



MEMORANDUM

“...meeting community needs...enhancing quality of life.”

TO: Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDC)
FROM: Matt Rehbein, Economic Development Specialist
DATE: July 14, 2014
RE: Summary of the City's Neighborhood Program (2013/2014)

Introduction

As the City's Neighborhood Program approaches its second year, Staff has created a program summary outlining the activities that have taken place over the last year and identified ways Staff can continue to grow the program. The Neighborhood Program has proven to be a successful tool in neighborhood revitalization, neighborhood organizing and improving communication between City Hall and Appleton's neighborhoods. As the program grows, Staff anticipates an increase in the number of registered neighborhoods and more collaboration between City Hall and Appleton's neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Program

The Neighborhood Program was approved by the Common Council in October of 2012. Community and Economic Development Staff spent several months researching other communities' neighborhood programs and developing a program that would fit Appleton's needs. The department's primary goal was to create a program that would allow neighborhood residents to effectively communicate with City Hall and vice-versa in regards to neighborhood issues, neighborhood revitalization projects, development projects, City projects and programs, or any other reason the neighborhood or City would see fit. In addition, the City saw the Neighborhood Program as a way to let residents organize and strengthen their neighborhoods and in effect, take ownership of where they live. The program included an educational learning series known as the Neighborhood Academy. This learning series assisted neighborhoods in their organization efforts. As a means to assist residents to revitalize or strengthen their neighborhoods, Staff proposed a neighborhood grants program that provides financial assistance for projects that provide a positive impact to the neighborhood and community.

The foundation of the program is the neighborhood registry. Residents are asked to register their neighborhoods by meeting with fellow residents to identify the neighborhood's main contacts, create a neighborhood name and define the neighborhood's boundaries. Since the creation of the program in late 2012, Staff has worked with residents to create 12 registered neighborhoods throughout the City (**See Attached Map**). Registered Neighborhoods are completely or partially located in 12 of the 15 Aldermanic Districts in the City. The central city

neighborhoods north, south and east of Downtown are highly represented by 4 registered neighborhoods (Old Third Ward, Historic Central Neighborhood, Lawrence-City Park, and Peabody Park). In addition to the 12 registered neighborhoods in the City, Staff has spoken to several other residents who have expressed interest in registering their neighborhoods. The initial success of the Neighborhood Program in terms of number of registered neighborhoods can be directly attributed to Staff's marketing efforts. Marketing the program was done primarily through presentations to the Neighborhood Watch Captains group, media interviews (WLUK, WHBY, and the Post Crescent), creation of the City's Neighborhood Program webpage and program brochure, and word-of-mouth. Registered Neighborhoods and their leaders include:

NEIGHBORHOOD NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD CONTACT(S)	DATE REGISTERED
Old Third Ward	Keith & Antoinette Powell	5/12/13
Historic Central Neighborhood	James & Althea Rosenberg	7/29/13
Ashbury Meadows	Bernie Coley	7/30/13
Northland Downs	Jon Parkhurst	8/6/13
Windingbrook Watch	Erin Arndt	8/9/13
Dellwood Street	Amy Johnson	8/9/13
Lawrence-City Park	Andrew Dane	8/30/13
Colony Oaks	Lori Fares	9/17/13
Summit Park	Gene & Sharon Wallis	10/3/13
Franklin	Jim & Regina Case	10/22/13
Peabody Park	Anna & Grant Johnson	12/1/13
Alicia Park	Ann-Marie Helmbrecht	3/27/14

Neighborhood Academy

One of the missions of the Neighborhood Program is to strengthen neighborhoods through educational programs. The City contracted with Sustainable Fox Valley to collaborate on a neighborhood learning series called the Neighborhood Academy. The Neighborhood Academy is a 6-module learning series intended to provide the knowledge and tools for Appleton residents residing in registered neighborhoods to increase their effectiveness as neighborhood leaders. Staff worked with Sustainable Fox Valley to market the program including the creation of a program brochure. The Neighborhood Academy began in October 2013, with an orientation meeting to present the Neighborhood Program, Neighborhood Academy curriculum and schedule and to introduce City Staff and the facilitator from Sustainable Fox Valley.

The Neighborhood Academy was originally to be funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. One of the major issues Staff faced with CDBG funding was it would limit participation in the Neighborhood Academy to those living within low-to-moderate income areas as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). To resolve this issue, in the fall of 2013, Staff requested that vacated department salary dollars (\$5,000) be used to fund the administration of the Neighborhood Academy, thus allowing participation to anyone living within a registered neighborhood. The City Council approved the request and participation in the Neighborhood Academy was successful. The City's first Neighborhood Academy was completed in 2014 with 19 participants representing 10 of the City's 12 registered neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Grants

The grants program that was approved in 2012, as part of the Neighborhood Program is cumbersome and the process is not well-defined. Since the Neighborhood Grants program is funded with CDBG dollars, the options for distributing and approving the grants are limited. Staff will work with registered neighborhoods to identify neighborhood projects that would qualify under the Neighborhood Grants program and CDBG objectives. Staff has prepared a proposal to define the grants program for CEDC consideration on July 21, 2014.

