

Meeting Minutes
COPC Environmental Justice & Health
Sub-Committee Meeting
June 27th, 2007
COPC Office 1816 Main St.

In Attendance: Fran Boltz, Mary McCourt, Jill Shuey, Charles A. Walker

I. Welcome / Introduction

Jill Shuey welcomed everyone to the meeting.

II. Updates

a. GreenLine

- Jill Shuey attended the Niagara Beautification Commission's monthly meeting on June 21st, 2007 and distributed GreenLine magnets to members. Jill will follow up with Marge Gillis to further discuss the Niagara Beautification Commission's interest in partnering with the GreenLine to help promote both their organization and the GreenLine to the community. Marge had expressed interest in promoting the adoption of certain blocks for clean ups as well as other beautification projects.
- An article promoting the GreenLine was written by COPC summer students and will appear in the next Niagara Falls Housing Authority newsletter.
- COPC summer employees are providing staffing over the summer break.
- The GreenLine has been receiving regularly calls concern graffiti removal and the Mayor's "Light it up" initiative to remove obstructions from street lights such as tree branches and also to get National Grid to repair damaged and broken street lights. The promoting of the GreenLine number through Niagara Falls Weed & Seed and the Mayor's initiative are helping to promote the GreenLine number to the community and we are now getting several calls per week regarding other matters such as illegal dumping and rodent issues in gardens.

b. Home Assessments

- We have still received no word on the status of two EPA grants, one focusing on lead and one focusing on asthma, submitted by NU.
- Gail Root's last day with the Healthy Neighborhood Program will be June 29th. COPC wishes Gail all the best as she starts her retirement.

- Dr. Mary McCourt chair of NU's chemistry department discussed with the group the status of her class for the 2007 fall semester. Mary teaches a non-majors course "Chemistry in Society". The class is offered in both the fall and spring semesters. Dr. McCourt has agreed to add a service component to her course for the fall 2007 semester and students from her class will be going out with staff from the Healthy Neighborhoods program to do home assessments and testing. Mary has 30 students registered for the course in the fall and has selected the text for the course "Environment: Science behind the Stories" by Withgott and Brennan. The students will be spending 1.5 hours in class and 1.5 hours doing home assessments per week. Fran Boltz mentioned the importance of having a staff person from the Healthy Neighborhoods program come into the classroom and do an orientation before the students start going out with staff to do home assessments. Mary asked Jill to follow up with Gail before she leaves regarding her successor. Jill stated that she would follow up with Gail immediately following the meeting.
- Working with NU's chemistry department, COPC has hired two summer student workers this summer who are chemistry majors. The students are working with NU professor Dr. Ronny Priefer. The students are going out doing home assessments with the Healthy Neighborhoods program staff as well as testing for environmental factors in one's home that may trigger asthma attacks in children with asthma. The students will analyze air samples taken at NU's campus labs.

c. Urban Environment

- Jill will have a NU social work student placed at COPC next semester to complete her senior social work practicum. One project area that Jill will have the social work student work in is the gathering of data concerning locations of vacant lots and illegal dumping. Jill and the student will work with block clubs and gather data from Weed & Seed's neighborhood tours. Jill and the student will follow up with Marge Giles and the Niagara Beautification Commissions regarding data gathered as part of their March 15th "Reality Bus Tour".
- Charles Walker stated that he may be able to assist COPC with getting data from the city.
- Fran suggested contacting Center City Neighborhood Development for data as well as contacting the Niagara Gazette editor to see if he would run a coupon where people could write down information and submit it to COPC.
- It was also suggested by the group that when COPC has a table at events they could have a sheet for individuals to write down locations of dumping and vacant lots in their neighborhood.

III. Workshop Topics

- A critical next step for the sub-committee will be putting together workshops. Technically, the only two workshops offered so far have been the ELI workshop on Asthma at NU and the presentation by Dr. Kelly made on lead to the Women's Commission.
- Fran suggested working with Marge Gillis and the Niagara Beatification Commission to do gardening workshops with kids or seniors. We could do a simple workshop on urban gardening and give out soil, seeds and pots. Patio tomatoes might be a good choice. Fran suggested

borrowing tools from Weed & Seed and also partnering with the Cornell Coop. Extension and perhaps the Book Corner.

- Mary mentioned that she is part of a group of investigators at NU working on a Heart project with Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center (NFMMC). This group could present topics related to heart disease. Mary stated that she will contact the members of the group to come up with a list of topics for community talks. Mary mentioned that there might also be workshops that the chemistry society student group could give. They have 30-40 student members.
- Charles stated that part of his job with the NFMMC is to put on community workshops. He is working on a TV series that airs on Sundays and is currently working with the American Heart and Stroke Association. It was agreed by the group that we should work together with existing partners to put on Environmental Justice and Health workshops. Charles also mentioned that he is organizing a “Gospel Festival” on Main Street on Saturday, July 21st and COPC should contact him if they would like to have an outreach table. Jill will follow up with Charles.
- Fran discussed the need to address the issue of spoiled fruits and vegetables that are being purchased at local grocery stores. Perhaps a workshop topic could be “How to select fresh produce?”
- Jill mentioned that the Independent Health Foundation’s “Good for the Neighborhood” program will be starting back up again in August. She has received a survey to fill out regarding what workshops COPC could present.

Next EJ Green Team Meeting: August 15th, Wednesday, 2:00 PM, NEW COPC office, 1816 Main Street. Task for the next meeting: Put together speakers list of COPC workshop topics.