



Working with Your City Forum

Wednesday, September 26, 2012, 6:30-8:30 pm

Rochester Public Library Auditorium

PURPOSE: To help neighbors and city staff work more effectively together to meet the changing needs of our community.

AGENDA

WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS (15 minutes total)

Bob Nowicki, President RNeighbors; Ardell Brede, Mayor; René Lafflam, Exec Dir. RNeighbors;

CITY PANEL (5 minutes each, 35 minutes total)

Brief overview of their function as relates to neighborhoods and neighbors can work efficiently within the set structure of the department.

- **City Council Representative** -- Interim Council President Randy Staver
- **City Counsel** -- Terry Adkins, City Attorney or Dave Goslee, Ass't City Attorney
- **Planning and Zoning** -- Brent Svenby, Senior Planner
- **Building Safety** -- Susan M. Legare-Gulden, Manager of Housing Inspection Services
- **Police** -- Community Action Team (CAT) representative
- **Park and Rec.** -- Mike Nigbur, Park and Forestry Division Head
- **Public Works** -- Richard Freese, City Engineer
- **Emergency Management** -- Ken Jones, Deputy Emergency Management Director

NEIGHBORHOOD PANEL (10 minutes each, 50 minutes total)

Lessons learned. Discuss recent neighborhood experiences working with city.

- Badger Hills (Residential Zoning) Please refer to handout
- Historic SW (Zoning Issues and Preservation) Frank Hawthorne
- Indian Heights (Working with Park and Rec for Conservation and Preservation of Park) Barb Hudson
- Kutzky Park North (4 1/2 Street NW: Community over Crime) Susan Todzy
- Slatterly Park Neighbors (6th Street Bridge Replacement) Janice Hobbs

AUDIENCE DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS



ROCHESTER

Minnesota



City Departments Portion of the Forum

City Council Representative - Randy Staver, City Council Member for Ward 5, Interim Council President
(507) 288-9034 (home)
rstaverward5@msn.com

Briefly describe your department's function within the city.

Hearings before the City Council are generally the last step of the process. To this point, projects will have been scrutinized, reviewed, discussed and debated - hopefully resolving most or all questions and concerns. However, there may easily be some unresolved items which the Council will then address in a public forum (hearing). All interested parties will be allowed to speak and a decision is often rendered during the course of the public hearing. There may be occasions where the Council decides to delay action (through tabling or continuance) to allow time for parties to resolve outstanding issues.

The Council operates in a quasi-judicial capacity which necessarily implies adherence to rules, ordinances and legal guidelines. As such, official decisions must be rendered in open meetings. While this conveys a certain amount of formality that may be viewed as somewhat unnecessary, the importance is that the Council is making decisions that could have impact for years to come and affect many citizens in our city.

The Council may also get involved on the flip side if problems arise as a project unfolds or once it has been completed. There may be tangible issues related to performance or simply misunderstandings among parties regarding aspects of the project. The Council will serve as the hearing body and make every attempt to resolve any discrepancies.

How do you work with neighbors?

In general, Council members make themselves available to meet with individual neighbors as well as larger groups. As with a Council meeting, the idea is to offer a forum to be able to answer questions and give guidance although official decisions cannot be made. The discussion will be less formal so as to encourage good conversation. We value the input of neighborhoods and encourage folks to become involved. Most often, people that live in the immediate area will be the most knowledgeable about specific areas of concern and we can learn from that knowledge.

Do you have 1 suggestion for neighbors they can do that will make working with your department more efficient?

Make every attempt to reach out to city staff to help understand issues and information. Often times communication is key. If unsure where to go or even what questions to ask, involve the council member representing your ward. They can serve as a liaison to other city departments and in many cases can assist in finding answers quickly. In short, try to do the homework with the goal of having productive discussions that lead toward the desired outcome.

