

Civic Park Community Meeting Notes

Wednesday, May 14, 2014

Joy Tabernacle Church, 2025 N. Chevrolet Ave., Flint, MI

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Meeting attendees:

Civic Park residents present (38)

William Alexander	Louis Kirkland	Judy Starr
Sue Ballard	Rosemary LeTourneau	Beth Stephens
Benjamin J. Cain	Kyle Manley	Ed Townsend
Katherine Crater	R. Sherman McCathern	Gloria Tucker
Beverly Davis	Frances McDonald	Cleaver Vaughn
Maurice Davis	Joezey Milton	Shaqwan Warren
Anthony Dunson	Taylor Pagel	Steve Warren
Sela Gibson	Barbara Pinson	George H. Weatherly
Darick Hearne	Bobby Simbler	Karen Weaver
Pat Hodges	Dorothy Simbler	Opal Wicks
John Foote	Rita Stanley	Eric Williams
Larry D. Johnson	Woodrow Stanley, 34 th	Lynn Williams
Sherry Kelley	District, Michigan House of	
Joe King	Representatives	

Non-resident community supporters present (13)

Christina Kelly, Director of Planning and Neighborhood Revitalization, Genesee County Land Bank
Chris Del Morone, Citizens' Board of Advisors Member, 6th Ward, Genesee County Land Bank
Sue Frownfelter, Community Relations Liaison, Diplomat Specialty Pharmacy
Rachel Franklin, Associate Director, Spatial Structures in the Social Sciences, Brown University
Aonie Gilcrest, NAACP
Megan Hunter, Chief Planning Officer, City of Flint
Lucille James, Demolition Program Coordinator, Genesee County Land Bank
Regina Laurie, Facilitator, Lecturer and Trainer, Flint Community
Heidi Phaneuf, Community Resource Planner, Genesee County Land Bank
Kevin Schronce, Associate Planner, City of Flint
Omar Simms, Genesee County Commissioner, District 1
Raynetta Speed, Community Outreach Coordinator, Genesee County Land Bank
Tom Wyatt, Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator, Genesee County Habitat for Humanity

I. Welcome and introductions

Regina Laurie and Rev. McCathern welcomed the residents and stakeholders to the meeting. Regina and Christina gave an overview of the meeting purpose which is: 1) Share updates on the Civic Park Historic District Study, Boundary Revision process and gather feedback on next steps. 2) Give residents an opportunity to share their vision for Civic Park, which will be

provided to the State of Michigan to help the State understand the needs of the community.
3) Share opportunities for residents to take action to improve Civic Park and good things happening in Civic Park. Participants were asked to work on 6 questions about Civic Park that will be discussed later in the meeting.

II. Presentation

Heidi Phaneuf gave a presentation on Civic Park Historic District Report Update and the Demolition Need Request. A copy of the presentation and the fully study is available on the Land Bank website at <http://www.thelandbank.org/civicpark.asp> . The study of Civic Park Historic District was completed to shows which properties are no longer considered contributing to the Civic Park National Register Historic District. The study proposed a smaller boundary that balances the need for preservation with the need for demolition. However, the State of Michigan Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) informed the Land Bank that the district could not be “shrunk” but could only be presented full de-listing (removing from the National Register of Historic Places) which was not wholly supported by the City of Flint at this time. Instead the Land Bank was encouraged by the City of Flint to look for other ways to get the needed demolitions funded. Land Bank staff identified the publicly owned properties that were references as vacant and having “lost historic integrity” according to the study. 162 potential demolitions were identified that the Land Bank is actively seeking demolition funding for. There are an additional 7 demolitions that the City of Flint is looking to support with CDBG funding that is awaiting approval. Megan Hunter talked about the ways that the City of Flint is looking to support neighborhoods and the funding that is being developed to support neighborhoods.

III. Vision for Civic Park

Christina Kelly and Regina Laurie led the group in a facilitated discussion of the Vision for Civic Park. Groups were asked to go back to their worksheets from the beginning of the meeting. Below is a synopsis of the answers given: (*mentioned more than once)

A. What don't you like about Civic Park?

- Dumping, litter and garbage on properties that is not removed*
- Abandoned houses, dangerous properties that are in need of demolition*
- Neighbors not holding each other accountable for what's going on
- No organized neighborhood group. We need to get organized.
- Scrapppers who are tearing apart houses and the hazardous materials they expose themselves to such as asbestos that have long term health effects. People should be warned and there is no accountability.
- We pay taxes but do not get support in this historic district.
- The obstacles to development that exist in the neighborhood.
- The perception of being forgotten by the City of Flint.

- Infestation of wild animals in the neighborhood.

