

Old West End Neighborhood Initiatives

(Working Together for a Better Neighborhood to bring about a Positive Change)

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2015 Community Meetings and Neighborhood Activities

January

Community Meeting: A power point presentation on the OWENI's "**Success Measures Survey**". Bob Krompak, Community Organizer explain the results of this survey that was completed on 200 Old West End/Overland Park residents. Discussed what was needed for community change, education, employment, safety, neighborhood growth, assets, and liabilities.

Ground was broken by the Lucas County Port Authority to build a 100,000 square feet warehouse building on the former Jeep site on Central Avenue near Maplewood.

"Eyes on the Prize" second phase, youth began painting a mural on January 20th at the Collingwood Arts Center with the assistance from Rachael Richardson, Art Corner Toledo, and professional artist Yusef Lateef.

February

Community Meeting: Guest, **City of Toledo Environmental Services Marc Gerdeman** who discussed the **Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives** proposal that will be submitted to clean up the former Chevy site at Maplewood and Central.

A **Retreat** was held for **OWENI leadership** members with Kris Smith, Network Funders Association, Miami, Florida. Discussed was organizational issues, goals, recruitment of member involvement, community issues, youth roles, public recognition, and assertiveness results. OWENI needs to assert our agendas (facts) in order to influence what we do for residents.

March

Community meeting: **Guest, Karen Rogalski, Cherry Street Legacy**, who gave a presentation on how to make your home and neighborhood safer with "**Crime Prevention through Environmental Design**." This can be done by increasing the lighting (street lights), completing neighborhood inventories to determine obstacles, locating and reporting fire/nuisance properties, completing safety walking audits, a demographics census on

residents, etc. Assessing neighborhood needs, working with local police and neighborhood watch blocks can help with deterring crime.

Leslie Robinson was nominated for a **Jefferson Award**. He did not win the main award, but he was still a winner, because he became a finalist.

An **Area Wide Partners Workshop** was held on March 19 at St. Vincent's Medical Center, d'Youville Education Center. Presentations on key initiatives and progress of the area wide planning efforts for the Old West End/Overland Park community on reuse planning, neighborhood improvements, job preparation and training, safety, youth engagement, community initiatives, federal partners for response and next steps was discussed.

The **installation of the mural**, drawn by youth and professional artist Yusef Lateef, was hung at Parisian Cleaners, located on Detroit Avenue, on March 20th. This installation was also featured on WTVG Channel 13 the same day. A feature newspaper article was written by Lindstrom, a reporter for The Blade newspaper and appeared in the paper on Mar 21st.

Residents were informed of the **Neighborhood Roofing Program** sponsored by the Toledo Lucas County Land Bank and Toledo Fair Housing. Several neighborhood residents qualified and they will receive a new roof for their home. This project was made available as a result of a settled lawsuit regarding homeowners in the neighborhood.

April

Community Meeting: **Guest, Chief of Police George R. Kral**. Residents voiced their opinions on how the Toledo Police Department can work in partnership with community residents and to identify hot spots that need special attention. A "Pursuit of Review Panel" was created to determine trends, training needs use of force etc. for officers. Residents were encouraged to forward concerns on the Toledo Police Department Facebook page.

NeighborWorks submitted an application on behalf of OWENI to the City of Toledo for consideration to be awarded **T-Town Trailer Day** (a one day) and **T-Town Action Week** (a six day) neighborhood cleanup opportunities. The City of Toledo would provide the equipment and supplies needed for these activities, i.e, rakes, blowers, lawnmowers, tractors, trimmers, bags, gloves, volunteers, etc.

"Unity in the Community Cleanup," a joint effort between OWENI and the Cherry Street Legacy was held on April 25 to clean up our neighborhoods. Two debris sites were made available for residents; one at the corners of Central and Detroit (OWENI), and the other at Delaware and Fulton (Cherry Street Legacy).

- There were 25 OWENI volunteers who assisted with the cleanup in our area. Volunteers picked up trash along Detroit Avenue, cleaned up the lot at Detroit and Central, and the alley in the 3100 block between Detroit and Maplewood. Residents dropped off unwanted debris and tires. Between the two entities, the City of Toledo collected 53.25 tons of debris and 625 tires. The Health Department also collected old medicines from residents.

- Afterwards, a **picnic** was held **at Grace Community Center**, with a DJ, for participants who assisted in the cleanup and for neighborhood residents, adults and children.
- There was food, a DJ, face painting, and hands on activities for the youth. This project was funded by a grant from the NeighborWorks Community Leadership Institute.

