



Legislation Text

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Community Organizing in Bryant Neighborhood and at Pine Lake Cooperative

The Office of Community Development has been working with council members Leigh Greden, Christopher Taylor, Carsten Hohnke and Mike Anglin to address a multitude of issues in the Bryant Neighborhood and Pine Lake Cooperative.

Bryant Neighborhood:

Community Action Network (CAN) is under contract with the City to operate Bryant Community Center. CAN initiated a community organizing effort and organized a meeting of community leaders and organizations on December 11, 2008. The meeting was well-attended by about 30 community members.

Derrick Jackson and Damon Thompson provided insight and advice on how to organize the community, based on their experience in the West Willow Neighborhood. A critical component is neighborhood involvement to both identify problems and help with solutions. After these issues are identified, then an outside consultant can be hired to help facilitate a community revitalization action plan. Three subcommittees were formed to address the following problems: Infrastructure Issues around storm drainage, Community Outreach to get the residents involved, and Housing Foreclosure.

Infrastructure: The Office of Community Development (OCD) has been working with public services, project planning and engineering to figure out how to address some of the drainage issues in the neighborhood. The subdivision was built on a drained wetland, and nearly all of the houses have moisture problems. In addition storm drains are not available in many of the cul-de-sacs. Many of the drainage pathways have become clogged with vegetation. Installing storm drains in the neighborhood was added to the City's Capital Improvement Plan and was also submitted for funding under the Economic Recovery Plan.

Community Outreach: A plan was developed to recruit court captains, conduct a door-to-door opinion survey on neighborhood conditions, and conduct two neighborhood meetings on March 5, 2009. Forest Hills Cooperative members will be included in the outreach efforts.

Foreclosures: An educational presentation was conducted by MSU Extension and the County Treasurer's office to help people understand the foreclosure process and to connect them with community resources. The Bryant Neighborhood is one of the target neighborhoods under the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) that Community Development is administering. NSP funds will be used to help homebuyers acquire and rehabilitate foreclosed homes.

Community Development is contracting with CAN to manage the community organizing process. \$10,000 will be requested from the Ann Arbor Housing Trust Fund to support CAN in managing this process, and additional funding may be required at a future date to complete a Neighborhood Action

Plan.

Pine Lake Cooperative:

Councilmember Hohnke requested that Community Development also work with Pine Lake Cooperative on a variety of issues impacting the Cooperative. The OCD has been working with Huntington Management for the past year to access funding for weatherization to supplement HUD funds for comprehensive rehabilitation of the units. Huntington Management supports any efforts made to organize the coop members and improve the living conditions. The OCD is setting up a meeting with CAN, Huntington Management and Peace Neighborhood Center to develop a strategy. Peace currently provides services to kids who live at Pine Lake.

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