UNP Community Affairs Committee Meeting

April 15, 2009 6-7:30 pm
Minneapolis Urban League

Attendees: Makeda Zulu-Gillespie, Co-Chair, UNP Community Affairs Committee
Raymond Dehn, Co-Chair, UNP Community Affairs Committee
Sherrie Pugh, Executive Director, Northside Residents Redevelopment Council
Judith Baker, Director of Parent and Community Relations, Parents In Community Action, Inc.
Dorothy Robinson, Community Resident, Rainbow Terrace/Near North Community
Shawn Lewis, Program Associate, Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Inc.
Irma McClaurin, Executive Director, Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center, University of Minnesota
Martin Adams, FIPSE/UROC Coordinator, University of Minnesota
Stephanie Wilkes (recorder), Administrative Assistant, Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center, University of Minnesota

Opening Thought – Makeda Zulu-Gillespie
‘Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond imagination. It is our light more than our darkness which scares us. We ask ourselves – who are we to be brilliant, beautiful, talented, and fabulous. But honestly, who are you to not be so? You are a child of God, small games do not work in this world. For those around us to feel peace, it is not example to make ourselves small. We were born to express the glory of god that lives in us. It is not in some of us, it is in all of us. While we allow our light to shine, we unconsciously give permission for others to do the same. When we liberate ourselves from our own fears, simply our presence may liberate others.’ - Marianne Williamson

The group started with introductions.

Updates
Ray Dehn - UNP
Ray shared that himself and Makeda are in the process of developing an online survey as a part of the current ongoing process to envision what the UNP should be in the future; this survey will be a way of getting the input of others in the community.

Irma McClaurin - Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center
UROC Building Renovation – The interior demolition is scheduled for 2 weeks out, but the abatement, asbestos and soil testing has already begun. Irma and the architects are currently looking at the finishings – carpet, tile, trim, etc.

UROC Staffing – Irma talked about Kelly O’Connor, UROC’s communications intern since December 2008, and shared that UROC will soon be posting for a new media intern. One project for this new media intern could be creating a Wiki for North Minneapolis, something that would be open for the community to add onto.

Martin Adams asked if the timeline information generated at the UROC Futures Conference could be used in some way.

Irma responded that that was a great idea, and that the addition of an actual timeline (a brief one was started by UROC to help prepare for the Futures Conference) might be worthwhile as well.

Research – UROC is engaging in a research project on “Effects of the Mortgage Crisis on Individual, Family, and Community Health and Wellness,” for which Sherrie Pugh was the catalyst. A meeting was convened last August, and the group has started now looking through all area newspapers to check the emergence of the issue through time. They are also looking into community health indicators, such as safety and the prevalence of community leaders. Irma has just finished an intake form to send to the financial literacy programs in North Minneapolis; the purpose of these intake forms will be to collect data, identify resources, create a resource booklet and eventually a policy brief.

The meetings for this project are every Thursday in the Board Room of the Minneapolis Urban League from 10:45 am to 12:30 pm; these meetings are open to anyone who wants to come in and help.

5/11/09

Prepared by Stephanie Wilkes
Sherrie mentioned that she had just received an email from Neighborhood Housing Services, which shared that they received money from the Carl Pohlad Foundation.

Shawn Lewis said that he has had conversations with Mayor R.T. Rybak and those in philanthropy, and has let them know the importance of paying attention to North Minneapolis.

**Martin Adams – FIPSE-UROC**  
**Health & Nutrition**

Martin shared that he has been spending most of his time working on the health and nutrition piece of FIPSE-UROC due to the large amount of enthusiasm to work on the school gardens. There are currently 3 schools, and by working with a university instructor, FIPSE-UROC is helping them to establish curriculum for middle school kids to accompany the school gardens; Cityview already has a garden, but FIPSE-UROC is working to get them in the other 2 schools.

Martin shared that the main challenge is the garden maintenance over the summer months, when there is a gap between school years.

He also said that Geoff Maruyama is working on a service learning class, for graduates and undergraduates to work through Plymouth Christian Youth Center around this issue.

Irma asked if FIPSE-UROC had thought about using a Step Up student to help with the summer gap issue; Martin replied that they had actually used one last summer.