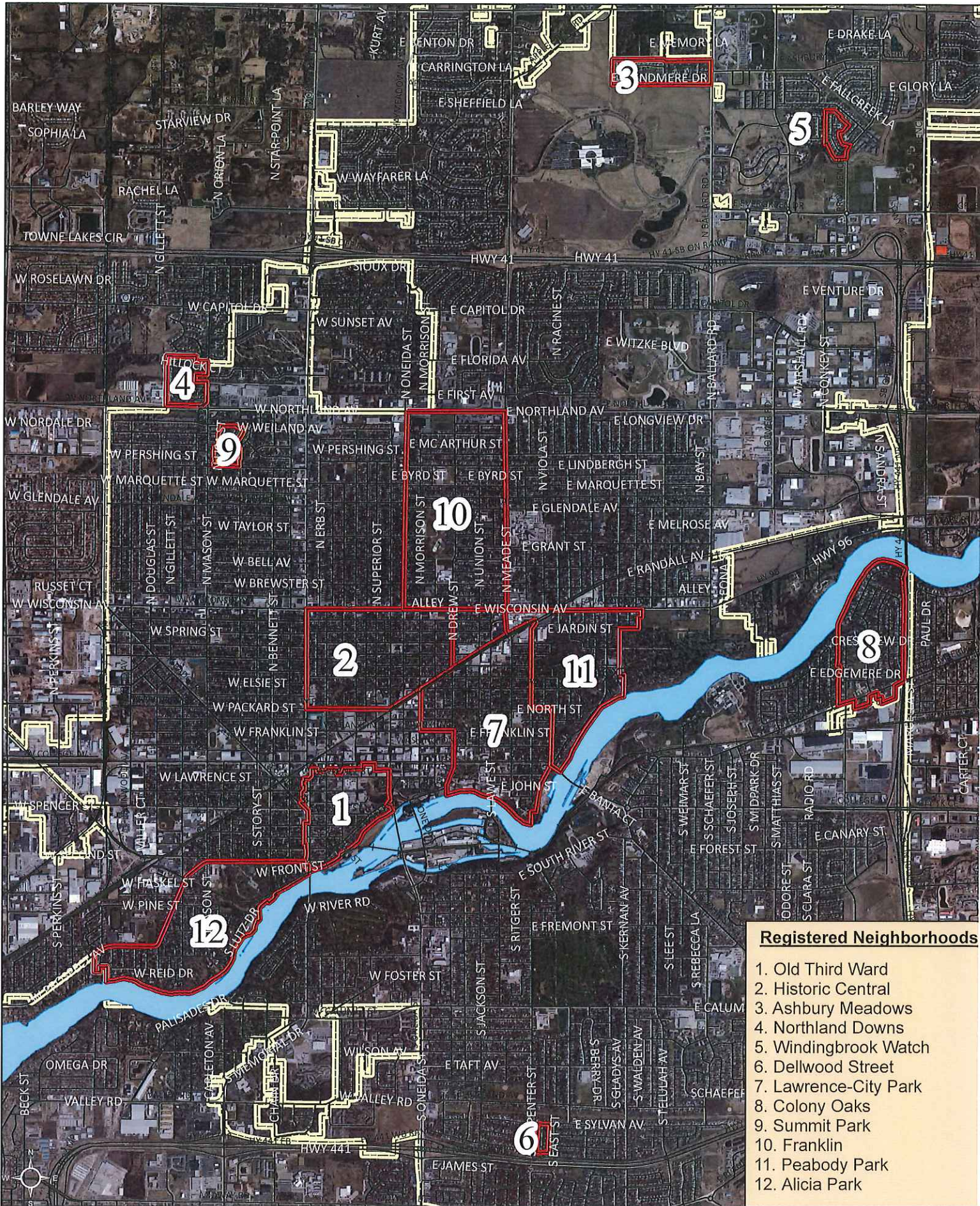
Communication

The primary goal of the Neighborhood Program is to increase communication between Appleton's neighborhoods and City Hall. In order for residents to strengthen their neighborhoods, a clear line of communication with the City is important. Program Staff assist Appleton's neighborhoods through communication in a variety of ways. First, we receive direct contact from neighborhood leaders regarding issues in their neighborhoods. For example, one neighborhood contacted Staff to discuss ways to improve pedestrian safety crossing a busy street in the City. Staff connected the neighborhood to the appropriate City department to assist with the issue. Staff also contacts neighborhoods when a developer or the City is proposing a project which may directly or indirectly impact a registered neighborhood. It's important that neighborhoods are included in the process of reviewing developments or projects that the City reviews. Staff anticipates that communication with neighborhoods will continue to increase. While this program anticipates and encourages neighborhood-initiated contacts like the example used above, Staff will be more proactive in Staff-initiated communication with neighborhoods. Specifically, Staff will want to better understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in Appleton's registered neighborhoods and look for ways to partner on City-wide goals and continue to strengthen Appleton's neighborhoods.

Conclusion

The first full year of the Neighborhood Program has been a success. Staff has spent a tremendous amount of work creating the Neighborhood Program, marketing the program, assisting residents in registering their neighborhoods, assisting in the administration and coordination of the Neighborhood Academy, communicating with neighborhoods, and identifying ways to continue to improve this program and the service it offers to Appleton's residents. As this program grows and Appleton residents become more interested in participating, Staff will need to identify alternative funding sources which won't limit participation or offer the constraints that CDBG funds do.

Cc: Karen Harkness
Monica Klaeser
Roxann Schmidt



- Registered Neighborhoods**
1. Old Third Ward
 2. Historic Central
 3. Ashbury Meadows
 4. Northland Downs
 5. Windingbrook Watch
 6. Dellwood Street
 7. Lawrence-City Park
 8. Colony Oaks
 9. Summit Park
 10. Franklin
 11. Peabody Park
 12. Alicia Park



Registered Neighborhoods - April 2014