OWENI's Community Organizer, Bob Krompak resigned to accept a new position with the Toledo Housing Court.

May

Community meetings: **Guest, Melissa Green, Board of Lucas County Commissioners Sustainability Coordinator** gave a power point presentation entitled, "It's Your Community and Your Design," and spoke about green infrastructure, the Junction Avenue Urban Water project, and green/complete streets. Also discussed was the proposed sustainable art project for the lot at Detroit and Central Avenues. These were possible ideas that could be considered for development efforts of the OWE/Overland Park neighborhood.

OWENI was notified that there was an interest to put a mural on the fire station located at Detroit and Nesselwood Avenues and funds were made available. We will pursue a drawing to be completed by seniors and youth with assistance from representatives with The Arts Commission and the Art Corner Toledo

June

Community meeting: Discussions were held with guests from the **Toledo Design Center volunteers** and residents on their thoughts, ideas, and concerns on re-purposing and the potential development of the land lot at the corners of Detroit and Central Avenues.

OWENI Leadership members participated in the **Old West End Festival** on June 6 and 7. Handouts about OWENI and ink pens were distributed to residents. Many visitors stopped by our tent.

OWENI T-Town Trailer Day and Action Week applications were approved by The Department of Neighborhoods, The City of Toledo. Trailer Day cleanup activities will focus on the 2300 and 2400 blocks of Hollywood, Lawrence and Maplewood Avenues. The Action Week activities will focus on Detroit Avenue between Delaware and Berdon, and some area side streets. Volunteers will be recruited to help with cleanup efforts. The City of Toledo will also provide volunteers, mowers, trimmers, and whatever else is needed to help make this a successful endeavor.

July

Community Meeting: The guest speakers were members of the **Toledo Design Center** (TDC). The Toledo Design Center, a volunteer group of architects, landscape architects, and planners are assisting OWENI with the **land development and re-purposing** at Detroit and Central Avenues. Two interns from Miami, Ohio University, Lauren Mitro and Vince Gregory, were major contributors for design creations. The OWENI leadership members completed a survey to assist with preparing a design study that reflects the community's preferences. The TDC team introduced design concepts to refine the Detroit Avenue gateway concept at the July meeting. This engagement was made possible by a funded Partners for Places grant that was written by the Toledo Community Foundation for OWENI.

- Guest, **Robert Ramsey** discussed his concerns with OWE/Overland Park residents on supporting his efforts to get a **zone change** that will allow him to open a car lot in the area. He indicated that his would be a positive aspect for the neighborhood and would also provide neighborhood jobs. Because this property was a former gas station, there are underground gas tanks that must be removed. Residents were asked to attend the City of Toledo's Zoning and Planning Committee meeting for discussion of approval or denial of the zoning change.
- Guest, **Marc Gerdeman, City of Toledo Environmental Services**, reported the following:
 - The Great Lakes Grant, written by Environment Services for the OWENI and Cherry Street Legacy areas, was approved for funding and trees will be planted along Detroit Avenue and Cherry Streets for beautification efforts.
 - The Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives proposal was funded and environmental remediation work will begin on July 27 at the former Chevy site located at 3199 Maplewood. A contractor was hired to remove, transport, and dispose of a 12,000 gallon underground storage tank, and an estimated removal of 1,135 tons of petroleum impacted soils.
 - The City of Toledo approved the demolition of L & L Plating at 936 Central, the nuisance property by the tracks near Maplewood.

T-Town Trailer day was held on July 18th. We focused on the boundaries of the 2300 and 2400 blocks of Hollywood and Lawrence Avenues.

Volunteers from The City of Toledo, NeighborWorks, OWENI, and area residents picked up trash, cut grass, cleared brush and trimmed edges. The City of Toledo also provided the equipment, supplies, and a few volunteers.

The **OWENI Neighborhood Beautification Grass Cutting project** began on June 16, 2015. Six youth, two of them females, were selected for this activity. Each will receive a small stipend, will cut grass and be mentored on Tuesdays and Thursdays, for four (4) hours each day. The youth will be supervised by two (2) adult volunteers. This grass cutting service was available to seniors and the disabled at no cost to them until September 5, 2015.

A **Zepf Center Recovery Housing** representative has agreed to provide volunteers to assist OWENI with its neighborhood projects. They will provide the people and staff supervisors to assist us where needed.