City Attorney's Office - Dave Goslee, Deputy City Attorney

(507) 328-2100

dgoslee@rochestermn.gov

The City Attorney's office has 12 members, 7 attorneys and 5 support staff

- 5 attorneys and 4 support staff are devoted to the office's criminal prosecution responsibilities

Function within the City

- This office prosecutes petty misdemeanor, misdemeanor, and many of the gross misdemeanor offenses that occur within the City limits
- The city attorney, myself and one support staff primarily handle the civil responsibilities of the City in its corporate capacity
- The civil side advises the council, boards, commissions and departments on their legal issues; drafts and reviews contracts, deeds, easements, ordinances, resolutions and other legal documents; and represents the City in litigation and at hearings for those cases not handled by the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust

How we work with Neighborhoods

- This office works with neighbors who may be victims of or witnesses to criminal activity
- This office also takes daily calls from citizens asking about ordinances and other laws that may impact the citizen

Do you have 1 suggestion for neighbors they can do that will make working with your department more efficient?

- This office does not make policy recommendations
- This office does not supervise other departments and their employees (although we will identify legal issues that may arise from a particular course of conduct)
- This office does not represent or advise citizens on their private civil matters

Olmsted Planning Department - Brent Svenby, Senior Planner

507.328.7127

svenby.brent@CO.OLMSTED.MN.US

Formed in 1975 through the merger of the Olmsted County Department of Development and the Rochester Planning Department.

Provides planning and related services under the administrative direction of the Planning Administrative Services Committee (PASC)

- PASC made up of representatives from the City of Rochester, Olmsted County, smaller cities of Olmsted County and the townships.
- **4 Divisions within the Department**
 - **GIS Division**
 - GIS Infrastructure Maintenance
 - GIS/Addressing Applications
 - **Housing Division**
 - Rental Assistance
 - Maintenance
 - **Housing Rehabilitation**
 - **Long Range Planning, Analysis & Policy Division**
 - Comprehensive (land use, transportation, etc.) Planning
 - Ordinance Development

- CDBG Administration
- **Development Review Service**
 - Zoning Administration
 - Development Review
 - Building Code Enforcement
 - Well & ISTS Code Enforcement

Function within the City

- Advise various boards, commissions and the City Council on land use regulations
- Maintain and update the zoning ordinance to protect the public health, safety and general welfare of the community
- Development of land use plans and corridor studies for long range land uses

How we work with Neighborhoods

- Send notices on zoning matters to property owners
- Notify neighborhood associations on various applications and notifications
- Work with issues that are brought to our attention (zoning violations)

Suggestion for neighbors they can do that will make working with the Planning Department more efficient

- Establish a neighborhood contact person when there are concerns/questions on a development proposal

Rochester Building Safety - Susan M. Legare-Gulden, Manager of Housing Inspection Services

507.328.2620

SLegare@rochestermn.gov

Function within the City

The Building Safety Department is committed to advancing public safety in the built environment through collaboration and community partnership which results in safe, accessible and healthy structures.

How we work with Neighborhoods

Representatives from Building Safety Department directly work with neighbors/neighborhoods through the Housing Division. We do this through monthly meetings with officers assigned to community policing and frequent interactions with neighborhood watch captains.

Suggestion for neighbors they can do that will make working with the Planning Department more efficient

“A better government through citizen participation”, is my one suggestion for neighbors to make working with my department more efficient.

Police - Lt. Bruce Sherden-Rochester Police Department-Tactical Crime Interdiction Unit

bsherden@rochestermn.gov

I am assigned to the Investigation Division of the police department. I supervise the Narcotic Unit, the Street Crimes Unit, the School Liaison Officers, and the Community Action Team. These units are termed the "Proactive Units" as much of what they do is proactive policing instead of reactive policing.

Department's function within the City

These units work with neighborhoods by responding to complaints of problem properties, suspected narcotic activity, and dealing with prolific offenders who cause problems. The initial complaint can come from residents of the neighborhood, and these units then are given the time to address the problem through whatever tactics and resources are available.

Do you have 1 suggestion for neighbors they can do that will make working with your department more efficient?

My one suggestion for neighbors is to establish a point of contact with the police department to funnel and provide information to. This can be established through myself or one of the Sergeants of the units by contacting us by phone or email. We can then assign the situation or point of contact to one of our officers who works in the neighborhood.

