



Flint Neighborhoods United

FNU Meeting, Saturday February 1st, 2020, 9:30-11:30am

Flint Public Library

Facilitator: Carma Lewis

Introductions, Announcements & Question: What asset would you like to see highlighted?

- Civic Park's green space
- The Flint Public Library: getting ready to renovate; will be closed from March until May; starting in May will be in temporary space at Courtland center
 - Open House Bash on February 29th from 12-4pm
- Pierce Golf Course
- Ballenger Square Community Association: Green areas
- East Side Franklin Park Neighborhood Association: Green Space! Park at Ohio and Franklin, which is open to the public
- Krystal Jo's Diner
- Mott Park
- Kearsley Park
- Pierce Elementary School and the park behind it; lots of people walk and bike and do other activities there; also, Family Dollar at Franklin
- Downtown Flint: small businesses with storefronts downtown and at the Farmer's Market
- New Section of Genesee Valley Trail
- Central Park; Dorothy's Coffee Shop on East Street
- Brownell Holmes Neighborhood: pocket library where the NA leases the lot from the Land Bank; kids can come at any time and borrow; also a gathering place for the NA
- East Side Coalition: Volunteers!
- Glendale Hills: walkability of the community
- Communities First is building affordable housing
- Lt. Zuck: the police department has a sergeant assigned to dumping
 - Nicole Reid
 - nreid@cityofflint.com
 - NSOs assigned to blight and dumping; will be investing that as well
- Mayor Neeley:
 - "We're going to be attacking blight very aggressively"
 - Our ordinance says people dumping can be charged \$250, \$500 dollars, spend 90 days in jail
- King Avenue Plus corridor; we're working up and down MLK; Peace garden on the corner of McClellan and MLK; 8 or 9 senior citizens out there weekly cleaning up
 - Response from local businesses when we ask about clean up, "I don't live here; I don't go outside my building or my business"
- Geri Clark: MLK/Pierson Association
 - Issue with continuation of MLK avenue
 - Working diligently with Piper Realty and Rosewood Manor where we often have our meetings; Last November they put up fencing again...
 - Speeding is an issue going north and south

- Michigan State Police:
 - Citizen's Academy starts February 24 and runs through April 13; first Monday of each week from 6-8PM; might still be slots left; Light up the Cities will be starting soon to highlight neighborhoods
- Neighbors United Block Clubs, serves various spots on the North Side; Hasselbring Center
- Neighborhood Engagement Hub; here to say hi to everybody; most important thing to highlight about neighborhoods is the people!

Organizations with Information to Share

100K Ideas

- Non-profit in downtown Flint area that aims to relieve the entrepreneurial burden by acting as a community resource
- 3 simple steps: 1) visit us; do an intake appointment online; go through your idea; figure out what industry it's associated with; priorities; 2) assessment binder w market research, competitors associated with your idea, next steps; 3) once you're a client, you're always a client
- Partnership with CS Mott foundation and Chamber of Commerce to launch a pitch competition; \$10,000, 5,000, 2500
- 100K signs a non-disclosure agreement with all its clients
 - We will not share your information without your knowledge; it doesn't leave this building
 - Client service contract that ensures that your idea stays 100% theirs; we don't take any percent

City of Flint

- Planning division responsible for licensing marijuana business; Flint has had 4 recreational marijuana facilities in operation since November
- We've been working very hard with legal department to build a permanent ordinance
- Limited administrative approval process (to work with existing business owners)
 - If a business has a valid medical marijuana license here in Flint, and they meet zoning and location restriction guidelines (e.g. proximity to parks, church, school), you could come and add recreational marijuana to that license; City could administratively approve that license without a hearing
 - We don't want to skirt the hearing process but if you can prove that you're going to be an asset to the community, we want to help you; otherwise, there needs to be a public hearing
- Community Benefit Location Exemptions
 - Areas of Flint where it is impossible to invest in marijuana business
 - Concern that the restrictions concentrate business in certain areas and other areas cannot be invested in
 - Usual process to be granted a location variance is to prove a hardship under the law
 - There are a lot of areas where you can't open a marijuana business...

Social Equity Exemption Program

- Social equity is a guiding principle of the Master Plan...that includes making sure that areas that have been historically disinvested in have opportunities
- Social equity...designed to work in 17 areas of the state; to help communities that have been negatively affected by marijuana prosecutions
- Social equity exemption program would address this...if everybody who owns your company is a Flint resident...and you can prove that you're going to be a good neighbor, you can get a location exemption....

