating of the CSL Plasma Center, reviewing several student housing-related projects, providing feedback on parking issues, and other small projects throughout the residential area of the neighborhood. Many of these projects impact the entire neighborhood and those who commute through Prospect Park on a regular basis.

The Z&PR committee also initiated a conversation about the alcohol guidelines for restaurants in the neighborhood that has brought a lot of interest to the meetings. While no finished product happened in 2013 there was the creation of a task force that includes a variety of people and opinions in order to create a flexible policy that will bring appropriate restaurants into the neighborhood.

After years of work the Sound Wall Task Force and MnDoT found a solution to the Sound Wall amplification problem, and soon the Prospect Park and East River Road area will be quiet again. There was also an agreement that the sound wall should have aesthetic appeal, and a quilting pattern of muted earth tones will be included during the construction of the new sound wall panels.

After years in limbo the U of M is building an Ambulatory Care Center on the edge of Prospect Park. This building will take up a full city block and will greatly increase traffic in the neighborhood. Representatives from PPERRIA attended meetings with developers of the Care Center in order to give feedback on creating an efficient building design that fits in with the community around the building. The designers of the building actively listened to this advice, and the result is a building everyone will be proud to have in the University District.

A team of residents have launched a campaign to build a community oven in the neighborhood. After a lot of research and spreading the virtues of having a community, wood-fired oven the team is ready for the next step of building once a suitable location for the oven is found. After many successful ovens being

installed in other neighborhoods and communities, PPERRIA looks forward to the day when it has one to call its own.

Prospect Park has been under consideration for inclusion in the National Registry of Historic Places for the past decade. Recently the neighborhood appealed a decision by the City Historic Preservation Commission to become a local historic district. Instead Prospect Park has lead an effort to change the City code to provide for Conservation Districts in addition to Historic Districts. In a Conservation District, residents agree on Design Guidelines that would help control development by assuring that it is consistent with neighborhood values and character. Council Member Cam Gordon has initiated a formal process involving neighborhood residents along with CPED and the City Council to achieve this addition to the City Code.

4. Housing

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

An estimation would be 8-10% of the time over the last year. Between examining new development projects, building renovations, and student housing projects the Zoning and Project Review spent a lot of the committee time on housing related projects. The MemComm committee has been spending more time on housing projects with the Glendale/Community Outreach Task Force. The Minneapolis Public Housing Authority has plans to completely overhaul the housing in the Glendale Neighborhood and PPERIA has been offering feedback and thoughts on how to make the new housing project fit in with the neighborhood.

5. Financial Reports

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

Please see attached file. It will be incomplete due to our fiscal year being May 2013-April 2014.

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 in 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 extremely frustrating to have to do every time a new project begins.

NCR has been more helpful with the addition of Michelle Chavez in the department. We have also worked with Jack Whitehurst, Robert Thompson, Bob Cooper and Judy Duffey and have generally been pleased with the interactions.

Lately PPERIA volunteers have been working with the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority. The staff there has been accommodating, answer questions quickly, are willing to attend our events and have been open to comments and suggestions.

Many neighbors reach out to Cam Gordon and Robin Garwood to gain assistance on various projects and problems the neighborhood is facing. We generally get a good response and have collaborated with the Council member and his staff on several projects.

Overall it seems that the City Departments do not know what other departments are doing. It can be frustrating when dealing with multiple departments, but that is the way of bureaucracy.

The Parks and Recreation Board is difficult to work with. 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 return phone calls or e-mails in a timely manner, if ever. However, the staff at the Luxton Park Recreation Center have been amazing to work with.

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___

2. City Communications – effectiveness

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

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

A recent frustration was with NCR about the NPP program. We were told we were supposed to do something, not told how or why or what the program was meant to do, just that it was different from the CPP grant. When we did get the information requested to NCR, it took months to get approved and moved through the process, and questions about how it worked or was going to work went unanswered—mainly because it was a new program that was not well explained to employees. This is just one part of the entire system, but it was very frustrating to deal with and does not seem to be the most well planned program.

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 we get 3 weeks notice, other times 1 week or less.

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 to work with our MPD Neighborhood Specialist Nick Juarez more about community crime response and prevention. There has been quite a lot of crime throughout the City this winter, and very little information from the MPD on their response or what the neighborhood can do collectively to help prevent crime.

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 planner for every development.

We would like to know how NCR works in order to understand the processes, responsibilities and timelines better. There seems to be a lot of reorganization happening in NCR and it would be nice to be kept up-to-date on the shift. We understand that part of this is us engaging with NCR more than we have in the past.

5. City Assistance

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

Translation and Interpretive services in order to engage with East African and Hmong communities in the neighborhood would be a great asset.

In general we would like more help reaching out to under-engaged populations in Prospect Park. Because we rely mainly on volunteer hours, it can be difficult to motivate people to do new things, or to try new ways to engage with their neighbors.

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 _____

6. Other comments?
