



Flint Neighborhoods United

Flint Neighborhoods United Minutes
Saturday, January 4, 2019
Facilitator: Carma Lewis

Question: What topic would you like to have a presentation on during 2020?

- Humane Society, Animal Control, or somebody to come and talk about how to manage “four-legged creatures” (skunks, possums, groundhogs, etc.); adoptions and rescue services; collecting strays, cleaning up deceased animals
- Programs for helping people repair their homes; housing security and home rehabilitation issues (mentioned a number of times)
- Resources available for homeowners to assist with maintenance or deal with ordinance violation notice
- Anything related to food; especially nutrition
- Dumping and code enforcement; tires being dumped in neighborhoods; buyback programs for tires
- Update on the new City plan, how it’s going, what’s been done
- Trust: what neighborhood groups can do to build trust among ourselves and in the City more broadly
- Traffic safety e.g. speeding issues; how to improve safety in areas where children can be hurt
- Grant-writing for neighborhood associations
- Blight elimination; tearing down boarded up houses; blight court
- Ombudsperson’s office; how we can communicate with ombudsperson
- Crime Prevention; including gun violence and conflict resolution
- Horticulturalist
- Municipal finance; including revenue sharing, how its impacted our neighborhoods and communities
- Affordable housing; what affordable housing actually is, how funding works at a state level, why certain areas get funding; how we can be better advocates to help change policies; how to help City and state department advocate for us (Glenn Wilson, Communities First)
- Flint City Charter and Code of Ordinances
- Local (neighborhood-level) economic development opportunities

Update from the City, Mayor Neeley

- Working on citizen’s guide to the Charter
- Blight is a priority, access to City Hall is a priority, reconstructing the Charter is a priority
- How City addresses blight is being restructured, Charter being revisited
- City of Flint Human Relations Commission is being revived
- Audit completed

Flint Neighborhoods United Elections

- Lucille James, Vice President
- Talia Gordon, Secretary

Updates, comments, concerns, announcements

Tané Dorsey (Ombudsperson, City of Flint)

- Role: Person who mediates between city residents and city administration
- If a person has an issue, complaint, concern, they can contact ombudsperson
 - **Tané Dorsey**
 - **cityofflint.com/ombudsperson**
 - **Email: ombudsperson@cityofflint.com**
 - **Phone Number: 810-237-2020**
- Dual role: bridge the gap between residents and the City; and the other component is an investigative role
- Lot of jurisdiction
 - City departments, city employees, public servants
 - Couple of 'gray areas' - lots of partnerships with different entities
- Blight is a priority; interested in learning more about the Land Bank; met with blight officers recently
- Concerned with how we beautify our city, get rid of vacant houses and other dark areas throughout the city?
- Tire dumping costs about \$2.50 per tire; interested in how we can remedy this problem of costs
- **Question:** if someone is found guilty of malpractice, what happens?
 - **Answer:** first thing standard practice is to attempt to resolve the issue directly, then they can bring it to the office, and we have jurisdiction to investigate the complaint
 - For example, if someone has a property damage complaint against the City of Flint, they need to fill it out within 45 days; that's the window
 - If it's a criminal complaint, go to the police, but any acts against the City Charter, as well as residential concerns (e.g. blight; water bills; sewer and maintenance issues), are the jurisdiction of the ombudsperson

Kate Cole (Traffic Taming Task Force)

- We moved the radar sign to University Park Area, on Cornelia Avenue, set it up covertly
- Found that 46% of cars are over speed limit
- We meet every first Monday of the month at the Crim at 3:30PM
- We're working to make connections with City enforcement to recognize problem areas

Glenn Wilson (Communities First)

- 5th anniversary of the African American Film Series
- Live jazz, food, tour the art galleries, suggested donation of \$5
- Next movie (last of the series), is on Thursday, February 13: "Mr. Church"
 - Doors open at the Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., at 5:30 p.m. and the films begin at 7 p.m. Seating is limited to the first 300 guests, and there is a suggested donation of \$5 per person.

Flint Public Library

- Saturday February 29th is our last day in this building; closed from March 1st to May 1st; reopening in Courtland Center starting May 1st for about 13-14 months.
- Big final day program coming up on February 29th, including concerts, story-times, etc. from 12-4pm
- **Question:** will there be a location in the City of Flint, since Courtland is technically in Burton?
 - **Answer:** We looked for certain criteria: Parking, bus service, a place that didn't cost us a lot to refurbish; helps that Sloan Museum is at Courtland, we can collaborate with them; they also serve a lot of families with children
 - Every dollar we spend on relocation is a dollar we can't spend on renovation so that was a consideration
 - But we will be having more librarians within the City of Flint to do outreach

Ballenger Square

- Had annual luncheon on December 14, 2019
 - Came to library, looked in the directory, got names of everyone in our area, and invited everyone who lives there; was able to get names of homeowners and renters who have been there for a long time
 - Also used Land Bank information to see which homes were blighted
 - Polk City Directory
- Also AtoZdatabases.com, which you can access online from home or the library; start at MEL.org
- You can download directory electronically