Sherrie also suggested approaching the surrounding block groups, to see if they would be interested in helping out during these gaps – she thinks we need to get away from importing labor into the community, when there may already be some there. She gave the example of Cityview, McKinley and Missionary – that there was a lot of enthusiasm in the beginning, but it dwindled as a sense of project fatigue set in, and said that tapping into existing community resources may be a way to breathe new life into it.

Martin then shared that there was more work to be done around this issue with the Hmong community, through Bethune; he indicated they were in the process of finding space for a garden.

Sherrie suggested that she could possibly help get access to land at Cecil Newman, which would be an opportunity for interaction.

Irma asked the group to think about ways to promote the garden as a resource within itself.

Sherrie asked Judy Baker if they own the land at PICA; Judy replied yes.

Shawn asked if they had approached the local churches yet, as they might also be able to offer assistance. Martin replied that they had not yet, and that their current focus was to develop relationships with the Minneapolis public schools. He says contacts with other groups like the local churches are not occurring because they don’t want them to, but they just see it as a step-at-a-time process.

**Out of School Time**

Martin said there had been some movement forward. Karen Goodenough at Plymouth Christian Youth Center is co-chair of that workgroup. Last summer, there was a meeting to discuss how we all can benefit from the university coming to the Northside, rather than individually. This has led to planning meetings (networking and training) and has focused on hourly youth workers.

**Youth Entrepreneurship**

Martin shared that there have been a few pilot programs with Extension’s Urban 4H program, which have gotten exposure and they are still building – they are working on not only these specific programs, but also thinking about other resources the university can bring for anyone going to work on youth entrepreneurship.
Martin is working on an agenda of to-dos – skill development, etc. – and will be scheduling a planning meeting in the future.

**Future of UNP Discussion**
Ray said that unlike the last meeting, he does not want to break into small groups; he would rather have everyone go through the March minutes for the next meeting in May; at that meeting, the group can talk more specifically, and also talk then about the surveys.

Irma shared some information about the survey – UROC has been using SurveyMonkey for a few different purposes (ex: choosing the theme for the Futures Conference) and has found it helpful. Because it is online, it is easy to pass along – asking an organization we send the survey to send it out to their own lists.

Makeda shared that there was recently a meeting with university members of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to clarify whether or not this technology could be used within their standards to gather information in the way UROC has been and would like to use the technology; after the meeting, the consensus was yes.

Irma clarified that through the IRB, the university has certain requirements when working with people in research; anyone who receives federal funding has to abide by these requirements. Because the way UROC has been using SurveyMonkey—to evaluate itself and its work—this method of research is outside the IRB. However, the IRB has expressed that it is interested in getting more info from the community.

Stephanie will be purchasing a quarterly subscription to SurveyMonkey, which will allow for more questions per survey, more responses allowed, etc.

**Open Discussion**
Ray then opened up the meeting to general discussion.

But first he noted that he and Makeda had come up with a CAC meeting schedule through the end of summer – meetings in May and June, no meeting in July, and reconvening for a meeting in August.

**Urban Food Enterprise/Rainbow Terrace**
Dorothy Robinson attended the meeting to represent the seniors at Rainbow Terrace, and well as the Near North neighborhood community.

She said they they were promised a store on Near Northside, and that the residents are in an uproar about this. She said that Ward 5 City Council Member Don Samuels visited Rainbow Terrace, and suggested that they do a petition.

The petition has been signed by all 1710 Plymouth Rainbow Terrace residents, and Dorothy plans to connect with Archie Givens to circulate at Legacy Village.

She shared that it is her understanding that there will not be a store through the UROC.

She shared that Chuck Lutz of the City of Minneapolis’ Department of Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED), in conjunction with the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council and the Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council, have worked with Rainbow Terrace to set up a bus to bring Rainbow Terrace residents to the Cub Foods on Broadway Avenue the first and third Thursdays of each month.

But she stressed that the residents’ main priority is getting a store in the area.

Irma McClaurin shared that she came into the conversation about the food enterprise after it had already started, but as she understood, it was a food co-op that was wanted by the community. She said an analysis was done to see if a traditional food co-op model was viable and the consensus seemed to be no.

Dorothy shared how the community meeting scheduled for 3 pm on Friday, April 17 came to be.

She said that Ward 5 City Council Member Don Samuels asked to come visit Rainbow Terrace; he had to cancel his first meeting, but then rescheduled for March 6.

