

OCTOBER 27th PATERSON FOURTH WARD COMMUNITY MEETING I - MINUTES

1. Welcome

Welcome the Councilwoman Ruby Cotton

Introduction of Paterson Habitat for Humanity and its partners:

- *Tier I Recovery (Dr. Willy Moody)*
- *Grace Gospel Church (Reverend Sarah Anthony)*
- *NJ Community Capital (Marc Dashield)*
- *Paterson Habitat for Humanity (Steve Kehayes)*
- *New City Parks (Rose Harvey)*

Purpose of the meeting: To get community input to develop a NRTC neighborhood Plan.

2. Setting the context

a. Background information about the Rosa Parks Neighborhood

- Review the neighborhood boundaries
- Basic Demographics

b. What is the NRTC Program?

- The Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC) fosters the revitalization of neighborhoods. NRTC offers business entities a 100 percent tax credit against various New Jersey state taxes in exchange for investments in improving low- and moderate-income neighborhoods according to a state-approved community-derived Neighborhood Plan.

c. What is a neighborhood Plan?

- Neighborhood plans include a comprehensive set of strategies to improve the community. The plan empowers community residents and other stakeholders to have a voice and work together in the planning and implementation of community-driven strategies that promote change in the community. It is required to access NRTC funding.

d. Overview of the Planning Process

- **Create Plan** - To create a neighborhood plan, community members participate in a series of community engagement activities that include:
 - Community Meetings/Roundtable Discussions
 - Focus Group interviews
 - Community Surveys
 - Online Engagement
 - Various Planning Exercises
- **Planning Process** - Previous Engagement Activities
 - Community Garden Planning Exercises
 - Planning Community Picnic

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e. Upcoming Engagements

- Community Meetings:
 - Jobs, Economic Development, Transportation & Open Space (October 29th, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm)
 - Housing and Business Development (November 17th, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm)
 - Housing and Business Development (November 19th, 11:00 am–12:30 pm)
- The second cluster of events starting in January will include:
 - Youth
 - Public Safety
 - Community Building
 - Plan Strategy Review
 - Draft Plan Review
 - Focus Groups (Property owners, business owners, and non-profits)
- NRTC is a program that will bring dollars into this community with your input. What this program does is give tax credits to businesses around the community allowing them to invest in communities. This is a 10-year plan with broad strategies for what the community needs. To unlock those dollars, you need to develop a neighborhood.
- The boundaries are on either sides of the railroad tracks, Lafayette Street and Broadway.
- This neighborhood holds 8000 residents, 2000 households in the neighborhood. Since 2010, the population has increased by 36%. African American's make up 32%, Latinos make up 45%.
- The neighborhood plans will develop broad strategies for what we want to do for jobs, open space, community buildings, public safety, and youth. This process will last from now to June 2023 and is driven by your input by a series of community meetings along themes to compile strategies and bring them back to you for feedback. It will be a comprehensive process.
- Once the plan is approved, the community can unlock dollars annually for ten years where there would be grant funding for up to one million dollars to implement. For the next ten years, based off these strategies, non-profits and the community would develop programs to initiate the plan.
- In addition to community meetings, there will be focus groups: property owners, business owners, elected officials and non-profits. On your way in, you filled out a survey. Throughout this process, you will be asked to fill out these surveys. The survey and other NRTC neighborhood planning information will be available online.
- In addition to community input, NJCC will be reviewing census and crime data to better understand the community and to develop key strategies.

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3. Meeting Goals

a. NRTC Plan Goals

- Goals for the night: The goal of this meeting is input. Community members are encouraged not just to be here today, but on Saturday as well to discuss jobs and transportation. In November, we will be talking about housing and business development. In January, we will have another set of meetings.

b. New City Planning Goals

- Tonight's process: New City Parks presented an offer to work with the community and gather ideas on park improvements. This is the beginning of a process and an opportunity for community input.

4. Introduction of New City Parks-Rose Harvey

Concerns expressed by community members:

- There are existing park committees formed by community members for both Barbour Park and Vera Ames Park. Park community leaders are already established and active.
- Community members feel disrespected and disregarded because there was a steering committee formed to work on these parks. Community members were not aware that this was happening and feel they should be included in any plans or changes that are to be made. Community members have been taking care of the parks and already have plans for what they want to see and do.
- Community members have been here for most or all of their lives. They care about the community and the families within it. They are invested in their community.
- Community members should be part of the entire process (i.e. design, agenda, documentation, etc.) and members of any committee to address the parks.
- If anyone is hired to work on the parks, they should be from the community (i.e. engineer).
- There is a lack of trust because of the way that the park review effort has been handled. Without trust, the established Barbour Park and Vera Ames Park committees do not feel comfortable sharing their plans with the NRTC Steering Committee and New City Parks. Vera Ames Park Committee has already submitted the plans for Vera Ames Park to the city for approval.
- Who will cover the cost of these renovations?

Response from NRTC Steering Committee and New City Parks:

- The NRTC Steering Committee and New City Parks were not aware that committees were already in place for both parks. They have created no plans for either park. The purpose of this meeting is to get feedback from the community about what they would like to see done. The plan is to work together to accomplish the common goal.
- The NRTC Steering Committee apologized to the community members for mishandling the communication and explained that contact information was collected from the sign in sheets that will be used to keep community informed. There will also be a banner placed between Grace Gospel Church and Tier 1 that will include a QR code and website that will have future meetings/events information.

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- Once a plan design is in place, New City Parks will raise funds to cover the costs of renovations.

Feedback from the surveys collected at previous community events:

Neighborhood challenges

- Reduce crime, hang out at night
- Reduce guns
- More jobs
- Improve parking
- Lack of youth programs
- Lack of mental health resources
- Lack of cleanliness in the community
- Threats: Lack of respect for elders; violence and killing; litter; weak educational system; poverty

Neighborhood assets, needs & opportunities

- What makes people feel good: churches, people
- Children
- Public bank
- Better paying jobs
- Something that makes me feel good
- Friendly people
- Everyone knows me
- Close to shopping and hospitals
- Development that leads to jobs

Conclusion

- A meeting with Barbour and Vera Ames groups will be set up to have them present what they've worked on and to ensure that everyone is on the same page.
- The sign in list will be used to keep the community informed.
- Listed people involved for the next meeting—agreed by community members.
- A community member was identified as the point person for the next park meeting. He will gather contact information.

Closed with Prayer