

Housing Committee Meeting Notes February 27, 2019

Present: Seth Moglen, Kim Carrell-Smith, Anne Evans, Connor Burbridge, Kevin Benner, Adrienne McNeil, Ian Panyko

Staff: Anna Smith, Chris Cassidy

Submitted by: Anna Smith

Southside Vision Proposals 2019-2020

The committee discussed potential projects for the 2019-2020 program year. Proposals are due on March 25, and the Steering Committee will select projects at their April 3rd meeting.

Façade Improvements

The committee discussed the importance of continuing Southside Vision's successful façade program. Anna explained that Southside Vision support is used to complement City of Bethlehem CDBG funding for facades, and staff anticipate receiving approximately \$30,000 in funds from the City for the upcoming year. Anna agreed to draft a proposal for façade improvements.

Tool Library and Workshops

Anna explained that she met with staff from the Southside library to discuss the possibility of starting a tool library and offering workshops on gardening and home improvement topics. The library has agreed to participate and staff are working with the backyard gardening group to coordinate workshop topics for spring.

The committee discussed potential components of the program, including multiple sites throughout the community to make tools available such as parks or community gardens. Connor mentioned that Penn State Extension will be donating some containers for container gardening. He also mentioned that 6-8 Lehigh students will be working on gardening at the Southside Permaculture Park this summer through Lehigh's Mountaintop program.

The committee agreed that a proposal should include funding for someone to oversee and manage the implementation of the project, as well as funds for materials and supplies. Anna and Connor agreed to draft a proposal within the next two weeks and distribute to the committee for review.

Tree Planting

The committee discussed including tree planting in areas where facades are completed. In addition, Kim mentioned the need for new trees along parts of Wyandotte Street, which is a major gateway to south Bethlehem. Anna and Chris mentioned that there are grants available to fund tree planting, including TD Bank, which is located at 5 Points. Staff will look into grant opportunities to support tree planting, in addition to adding the possibility of tree planting to façade projects.

Community Organizing

Seth mentioned the importance of community organizing in neighborhoods to keep neighbors informed and engaged in discussions of threats and opportunities for Southside neighborhoods. He suggested having a staff member available to work with neighborhood groups, provide training and support for neighborhood advocates, and organize neighborhood meetings. Anna mentioned that Kavei's research had indicated the need for such a position, and while CADCB staff would like to fill that role, current staff members do not have the time available to dedicate to organizing work at the level it should be done. Seth suggested putting together a proposal to fund a part-time staff person to work as a housing and neighborhood organizer, with

potential for it to turn into a full-time position. Anna offered to put together a budget and description of what that position could look like for the committee to consider.

Open Floor

Adrienne invited all committee members to visit the new Brinker Lofts at Fourth and Adams Street this Friday, March 1 from 5-7 pm. She also mentioned that the next community meeting regarding the New Street streetscape project will be March 26 in the Crayola Gallery at the Banana Factory. There will be two sessions, in the afternoon and evening.

Next Meeting

The Housing Committee will meet on **Friday, March 8 at 1 pm** for a special meeting with City staff regarding a proposed student housing development on First Terrace. The meeting will take place in the first floor conference room of the Forte building.

The next regular Housing Committee meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 20 at 3 pm** in the first floor conference room of the Forte building.