Then, Congressman Keith Ellison and State Representative Bobby Champion asked if they could also visit Rainbow Terrace. Their visit was scheduled for April 17, but once the housing and general community heard about this visit, they all wished to attend; therefore, it has turned into a community meeting and everyone is able to attend.
Sherrie Pugh shared that that from what she knows, a smaller mom-and-pop type faces a few issues, namely that they are not able to secure the environment around their store in the same way that a large chain store can. She also said that in reading a few trade magazines on the issue, it seems that the new convenience store is the pharmacy, like CVS and Walgreens, and that these types of stores are becoming a place for people to buy food and other items besides prescriptions. She mentioned that it might be good to connect with the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School of Management to help us think about attracting those sorts of businesses to the area. She said she knows the lease for the Walgreens on Broadway is coming up, and has heard that they do want to stay in the area but may be interested in a new location. She also mentioned a federal grant due in May that may provide up to $800,000 for a project like this.

Dorothy Robertson added that she had heard from Cora McCorvey that there might also be stimulus money or Section 3 money available that could go toward a project like this.

Makeda Zulu-Gillespie asked if Rainbow Terrace and the Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council meet on a regular basis.

Dorothy responded that the Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council meets the first Thursday of every other month, the next to be in May. 2 delegates from each of the 40 highrises in Minneapolis comprise the board of the Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council, so attendance for the bi-monthly meetings is 80. She also mentioned that there are currently 8 highrises located in North Minneapolis. She said there are 6 or 7 in Northeast Minneapolis, but that the bulk are located in South Minneapolis.

Sherrie Pugh said that 60-70 percent of Minneapolis’ scattered site family housing is located in north Minneapolis, and referenced what she thinks may be a disconnect between North Minneapolis and Minneapolis Public Housing Authority.

Dorothy shared that Minneapolis Public Housing Authority just purchased 200 units in Heritage Park; Sherrie thought they might be the Bright Keys Townhomes. Dorothy said that Minneapolis Public Housing Authority owns a lot of the Northside.

Ray Dehn shared that he was glad Dorothy came to the CAC meeting today, and that her active role and connections in the community make her the kind of partner that the UNP wants to engage with. He shared that he thinks a lot of people are disappointed about the food enterprise, but he thinks that if people are active and can get their voices heard, that some sort of urban food enterprise in North Minneapolis could be possible in the future. He also pointed out that he has heard the Glenwood-Penn site as a more viable option, which is an option even if it is not within walking distance of Rainbow Terrace.

Dorothy Robinson shared that her view is that the community has done everything asked of it by the University of Minnesota in regards to this food enterprise, and she is disappointed that when it became known that this would not be a possibility, the University of Minnesota left people hanging and did not let them know.

Irma McClaurin agreed with Dorothy that there was a gap in the communication about this issue, and apologized that it did not take place.

Makeda Zulu-Gillespie brought up that if there is to be a business incubator in North Minneapolis, it might be good to think about having it be a circulator that travels around North Minneapolis. She said while it is important to utilize public transportation, it is also important to build and support our own businesses in the area.
Irma McClaurin pointed out that the University of Minnesota’s Center for Transportation Studies may have some information about traffic patterns or public transportation use in North Minneapolis that could be helpful in a discussion about this; she asked Stephanie Wilkes to look into this.

**Nominations and Celebrations**

Makeda also shared that Sherrie was nominated by UROC for the Community Partnership in Engagement award at the university, and that the reception to recognize those nominated will be April 23 from 4-6 pm at the Weisman Art Museum.

Sherrie mentioned that she heard about 7 Upward Bound North High School students who will be attending the University next year.

Irma asked the group to think about a way to honor and celebrate that.

Ray suggested inviting them to one of the CAC meetings, with their families; Irma suggested the possibility of holding an event at PICA.

**UROC Building Renovation**

Ray wanted to share with the group a conversation he had with Sharon Banks after his comments at the last meeting about convening a community meeting after the rewarding of the contracts about the process and the decisions made (who was awarded contracts, the workforce percentages, etc.).

He said Sharon indicated that the university and the project team do not feel that that kind of meeting is a needed part of the process, but that Sharon is the person to call if people want percentage numbers, and that she said he should feel free to give her information out for this purpose.

Irma said that the 2 target goals are 30 percent of the total subcontracting and also 30 percent of the total workforce will go to WMSBEs (women, minority, small business enterprises) – which is triple the university’s standard.

Sherrie said that kind of information is very important to get out to the public, in a press release to the community papers.