Flint Neighborhoods United

- Starting Saturday March 7th, 2020, FNU meetings will be in a new location
 - Checking out the Masonic Temple, which has a handicapped elevator and is accessible
- **Suggestion:** Eastern Food Bank has conference rooms
- We'll have the final information about our new meeting space by next meeting
- Any suggestions, call Carma Lewis: 810-280-6344

Flint Rising

- A lot of students who live in Flint are bussed outside of the City limits starting as early as 5:30am
- Bus stops are outside of abandoned buildings, liquor stores, etc. with no lighting or police presence
- Have already reached out to Flint Board of Education, Genesee Intermediate School District
- We need some type of assistance...don't know if we can change these stops, but we need male presence, police presence
- **Suggestion:** this is where the block club captains need to rise up
- **Ombudsperson:** if we want to make this a substantial complaint, first step is photographing these stops; you need to document what "unsafe" spots look like
- **Suggestion:** Similar issue, talked to neighbors, had them turn their porch lights on; tell neighbors to turn the porch lights, have adults wait around until the bus comes;
- **Suggestion:** MTA drivers are very sensitive. They will move down to where it's better lit; can ask the same of other bus drivers
- **Suggestion:** Create a task force committee; build on existing relationships; get people in the room together
 - **Actions (Glenn Wilson):**
 - Bring up issue to MTA board;
 - Call Consumers Energy
 - Call community school director,
 - Use YWCA safe routes program,
- **Suggestion:** CRIM should be involved in that meeting, they have SAGE

Vicki VanBuren

- City of Flint and Vanguard say they will be installing new meters and to call and make an appointment
- Be conscious of who is working for them and how to make sure we know (what the trucks look like, what they're wearing)
- To make an appointment: (810) 360-2272 or the water department (810) 766-7202
- Remote monitoring, you can also get access to the reading on your phone
- They come in to where the meter is, attach a gadget to the line

Gary Jones, Flint Community Affairs Liaison to Governor Whitmer's Office

- Just got back 2 days ago
- We got a supplemental through, about a billion of resources that came through
- Real brief end of year wrap-up
- Poverty task force announcement; ensuring people are being ultra-responsive

Presentation from Dr. Thomas Wrobel, UM-Flint

- Professor at UM-Flint, 35th year of teaching; serves as faculty ombudsperson; also a licensed clinical psychologist, working with trauma and rehabilitation
- Here to ask for your knowledge and help in accessing people to take our surveys about the psychological effects of the water crisis
- Did a study with three samples: Undergraduates who are Flint residents; undergraduates who are commuters; and people at UM-Dearborn who were not affected by the water crisis
 - Where do they get their information from? Which sources do they trust? How much do they know about the effects of lead, legionella, how to use a water filter, do they have a water filter, etc.?
 - Also asked about attitudes about government, water accessibility, depression, anxiety, stress
- Current study focuses on the last issues: depression, anxiety, stress
- I want to be able to document that, “Flint residents reported more emotional distress including **depression, anxiety, and stress** than commuters or non-residents following the water crisis”
- Governmental sources vs media and social media, libraries; more people utilized the latter
 - The most trusted sources are physicians but people don’t often get to physicians; same with libraries
 - The government turned out to be the least trusted of all sources; and compared to commuters and non-residents, significantly less so
- Flint residents were more knowledgeable about the effects of lead and legionella compared to other control groups
- Survey takes about 20 minutes, we have it in three different forms
 - Can do it online, can scan the QR code and do it on your phone, or we have paper copies
- **Question:** more input from the teachers about the effects of lead on behavioral problems; could we do a presentation for teachers?
 - **Answer:** next steps, definitely
- **Question:** how is your research connecting residents to resources? What is the data being used for? Is it being connected to Genesee Health Systems or other providers across the communities? What is the end goal?
 - **Answer:** There’s very little actual documentation about stress...I’m doing the first step on this; our next step is working with teachers and students.
- **Question:** concern about the psychological and behavioral effects, and concerned that we’re consuming large amounts of water from bottles, are we collecting any data on that?
 - **Answer:** This particular research is more narrowly focused
- **Question:** only one mention of the mental effects, this is really big and one thing I’ve noticed in my community, is that we don’t understand the importance of stress, anxiety, and depression, don’t recognize the symptoms, and definitely don’t get treatment. Is that part of your study, helping us to recognize the symptoms, help us to see that that’s a problem? What do you see as the endgame?
 - **Answer:** we’ll be developing recommendations based on findings; I’m in the process daily of working on a manuscript, developing recommendations, comparing results, seeing if there’s a trend, looking at trends as well as comparative data

Gary Jones, Community Affairs Liaison to Governor Whitmer’s office

- We just got back 2 days ago
- We got a supplemental budget through, about a billion dollars’ worth of resources.
- Poverty task force announcement; ensuring people are being ultra-responsive