Park and Recreation - Mike Nigbur, Park and Forestry Division Head

507-328.2541

mnigbur@rochestermn.gov

This Division manages the 120 parks covering over 3000 acres of parkland/Athletic fields/playgrounds/various trails . We manage the Peace Plaza maintenance/Landscaped & natural area maintenance, as well as the Urban Forest (Park & BLVD Trees).

Department's function within the City

- The Park and Rec Department also includes the Mayo Civic Center,
- The City's Recreation Program & Adaptive Recreation Program,
- The municipal Golf Courses (Eastwood, Northern, Soldiers & Hadley Creek),
- Facilities Management (Rec Center, Graham, Foster Arends, National Volley Ball Center)

How do you work with neighbors?

- Our Citizen involvement includes
 - Weed & grass violations
 - Blvd Tree Planting program
 - Facility & Park uses/Events (patrons to our facilities and parks)
 - Garden Plots/Community gardens in Parks
 - Citizen concerns (trees, weeds, mowing, litter, graffiti, undesirable people using the park, etc)
 - Park encroachments
 - Youth & Adult sports & REC activity coordination

Do you have 1 suggestion for neighbors they can do that will make working with your department more efficient?

Please keep available staff and available funding in mind when making requests of the City.

Public Works - Michael Scharenbroich, Administrative Analyst

(507) 328-2436, MScharenbroich@rochestermn.gov

Contact: Richard Freese, Public Works Director, rfreese@rochestermn.gov, www.rochestermn.gov/publicworks

Locations

- City of Rochester Public Works Department, 201 4th Street SE, Rm. 108 Rochester, MN 55904
- Public Works and Transit Operations Center, 4300 East River Road NE, Rochester, MN 55906
- Water Reclamation Plant, 301 37th ST NW, Rochester, MN 55901

Divisions

- Transit and Parking (507) 328-7433 www.rochesterbus.com
- Water Reclamation (507) 328-2650
- Engineering (507) 328-2400
- Land Development (507) 328-2400
- Storm water (507) 328-2440 www.rochesterstormwater.com

Department's function within the City

The City of Rochester, Public Works Department is responsible for planning, programming, design, construction, and maintenance of public works facilities. This includes street infrastructure, street lighting, traffic control, sanitary and storm water, water main, and waste water treatment facilities, as well as on-street and off-street parking, and coordination of mass transit modes.

How do you work with neighbors?

The Department strives to provide first class public works infrastructure and services to meet your daily needs including accessible and safe roads, environmentally sound storm water management, effective and efficient waste water treatment, a reliable transit and parking system and engineering and development that meet standards. We work towards open meetings, transparency and easily accessible information during project planning, programming, design, construction and maintenance.

Many of our projects need neighborhood and community involvement. We hold neighborhood meetings with one-on-one advisory committees, neighborhood groups and public hearings.

Do you have 1 suggestion for neighbors they can do that will make working with your department more efficient?

Help us to complete our communication feedback loop. Use our connection portals – website, email, neighborhood meetings and social media to actively and constructively participate in the communication process.

Emergency Management -- Ken Jones, Deputy Emergency Management Director

507.328.2824, kjones@rochestermn.gov

Website: Rochestermn.gov/departments/emergencymanagement

Department's function within the City

Emergency Management prepares for disasters, coordinates disaster response, guides disaster recovery, and finds ways to prevent/minimize disaster impact

How do you work with neighbors?

Fire department assists neighbors with fire prevention and response; Emergency management helps neighbors to prepare and be informed of major emergencies and disasters

Do you have 1 suggestion for neighbors they can do that will make working with your department more efficient?

- Be informed. Enroll in Rochester Alert: alerts.rochestermn.gov/enroll
- Be prepared – Get started with Do1thing.com
- Improve emergency response – we need one or more neighborhood associations to volunteer for the Community Alert Drill (contact RNeighbors to join the Community Alert Planning Team)



Neighborhood Associations Portion of the Forum

Badger Hills Neighborhood Association

Contact: Amy Ries, aschmidty8@gmail.com

Our neighborhood, Badger Hills Neighborhood Association, is comprised of 5 streets. Therefore, we have 5 core leaders, one for each street.

