

Neighborhood Plan Meeting #1 Notes

November 24, 2015 10:00 AM

- I. Keely Freeman, Sierra House Director, welcomed participants and discussed the role of the Sierra House in this project as well as its programs.
 - Attendees introduced themselves and discussed their role in the community.
 - Bill Hunter (Project Development Consultant)-facilitated the meeting and explained the purpose of the neighborhood plan and the need for community collaboration.

- II. Assets of rebuilding in the Greenwood Section
 - Accessibility to Highways
 - Public Transportation
 - Ability to Walk to Destinations
 - Elementary Schools
 - Business District
 - Local Churches
 - Parks/Recreational Areas
 - Vacant/Available Land
 - Presently Based Properties
 - Availability of Investors and Individuals willing to commit to this project

- III. Guest Speaker: Alle Ries- Director of Community & Economic Development, La Casa De Don Pedro
 - They have worked on three extensive neighborhood development plans in Newark, NJ (Broadway Area)
 - Some were rentals and others were owner occupied homes.
 - Currently they are working on the redevelopment of 4 homes in the Greenwood section of East Orange, which will be brick frame houses.
 - The focus of their project is “Quality of Life”, which includes the following aspects: Economic Development, Public & Community Safety, and Health & Family Development
 - A key component is community involvement by producing a resident satisfaction survey distributed to over 2,000 residents to gather feedback.

- IV. Guest Speaker: Robin Gordon- Director of Administration, HANDS
 - Housing & Neighborhood Development Program in Orange operating for over 30 years.
 - Utilizes Organic Planning Strategy
 - Created by real-estate developers from a non-profit organization
 - Focus on chronically vacant lots
 - Worked on the Valley Area in Orange, NJ and the Heart of Orange.
 - Completed an evaluation of Development Plans in those particular neighborhoods, to produce a collaborative approach.
 - Created the 1st NJ Redevelopment Tax Program
 - Worked on some new construction as well as rehab properties

- V. Speaker: Valerie Jackson- Director of Planning for the City of East Orange
- Discussed the East Orange master plan which will be updated
 - Request for qualifications for redevelopment based on the area of need; soon to be released.
 - Interests of potential investors has been already considered
- VI. Interactive Participation of all the Attendees and their Visions for the project
- Increased Homeownership
 - Coordinated Planning Efforts
 - Viable Commercial Districts (restaurants, types of stores missing from the area)
 - Economic Development
 - Resident Driven
 - Recreational/Activities Centers for the community
 - Medical Building for Well Care Services for community
 - Transportation Areas being utilized as an asset
- VII. Closing Remarks and Sign-up sheet for Potential Steering Committee Members
- Keely thanked everyone for their participation and attendance
 - Surveys were completed and collected
 - Sign-up Sheets for potential steering committee were completed and collected
 - Next Meeting topics were briefly discussed