B. What do you like about Civic Park?

- First historic district built by General Motors.
- We love the neighbors
- It's quiet and peaceful
- Teamwork and dedication of residents and community leaders
- What it used to be and thinking about what it could become
- Childhood memories of Civic Park

C. What do you want to see Civic Park look like in the future?

- Without a vision, there will not be a Civic Park; things will continue to get worse.
- A new revitalized Civic Park
- Neighbors getting together to make it happen
- Crimes reported and police patrolling
- Historical markers for historically significant homes
- Let people know about the hidden park in Civic Park Neighborhood – Dougherty Park
- Neighbors taking care of properties, more Clean and Green groups in Civic Park
- Getting more support for issues like dumping and use the media when police cannot help
- Action
- Rental properties kept up to a certain standard, no slumlords.
- Give Civic Park the same attention as downtown Flint.
- GM Investment
- Organize a neighborhood/community group.* (A sign-up sheet for those interested in starting a neighborhood group was passed around and 21 people signed up).
- Money for homeowners to fix up their homes, not just for developers. Include local businesses in opportunities for reinvestment.
- Support people trying to rehab a house, stop any vandals.
- Redevelop homes in the historic district for homeowners.
- Maintain vacant lots*
- Opportunities for residents to purchase land.
- Better sidewalks, streets and better places.
- Tourist destination
- Street lights
- Better stores and fewer liquor stores
- Civic Park School- an employment training facility where youth are mentored and learn alternative energy skilled trades

- Develop jobs first
- Skill building and training programs (such as Rebounding Force)*
- Civic Park becomes the “Silicon Valley of Sustainability” of the Midwest
- Habitat for Humanity building homes in Civic Park

IV. Next Steps

Civic Park residents circulated a sign-up sheet for a developing a community/neighborhood group. Joy Tabernacle will allow for use of the church. Regina and Raynetta were asked to provide support for organizing and getting the group going and are willing to do so.

Civic Park Community Meeting- Worksheet

Responses given to the worksheet questions handed out at the beginning of the meeting:

**responses from non-residents

1. Do you live in the Civic Park neighborhood?

Yes: 14 responses No: 2 responses**

2. What do you like about the Civic Park neighborhood?

- Teamwork / dedication
- I like knowing my neighbors and the history
- I grew up here and still reside here
- It is a great neighborhood. I have many good memories of friends and the neighborhood
- The way it used to be 20 or 30 years ago.
- Memories
- Historical area built by General Motors. Brick houses.
- My boulevard and what it used to be.
- My neighbors, quietness, children being able to ride bikes.
- The homes remaining are basically still home owners who take care of their properties with pride.
- It's very quiet.
- I grew up here.
- Friendly people.
- I love working with people and cleaning up.
- Home. Family area. My memories.**
- It's a beautiful neighborhood with ton of character. I appreciate the architecture and the streets with the tree canopies.**

3. What don't you like about the Civic Park neighborhood?

- The dump site and no one doing nothing about it.
- I don't like the abandoned houses.
- The random properties.
- Blight.
- Run down homes still standing.
- Debris. Abandoned houses. Dumping. Obstacles.
- Abandoned houses, tall grass, rodents, trash, no street lights.
- Seeing it be abandoned and left to fall into the shape it's in without seeing any changes for years.
- Abandon homes that could have been restored more good neighbors to help rebuild Flint. More lighting in dark vacant lots with burned, abandoned homes. Don't need liquor stores in low-income and crime areas.

- The abandoned stripped homes. Conditions of our roads. Trash pick up dumped at vacant homes that garbage trucks will not pick up. Dim streets. Gun shots... Stop the scavengers from thieves stripping.
- Too many abandoned houses.
- All the crime.
- Run down vacant properties dumping, half burnt down homes, obstacles of development, feeling forgotten by the city, more community meetings.**
- The blight. The wide streets (possibly a road diet?). That the school is not being used for some productive purpose.**

4. What would you like to see change in the Civic Park neighborhood?

- Instead of tearing down the houses fix them up.
- I want to see the abandoned house gone.
- Rebuilding, refreshing.
- Homes.
- Dumping.
- Abandoned houses torn down.
- Removal or restored homes. The return of neighborhood businesses, grocery stores, neighborhood watch, upkeep of rental properties, stop vandalism, better sidewalks.
- Get rid of the filth, garbage and houses that aren't going to ever be saved. When a house is demolished that it be cleaned up so it can be kept up by the neighbors.
- Everyone working together. City and citizens.
- Get rid of the riff raff. I have a family across the street from me no lights, gas or water! Make land lords keep their property up to a higher standard.
- More people in the houses.
- Improvement in the neighborhood.
- More homes repaired.
- Houses to be torn down or occupied by families. If the homes can be restored, sold to families or given to programs to fix and restore historical homes.**
- Housing rehabilitation, new construction (if needed).**

5. What would you like to see stay the same in the Civic Park neighborhood?

- The houses, but up and running.
- I would like to see the people stay the same.
- Civic Park School.
- Historic District.
- Churches, schools, stores.
- Houses getting fixed up.
- Yes.
- Something done to keep the present owners here.

- Historic homes for history and landmarks.
- Joy Tabernacle. The homes that are in decent repair and appearance.
- All the good people.
- I want it to grow.
- The family environment. I have been in the area all my life. I intend to stay here.**
- Housing density, the unique styles/designs of the houses. The school.**

6. Complete the following sentence, "In five years I envision Civic Park to be..."

- ... back, a full community.
- ... a historic place.
- ... how it used to be back in the days.
- ... a positive neighborhood with homes and family.
- ... a new Civic Park Area!!!!
- ... non-existent.
- ... tourist site, utilize Civic Park School for training students.
- ... a subdivision.
- ... back to the GM era it was built in. Beautiful homes safe neighborhood.
- ... more residents and businesses.
- ... a happy place to live.
- ... big and good.
- ... clean and safe neighborhoods. A place to raise our families.**
- ... a stable and diverse neighborhood that offers cultural, economic and other amenities in and around the neighborhood.**