Briefly describe your neighborhood's problem or concern that propelled you to work with the city and what department specifically?

- Our neighborhood was surrounded by land that was originally planned for residential zoning. However, some neighbors recently received notifications from the city regarding proposals for rezoning the land and were invited to attend several city council meetings for further information. At that time, several neighbors decided to increase the communication among the whole neighborhood and form a neighborhood association in order to unify our voices and concerns. We made contact with our city council representative and he guided us to the appropriate resources, such as RNeighbors, in dealing with the planning and zoning committee along with the city council members.

What did you do that did NOT work well?

- One thing that we felt worked against our efforts was the fact that we didn't have a neighborhood association already developed prior to facing such large neighborhood issues. Instead, we spent a lot of time and energy building our association, which initially reduced our efficiency while dealing with pressing timelines of the rezoning concerns.

What did you do that DID work well?

- What worked well for us was knowing when to ask questions, use available resources, utilize our city council representative, and update the RNeighbors representatives on our progress. We also found it beneficial to meet with the developer outside of the city council meetings to negotiate the rezoning terms. Lastly, we compiled an email list, which helped improve the communication among our neighbors.

What was the final outcome?

- Prior to the final city council meeting, our neighborhood was able to come to an agreement with the developer regarding the rezoning situation. We presented this agreement to the city council, and they were impressed with our efforts in working with the developer in a unified manner. The city council honored our collective proposal and praised our hard work to negotiate our conditions outside of the city council meeting. From this experience, our neighborhood association was able to approach similar situations with a more polished and efficient process.

Do you have ONE suggestion for neighbors they can do that will make working with the city more efficient?

- To be most efficient, we suggest designating only a few people as core leaders for your neighborhood to make contact with appropriate resources when necessary. When making contact, know what you are asking for and be concise. Also, be sure to update your neighborhood with any essential information.

Historic SW Neighborhood Association - Zoning Issues and Preservation

Contact: Frank Hawthorne

FRANK@rochester.lib.mn.us

Our eight-member association board meets monthly, on the second Thursday, at Zumbro Lutheran Church; and our meetings are open to the public. Our neighborhood encompasses an area bounded to the N. by 2nd St. S.W., to the E. by Broadway, to the W. by 10th Ave. S.W., and to the S. by 10th Street S.W.

In the 6+ years since being established, HSNA has worked w. such community organizations as the Rochester Area Foundation, and R-Neighbors, to conduct neighborhood surveys, participate in Neighborhood Watch & National Night Out, paint street murals, sponsored a door-to-door "Garden Walk," organized volunteers for "Litter Bit Better," and helped facilitate city tree-planting projects.

- Hosted occasional speakers on a variety of topics of local interest, plus an annual Southwest Neighborhood Picnic.
- Maintain open channels of communication with our elected officials--i.e. for the City, Councilmen Bilderback & Wojcik--and are planning a "Candidate Forum" on October 18th.
- It is our goal to participate in the "Imagine" process for downtown neighborhoods.
- Openly supportive of the pending Historic Preservation Ordinance, now before the City Council.
- Collaborated with S.W. neighbors who opposed placement of a proposed MM Veterans Museum in the public-use areas of Soldiers Field Park; and later (in 2011) served on the Veteran Museum "site subcommittee."
- Collaborated (over the past year) with S.W. neighbors who opposed placement of a (City) proposed 3.5 million gallon Water Tank in the middle of St. Mary's Park.
- Collaborated w. a larger, ad hoc group of neighbors who (since May of this year/2012) have actively & successfully opposed a proposed zoning change & large-apartment project for the "Williams House" block, at 5th Avenue & 5th Street S.W.

Like most such organizations, we're a constant Work-in-progress & always "Under Construction." So we encourage our neighbors to join us in the struggle!

