

Southside Vision 2020 Steering Committee
NOTES
February 6, 2019

ATTENDANCE: Dean Donaher, Diane Labelle, Don Miles, Gail Mrowinski, Donna Taggart, Tom Stine, Danielle Kulnis

STAFF: Ellen Larmer, Alicia Karner, Tracy Samuelson, Anna Smith, Chris Cassidy

GUESTS: Ed Gallagher

NOTES RECORDED BY: Anna Smith

In the absence of Mayor Donchez, Dean Donaher called the meeting to order at 8:20 am.

Meeting Notes

Minutes from the December 5, 2018 meeting were reviewed. Donna moved to accept the minutes, and the motion was passed unanimously with no objections or corrections.

Proposal Process – Program Year 2019-2020

Anna explained that staff are starting the proposal process for Southside Vision 2020's sixth program year with the expectation that project proposals will be due to the PA Department of Community and Economic Development this spring. The committee reviewed the timeline for submission of proposals and the proposal form. Committee members discussed the importance of including information on additional project funders or potential funders on each proposal. In addition, Dean asked that a code be created to refer to the Goals and Strategies more easily.

Tom asked that a list of current year projects be sent to the committee as refresher. Anna will distribute the final documents to all committee members and partners by email.

Committee Reports

Business and Economic Sustainability

Donna explained that the committee meets with local businesses every other month to assist with feedback on their marketing strategy. The committee met at Hero's Kafe at Ben Franklin TechVentures in December and spoke with owners Daniela Torres and Xavier Martinez about their experience opening the café with support from CADCB staff.

Donna mentioned that the committee held their first networking event for the year on January 24th at the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Northampton Community College. Over 120 people attended the event, which included 25 vendors from CADCB's business development programs, a certificate ceremony for graduates of the Start Your Business program, and remarks by State Representative Steve Samuelson. Tom mentioned that he had attended and realized that the event is drawing people from across the Lehigh Valley. Donna explained that the committee will continue discuss how to handle increased interest in CADCB's services from individuals outside of Bethlehem.

Development

Diane explained that the committee is working on a Request for Proposals to develop lighting guidelines and project ideas for south Bethlehem. The committee plans to distribute the RFP within the next two weeks.

Diane also explained that the committee is planning to make improvements to Tranquility Park this spring with support from the Lowes Heroes program. Diane is working with landscape architect Bruce Fritzinger to develop a design for the final stage of the park, which would include new lighting, steps at the back, and potential new fencing or a gateway structure. The improvements will take place at some point this spring.

Housing

Anna mentioned that Ham was unable to attend this morning. She explained that the committee had met in December to discuss next steps following Karen Black's research on preserving mixed-income housing in south Bethlehem. In addition, the committee met in January to define priorities for façade improvements for the upcoming construction season. The committee plans to focus on Fourth Street, Fillmore Street, Hayes Street, and Pawnee Street.

Tom mentioned the importance of featuring the work that has occurred on Hayes Street in photos. He emphasized the significant visual change following façade work.

Ellen provided an update on CACLV's purchase of five homes in strategic locations in south Bethlehem for full rehabilitation and sale to low- to moderate-income homebuyers. Rehab work will be starting soon using some HUD funding from the City of Bethlehem, and following the sale of the properties, CACLV anticipates have a \$500,000 revolving fund to support affordable housing in south Bethlehem.

Outdoors and Wellness

Dean reported that the committee had 15 people at their last meeting, which was the largest group in quite some time. The committee discussed the upcoming funding cycle, including potential projects such as pop-up weekend activities in parks and backyard gardening. In addition, the group revisited discussions about feral cats in the community as well as concerns about visitors to the Sands who spend long days outdoors in our community. Finally, the committee discussed the progress of work toward a pedestrian bridge linking north and south Bethlehem.

Transforming Community Image

Anna mentioned that Glenn was unable to attend the meeting. She reported that the committee has a new intern from Moravian College who will be assisting with social media management of the Southside Proud campaign during the spring semester. The committee has also applied to Lehigh University's Mountaintop program, which would fund several students to expand the Southside Proud campaign as well as the *Southsider* online publication.

Don emphasized the continued importance of publicizing Southside Vision's work and distributing information on successes online.

Southside Issues

Donna reported that the Hispanic Center of the Lehigh Valley is entering the last stage of its capital campaign, which includes demolishing the house on Fourth Street and building a ramp, park, and completing façade improvements.

Don invited all committee members to WDIY's annual celebration at the Ice House on Saturday, March 2 from 6-11 pm.

Gail reported that the FabLab had a successful Open House in January, with over 150 people in attendance.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 am.

Next meeting: April 3 at 8:15 am in the Risbon Room of the Banana Factory.