

Housing Committee Meeting Notes January 23, 2019

Present: Seth Moglen, Allyson Lehr, Valerie DeWeerth, Kim Carrell-Smith, Anne Evans, Connor Burbridge, Kevin Benner, Adrienne McNeil

Staff: Anna Smith, Chris Cassidy, Emily Folenta

Submitted by: Anna Smith

Residential Façade Program 2019 Planning

Anna briefly reviewed the 2018 residential facades that were completed during the 2018 program year and explained that staff are currently preparing for 2019 projects. As discussed at the December meeting, the committee is charged with determining priorities for target areas for outreach to property owners. Anna explained that the committee will have approximately \$48,000 to spend on façade improvements this year, which translates to about 3-5 facades depending on the size of each project. Staff have identified 15 potential properties based on prior areas targeted and the acquisition of Lehigh Valley Community Land Trust properties. Anna reviewed each of the properties with the committee and asked for feedback on the prioritization of properties for outreach.

Committee members emphasized prioritizing owner-occupied homes when possible, and suggested that additional restrictions could be placed on investor-owned properties. Committee members discussed the importance of completing Fillmore Street by attempting additional outreach to the owners of 330-332-334 Fillmore, but they did not support outreach to 318-320 Fillmore. The committee discussed the potential of getting involved in the Pawnee Street area on a scale similar to that of the Hayes Street corridor, and Anne mentioned that four homes on Dakota Street could be future possibilities. Kim mentioned the importance of completing 328 East Fourth given its place in a connector block between the main commercial district and 4 Blocks International. Barbara mentioned looking at homes on Morton Street behind the St. John's Windish parking lots.

Following extensive discussion, the committee agreed to prioritize the following properties for 2019 projects: 328 East Fourth, 330-332-334 Fillmore, 662-664 Hayes, and 447 Pawnee. Staff will begin outreach to property owners.

Upcoming Southside Housing Programs

Anna reminded the committee that CADCB is working with North Penn Legal Services to coordinate a training on landlord-tenant law for social service providers and residents. The training will take place on February 27 at NCC Fowler Southside Center.

Anna also mentioned that North Penn Legal Services is coordinating a Fair Housing Summit on April 12, which is a great opportunity to learn about housing discrimination and how to combat it.

Southside Vision Proposals for 2019-2020

Anna explained that the proposal process for 2019-2020 projects will begin shortly, and proposals will be due to the Steering Committee by the end of March. The next two committee meetings will be dedicated to developing proposals.

The committee discussed supporting additional tree planting and maintenance of sidewalks/tree wells in targeted areas of south Bethlehem. Committee members agreed to bring targeted blocks to a future meeting.

Seth mentioned looking into opportunities for housing cooperatives or co-housing arrangements. Chris mentioned that the Regional Homeless Advisory Board is currently exploring some of these possibilities.

Seth also mentioned looking into how to create neighborhood gardens or playgrounds on truck gardens or double lots in Southside neighborhoods.

Connor explained that he is working on developing a proposal to support backyard and community gardening throughout south Bethlehem. The project would include reactivating community gardens at Martin Luther King Jr. Park and the Greenway, in addition to workshops on gardening and the creation of a tool library. Barbara suggested that realtors could assist with donations of tools to the tool library. Anna also mentioned that the Seed Farm is now a part of CACLV and could be a potential resource.

Next Meeting

The next Housing Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 27 at 3 pm in the first floor conference room of the Forte building.