

Meeting Minutes
COPC Environmental Justice & Health
Sub-Committee Meeting
February 7th, 2007
COPC Office 1901 Main St.

In Attendance: Bonnie Benton, Sheen Rajmaira, Sean Kelly, Sr. Beth Niederpruem, Barbara Pfohl, Gail Root, Jill Shuey

I. Welcome / Introduction

Sean Kelly welcomed everyone to the meeting.

II. Outreach

- The outreach committee has not met since their last meeting on 1/4/07. Jill Shuey will follow up with the members of the outreach committee regarding putting together a listing of possible workshop topics.
- Jill Shuey will follow up with Buffalo News reporter Paul Westmoore. He had agreed to run a story on the GreenLine in The Buffalo News during the middle of January. No story has been run to date.
- Jill did appear on LCTV on January 26th to tap a show promoting COPC. Jill promoted the GreenLine and the show will air for the month of February at different times on Channel 20.
- Unfortunately, Jill was not able to attend the Niagara Falls Block Club Council retreat on February 3rd due to bad weather in Buffalo. Jill will follow up with the block club council president Roger Spurback about speaking at the group's next meeting or to individual block clubs.
- Jill has been invited by Norma Higgs to attend the next planning meeting for Beautify Niagara on February 22nd.
- Jill has followed up with the Independent Health Foundation's Good for the Neighborhood Program regarding upcoming topics for their monthly event. There may be an opportunity to showcase the GreenLine at the March event.

III. GreenLine

- A proof for the GreenLine magnets was put together by the NU PR department and approved by the outreach committee. Jill is just waiting to her back from Carol Hartwig with Promotion Solutions regarding the delivery date.
- Jill is training a new COPC intern this semester to assist with the GreenLine. The new intern is a master's student enrolled in NU's Criminal Justice program.

- Gail Root suggested contacting the Niagara County Office of Aging to get information out to seniors about the GreenLine.
- Jill mentioned that she attended the Niagara Falls Weed & Seed retreat in January and they are interested in adding graffiti removal to the GreenLine as an item residents can call in to get referral information on.

IV. Urban Environment

- Sean Kelly updated the group regarding the EPA lead grant. The grant was submitted in early January. The goal of the grant is to reduce the incidence of childhood lead poisoning in Niagara Falls. The grant will provide for the training of NU students, outreach and education, community lead awareness sessions, blood testing, intensive training of residents, lead risk assessments and a train the trainer program. The grant if awarded would complement and add support to our COPC initiatives, assisting COPC with expanding home assessments with testing and providing environmental justice and health workshops. Sean mentioned that it might take up to four months to hear from the EPA regarding the award of the grant.
- The urban habitat project has received a positive response from the community. The Environmental Leadership Institute (ELI) has received multiple offers for land. Sean Kelly and Sheen Rajmaira have been contacted by Habitat for Humanity; they have vacant lots that they are not currently able to develop.
- A new EPA grant was discussed: EPA asthma grant. The EPA asthma grant focuses on reducing public exposure to indoor pollutants looking at environmental triggers and healthy school environments. Projects for the EPA asthma grant must support demonstration, training, outreach and/or education. Gail Root mentioned she has been working with Dr. Jamson S. Lwebuga-Mukasa from UB and the Center for Asthma and Environmental Exposure. Gail has given Dr. Lwebuga-Mukasa data from Healthy Neighborhoods home assessments to analysis. Dr. Lwebuga-Mukasa had attended the first COPC GreenTeam sub-committee meeting over the summer and expressed interest in working with COPC. Sheen mentioned that she could start mapping Gail's data by census track as well pertaining to both lead and asthma. Gail will forward Sheen her data and the group agreed to follow up with Dr. Lwebuga-Mukasa regarding working together on the EPA asthma grant.
- Professors at NU have also been involved in looking at environmental links between air pollution and heart disease. They have been partnering with the NFMHC Heart Center.

V. New Issues/Discussion

- Sr. Beth Niederpruem of Center for Joy and Zach Casale with Main Street Business & Professional Association are interested in partnering with COPC on a project to redevelop three vacant lots at the corner of 11th and South in Niagara Falls into either a playground or a community garden. There is a Head Start program across the street that would benefit from the space as well as the larger community.
- Jill invited Sr. Beth to discuss the idea with the sub-committee. Sr. Beth distributed a draft proposal that she had put together to submit to the City of Niagara Falls.

- Resources that were mentioned that COPC might be able to over include:
 - Assistance from students in constructing the playground (Jill is familiar with a similar project in Buffalo where Daemen College students helped build a playground in the Fruitbelt.)
 - Assistance with design and layout (If a garden is involved as well, perhaps this is something that the Cornell Coop. Ext. could assist with?)
 - There might need to be soil testing (Partner with NU ELI)

- It was also suggested by Sr. Beth to do a neighborhood clean up (which would assist with our COPC objectives) as well as coming up with a strategy to maintain the space with the parents from Head Start.

- Sr. Beth is following up with the Head Start parent group as well as churches in the area and Zach is following up with the city regarding the lot as well as the Niagara Beautification Commission. Sr. Beth and Zach already have other partners interested in the project such as Center City Neighborhood Development.

- The Green Team members seemed open to the proposal and were interested in how COPC could partner with the project. Sub-committee members expressed concern with the issue of liability. Would the City of Niagara Falls maintain ownership of the property as well as up kept and who would be responsible for general maintenance? Another key issue is fundraising for the project. Where would the funds come from for the project? Sr. Beth mentioned about approaching local business for donations. Jill mentioned that there are some national grant resources for this type of project. Sheen stated that she would start to work on a layout for uses for the three lots as well as start to research potential grants. Sr. Beth and Jill will follow up with Zach Casale and set up a date for a small group to meet to discuss further details for putting a proposal together to submit to the City of Niagara Falls.

Next EJ Green Team Meeting: March 7th, Wednesday, 2:00 PM, COPC office, 1901 Main Street.