Indian Heights Neighborhood Association - Conservation and Preservation of Neighborhood Park

Contact: Barb Hudson

barb.hudson@live.com

Collaborated with the Rochester Park and Recreation Department to conserve and protect Indian Heights Park from development.

Lessons learned that did not work well

- Did not initially anticipate the time commitment and breadth of the challenge
- Naiveté that the “public” would offer support
- Assumed all stakeholders would be courteous and respectful

Lessons learned that did work well

- Neighbors started a door-to-door campaign and petitions signed
- Naturalist organizations contacted for assistance and support
- Native American tribes informed and asked for support and assistance
- Door-to-door flyers posted to attend meetings to discuss how to proceed
- Core group of volunteer leaders identified to coordinate neighborhood efforts
- Developed e-mail and web sites for communications
- Adopted two city parks
- **Interaction with City**
 - Contacted Park and Recreation Department and City Council members with concerns and invited them to neighborhood meetings
 - Contacted RNeighbors and started a Neighborhood Association
 - Core group leaders, neighbors and naturalists attended Park and Rec Board meeting to present petitions and publicly protest the development of the park
 - Park Board assigned a subcommittee of key stakeholders to meet and develop a long range plan for the best use of the park by all community members

Final Outcome

After 15 months in subcommittee and a unanimous vote, the Park Board voted to preserve and protect the park. All stakeholders continue to voluntarily work together on a committee led by the Park and Recreation Department to meet the goals of the park.

One Suggestion for neighbors that will make working with the city more efficient

Collaborate with someone who has done this before [a preceptor/mentor] who can offer some insights and suggestions regarding who to contact and how to prepare.

Kutzky Park North - 4 1/2 Street NW: Community over Crime

Contact: Susan Todzy

todzsm17@gmail.com

twitter.com/todzsm17

PROBLEM

4 1/2 ST NW like other streets experience common neighborhood problems like noise (parties, vehicles, equipment), vehicles (abandoned and improper parking), junk and garbage (illegal dumping, litter, and junk on property), animals (stray pets), traffic (speeding and cut-through traffic), but when the issues of prostitution, drug dealing, gang activity, public intoxication, and even an episode of gun shots had occurred, it was time for the neighborhood to come together and step it up.

OBJECTIVES

- Know the importance of starting a neighborhood watch. Neighborhood Watches turn around neighborhoods.
- Learn the value in promptly reporting suspicious activity. Any garden left unattended will attract weeds.
- Know that YOU are the difference. If not you, who? If not now, when? Become a Block Captain or member of your Neighborhood Watch or Neighborhood Association. All landlords, we challenge you to become faithful stewards of our neighborhoods.
- KISS your Community Resources. Keep it simple, Skipper. Be objective. State the facts. Tell them what you see, and where you see it. Be specific.

Slatterly Park Neighbors -6th Street Bridge Replacement

Contact: Janice Hobbs

hobbs.janice@CO.OLMSTED.MN.US

Situation

Dept. of Public Works sends postcards to affected neighbors on either side of a main connecting neighborhood bridge about an upcoming meeting in late January of which no neighbors were aware of.

Lessons learned that did not work well

- The Neighborhood Association was not invited to attend the Public Works meeting.
- Bridge plans weren't shared at the meeting.
- Not sure if there was intent to get residents involved in any part of the bridge planning, because it would only delay planning that had already been done by the engineers out of the Twin Cities.

Lessons learned that did work well

- Public Works took the initiative to reach out to immediate neighbors via a postcard.
- Having an organized Neighborhood Association is important. In this case, someone who has been involved in the neighborhood association contacted the neighborhood association president, and got the word out.
- A fair size group of neighbors & neighborhood association members, and CUDE- Community Urban Design and Environment got involved.

Final Outcome

The bridge aesthetics are well thought out, and will complement our historic downtown neighborhood, with a unique railing design, lighting fixtures and planters.

The goal of the neighborhood committee is to finalize plans this fall and come to an agreement whether it be a variance or acceptance from the neighborhood on the current proposal from Public Works and try to get the bridge in line for 2013 construction.