

Brodart Neighborhood Improvement Program Meeting Notes

**All Saints Memorial Church
Wednesday, September 25, 2013**

Speakers:

Overview: Kim Wheeler - Lycoming County Planning

Homes-in Need Program: Connie Baker/ Rachele Abbott - STEP, Inc.

A Brush with Kindness Program: Nancy Wentzler/Habitat for Humanity

City Update: John Grado/City of Williamsport

Others present: Bill Kelly (Lycoming County), Stephanie Young (City), Tom Salisbury (STEP, Inc.), Sandy Spiro (Habitat)

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Kim Wheeler introduced herself and the partners including the media. Kim asked for a show of hands from those who had attended previous meetings. More than half of the attendees had attended previous meetings.

Mayor Campana acknowledged the partnership and stated that the project will improve the area for the better. He stated that he will be available for a question and answer session later regarding improved lighting and plans regarding Memorial Pool or East End Pool. He will need citizens' support.

Kim mentioned that this was the third BNIP outreach meeting and that in order to keep the dialogue going, additional meetings will be scheduled every few months. Competitive federal dollars and the Act 13 gas impact fee dollars will be invested into the neighborhood. There is currently 1.1 million dollars of PHARE funding towards housing strategy. In 2013, 1.3 million dollars was awarded to the County's response to the demand and stresses caused by the Marcellus Shale gas industry. Three projects will be funded:

1. Memorial Homes is a 3 phase housing development with a total of 74 mixed income units including 40 apartments, 32 townhouses and 2 single family homes.
2. BNIP improvements to homes and streetscape improvements in the neighborhood of 150 household area
3. Grove St. Commons, which will be 42 units of senior housing in the east end of the City.

\$550,000 will be designated to BNIP and \$150,000 of CDBG funding will be used for streetscape and infrastructure improvements. The July meeting prioritized these needed improvements. Kim met with executives of Textron to partner with improving the conditions around the Textron property and removal of the hazardous materials. The City

submitted a grant application in the amount of \$61,850 for a beautification project that includes shade trees around the perimeter and solar lighting.

Connie Baker and Rachelle Abbott reviewed the Homes-in Need program and gave a status update. STEP, Inc. has received 15 applications. One project will begin on Monday, three projects will be scheduled, one project is scheduled for a preconstruction meeting and 8 projects are ready to audit. Two applications are going through the eligibility process. The eligible repairs were reviewed including repairs to roofs, window replacements, ramps, painting, and heating systems. Income is taken as a point in time at the time of the application. There is not a need to resubmit an application. The eligible income limit is 200% of the area medium income. The funding is only available to residents that own their homes and is not available for rentals at this time. Rachelle mentioned STEP, Inc.'s other programs.

Nancy Wentzler reviewed the Brush with Kindness program and gave a status update. Work includes exterior work, minor repairs to porches, landscaping, and beautification. Habitat is working closely with STEP, Inc. The Brodart neighborhood is a priority. Four applications will be completed by the end of October. Habitat is looking for applications for the spring. The Penn College horticulture department students are helping and do a professional job.

John thanked the partners and Bill and Kim for their professional efforts in bringing this project to the community. John explained that the Brodart project started as a Brownsfield initiative and that Brodart sold the building to the Williamsport Redevelopment Authority for one dollar. The building is now coming down and John thanked the neighbors for their patience. He has been watching the activity with the neighbors. He is expecting a completion date of November 7, 2013. The next step is an Act 2 Clearance for the site developer, NRP Group. DEP is involved in the ACT 2 Clearance. NRP group had its land development plan approved. It should take one year to complete the housing development after the Act 2 Clearance.

Bill explained that the Act 2 Clearance is the highest standard and it means that the site is good to go for residential purposes. A lengthy process is involved

Rachelle introduced the BNIP sign that will be on display at homes that are being rehabilitated. Kim described the sign.

Kim reviewed the meeting of July 18, 2013 and distributed a copy of the meeting notes. Three tables marked up areas of high concern. Infrastructure improvements are a top priority. All three tables agreed that the intersection at Oliver and Beeber Streets is dangerous. Kim discussed the concerns and summarized July 18, 2013 meeting notes. A citizen commented that Oliver St. is the main thoroughfare for ambulances, trucks etc. Also, people exit from the softball field on the other side of the street at the Elm Park entrance and exit. A citizen commented that Textron has had hazardous material for over 30 years. Kim commented that Textron plans to relocate the operations on Memorial Ave. and Textron made those plans before the BNIP meeting.

A citizen commented that the alley by Textron is shut off so residents can't get in and out. City should provide snow removal. Other citizen comments included better signage for Scott St. because it is one way and more bus shelters on Memorial Ave.

A citizen commented on the poor condition of the mosque.

The Mayor stated that there is a new property owner and that he is trying to find the former property owner who moved to a property at Campbell St. and Park Ave. The new owner has been there a short amount of time and is trying to clean up. A citizen stated that the building is not safe and shingles have blown off. Michael Ochs stated that there are tree limbs everywhere and another citizen commented that the trees need to either come down or be limbed. Michael Ochs mentioned parking issues and whether parking can be reserved for just the residents. John responded that anyone can park on the public streets but if the parking gets bad, it can be reviewed. Kim stated that if all of the priorities from the July 18 meeting have not been addressed that residents can send e-mails. The e-mails are checked by all the partners.

Kim, John and Bill had a meeting with PennDOT transportation planners on September 10, 2013 regarding the issues with the intersection at Oliver and Beeber Streets. There are no traffic reports because people are too careful going through the intersection. Remedies include redesigning the intersection to a semi circle coming off of W. 4th St. A traffic study needs to be done. PennDOT will not help with funding so the City will have to find other sources of funding. The County has a technical assistance program that is free. It is a PennDOT roadway so it must be approved by PennDOT. Pedestrians also have difficulty.

\$150,000 of CDBG funds can be the first step to making an accessible way into the park and a grander entrance gateway; however, not everything can be addressed all at once.

A citizen asked about Memorial Pool. John stated that there is \$250,000 of CDBG funds. The Mayor stated that we could not spend less than \$750,000 to fix Memorial Pool. John stated that there was recently a core test on both pools and both pools need to meet ADA requirements. Both pools were built in the 1960's. The bathhouses also need work.

John mentioned the "lights on" initiative and that the City has 2,300 lights that cost \$250,000 -300,000 annually. Safety lights and other types of lighting can be part of the CDBG. A citizen stated that Avco used to have lighting and asked if it is possible for the lighting to be reinstated. Kim will check.

Michael Ochs stated that neighborhood representatives have not been included in meetings and have been left out of the team.

He wondered if police officers have a presence on bicycles. The Mayor responded that the police are not on bicycles, but they walk the neighborhood.

A citizen asked about the security around Brodart because she saw people passing things over the fence. Bill stated that the contractor reported that \$30,000 to \$40,000 of copper had been pulled out of the building. John stated that no one should be there at night and to call 911 if you see suspicious activity.

A citizen stated that residents should be contacted about upcoming meetings, including job site meetings, and that residents should be invited to attend all meeting related to Brodart.

Kim thanked the partners and everyone for attending and encouraged residents to review the website and to e-mail with any concerns.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 11, 2013.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p. m.

7:30