As of July 14, the Lucas County LandBank reported **demolishing the following properties:**

- 2724, 3271, and 3361 Detroit Avenue
- 2319, 2470 Maplewood
- 606 and 811 Nesselwood
- 2413 and 2482 Hollywood
- 3117 Kimball

August

Community meeting: **Guests, The Toledo Design Center** discussed the **final design concepts** for the gateway design and implementation strategies for the vacant land at the corner of Detroit and Central Avenue. The land will be structured to be mainly viewed as a visual aid from a vehicle. The design will be low maintenance that incorporates nature. This can include butterfly islands/gardens, trees, a jeep icon, and possibly a graffiti moss wall. The area can also be used as an educational tool for youth and neighborhood group meetings. Kudos to the college interns, Lauren Mitro and Vince Gregory, for their hard work on this project. Also, a big “thank you” to all of the Toledo Design volunteers for their assistance with the project design. The Arts Commission will be contacted for the possibility of designing a jeep icon that will be a part of the lot design.

The Toledo **T-Town Trailer Week** for OWENI focused on the Detroit Avenue corridor from Delaware to Berdan Avenues and a few side streets. Cleanup efforts were scheduled from August 17 – 22, 2015. There were a total of 32 volunteers, 16 adults and 16 youth. Volunteers were from Pathway, The City of Toledo, and OWENI. Some of the cleanup activities included:

- Trash being up on both sides of the street on Detroit Avenue from Delaware to Berdan,
- About 50 yards were cut,
- The alleys between Central and Highland and Kimball and Detroit were cleaned,
- Trash was also picked up by the volunteers on Glenwood, Scottwood, Parkwood, Kimball, Highland, Winfield, and Castle,
- Tree branches were trimmed on Hollywood,
- Bulk trash was removed on Hollywood,
- A few pot holes were filled,
- The defaced stone signage (with the word Riverside on it) at Detroit and Arcadia was removed, and
- A refuse drop was placed at the lot on Central and Detroit on Aug 21 and 22 for residents to drop off unwanted debris and tires.

Attention was still needed on a few areas, i.e. sinkhole in the alley of the 3200 block between Kimball and Parkwood, properties to be leveled with dirt and grass seeds planted on Arcadia near Parkwood and in the 3100 block of Kimball. Cindy Geronimo, Commissioner’s Office, stated for areas/properties still needing attention, the information will be forwarded to the appropriate departments for completion.

The **Neighborhood Beautification Project** is nearing the end as the students are preparing to return to school. The final aspects of the grass cutting is the week of August 21, and on Saturday August 29 and September 5. Thus far, the youth have cut over 100 yards/lots.

- The six (6) youth who participated in the Neighborhood Beautification project were awarded school supplies as one of the “thank you’s” for their summer participation. Each received a grip, calculator, paper, pens, pencils, hand sanitizer, tissues, post it notes, folders and other supplies.

Representatives from The Arts Commission, Toledo Community Foundation, and OWENI interviewed four candidates for the selection of an **Americorps** member to serve as a **Community Engagement Specialist** for the Art Museum and OWENI. The individual selected will be employed from October 1, 2015 through July 31 2016, and will receive a work stipend and a \$5,730 educational award.

The **Toledo City Council approved the zone change** for Robert Ramsey to open a car lot at the corners of Delaware and Detroit. It was changed from CN Neighborhood Commercial to CR Regional Commercial at 2485, 2487, and 2497 N. Detroit @ Delaware for Robert Ramsey to open a car lot at that facility.

September

OWENI’s Beautification Grass Cutting Project ended on September 5th. A total of 129 yards/lots were cut between June 16th and September 5th. An end of the project a **cookout** was held for the youth and their parents/grandparents on September 5th. There were 15 people in attendance. The menu consisted of ribs, chicken, beef hot dogs, baked beans with ground beef, macaroni and cheese, grilled corn, vanilla pudding cake and beverages. Even though it rained on the cookout, it was still a success. We just had to use the front porch and the house, instead of the yard with tents and chairs.

The **demolition of L & L Plating** at 936 Central finally began.

Monthly Continuations

Since March 2015, **District 4 Councilwoman Yvonne Harper** has attended the OWENI monthly meetings to give **updates on City Council and neighborhood issues** that affect District 4, which includes the OWE/Overland Park neighborhoods. She also stated that District 4 is the most blighted neighborhood in the City of Toledo and she will do all she can to help with neighborhood improvements.