- You can only apply for a microbusiness, which can only be done in a D3 or a D4 zone in the city (D3 and D4 refers to medium sized business in traditional commercial areas)
- Social equity program supports Mom and Pop marijuana shops, which can grow and process on site and can sell only what they grow and process on site; this addresses the issue of speculators coming in from out of town and buying up the property

Blight Elimination Plan exemption

- If you are a marijuana business; you could get an exemption if you complete a blight elimination plan; first you need to meet with City and its partners; second is you need to meet with neighbors within 1000 ft of the property; need to prove that you're going to be a good neighbor; third, put together a plan with those groups to improve structural and non-structural blight, need to make a capital plan and a capital investment to reduce blight over the next 5 years in that area
- We have areas that have traditionally been commercial and industrial, where we could put any other type of business that would bring capital to the city, but we can't because they're 300ft within residential properties

Park Beautification Exemption

- Same deal as blight elimination plan
- Prove a capital investment in first year for park, for 5 years you're going to support maintenance of that park
- Need to have public support

Questions

- Q: Okay, businesses say they're going to be good neighbors....How are you going to enforce that?
 - Resident-Initiated Hearings process; Residents can initiate system
 - Make sure that business are policing themselves for fear that they are going to upset their neighbors and have their businesses closed temporarily
 - Resident can make a complaint to the City; bring them before the commission for a complaint review process...work together to mitigate the problem; otherwise we would have a public hearing to assess whether the business would be suspended
- Q: Can anybody go get marijuana from these recreational places?
 - Yes, from a licensed, legal, shop; we have two businesses that have applied to get their city license, they're applying to get their state license; should be open in a few weeks
 - Micro Business and social equity program are designed to have lower fees; you get your license fees from the state reduced by 50%
- Q: Regarding regulations, are these shops under the same regulations as liquor stores?
 - With pot shops, we have a City license for them in addition to the State...we don't locally have a lot of control over liquor stores because their licenses are handled by the State; we have a lot more control over the recreational marijuana
- Q: are there ordinances in place inside the city to deal with public intoxication regarding marijuana?
 - None of our ordinances would permit consumption in public

Genesee County Treasurer, Deb Cherry (<https://www.gc4me.com/>)

- Here to talk about Property Tax Foreclosure
- What happens currently is that you pay your taxes at local unit of government; two times when taxes come out;
- if you don't pay in the Summer/Winter taxes; the city sends them over to the treasurer (as of February 28), once they're sent over it's considered the first year of delinquency...

- For the first year of delinquency, we have to add a 4% administration fee and 1% per month interest
- Second year, if you don't pay your taxes, you go into forfeiture, the interest rate is increased retroactively and going forward; fees total 18% per year, by state law
- Next step is foreclosure; the last absolute day that people can pay their taxes and not get foreclosed upon is March 31st 2020 for people who are delinquent from 2017 or earlier
- Poverty Exemption...
 - City of Flint is realistic and fair with people
 - You need to do it every year; have to go back and reapply
- Step Forward program
 - Helps people pay their taxes
 - Need to prove some sort of income
 - Last year!

Questions:

- Q: Any repercussions for taking advantage of these programs?
 - No
- Q: Is there relief/assistance available to senior citizens?
 - No; but there is for disabled veterans; you have to apply at the assessors office for that
 - Once we foreclose on property, we ask the landbank to do an assessment; we try to identify the condition of the property, whether its vacant or someone is living there; if they're a tenant, we try to work with them so they don't have to leave the property
- Q: How many properties in the City of Flint did you turn over to the Land Bank last year?
 - 1500 foreclosures...probably sold 300-400 in auctions, and landbank got 1097 properties that were transferred from the city; most vacant/dilapidated houses that need demolition
- Q: for some properties posted there is a suggested lowest bid of \$10,000; is that minimum suggested bid a requirement?
 - It depends on the property; your bid is going to be based on what you can afford to put into the property
 - that is not a requirement; not binding at all; you can bid any time
 - One of the findings was that properties before the treasurer office...they looked at properties sold at auction to speculators; majority were coming back in next round of foreclosures after 3 or 6 years; so if a property was in poor condition, somewhere between fair and demolition, we now put properties in a bundle because we don't want speculators to buy property and flip it without doing any work
 - Landbank: now we do open houses for our featured homes
 - Bundle done by August (job between treasurers office and landbank)
- Q: How big are those bundles?
 - Usually at least 100 properties, often more than that in a bundle
- Concern: "That just opens it up for speculators"
 - No one has ever offered a bid on the bundle...in 10 years
- Just to give an idea of properties/homes...when properties go into forfeiture, by the time we get to foreclosure, it's about 3000 homes...we help about half, about 1500 people; averaging 1500 properties, which is a lot
 - We probably sell at auction 4-500
- Suggestion/Concern: Need a review of policies and procedures to make them more standardized...also wanted to bring to attention the new policy in conflict with Imagine Flint Plan...city assessor's office no longer does the legal description or mapping of

properties when someone tries to amalgamate for tax purposes; now buyers have to do that themselves/find companies to do that; it's too expensive for the average citizen to afford; this is a big barrier

Neighbors Changing Flint (www.crim.org/ncf)

- Wednesdays starting February 19 until March 25 there is a leadership series at Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village
- Full gamut from how to bring people to the table to turn your vision into a reality; sessions on fundraising and development, grant-writing; developing an elevator pitch; etc!
- Will also be talking about census and how to educate neighborhood groups, etc. at the March 18 sessions

City of Flint

- Blight plan; very, very serious about handling the blight and the people dumping in our city...encourages residents to take pictures of dumpers, license plates, etc; call the city, call the police
- Can call 911 for blight; also a hotline number: (810) 237-2090
- Last two weeks of the month in the dome we'll have a display for Black History Month for the City of Flint's history, specifically

Habitat for Humanity Young Professionals

- Asking people to join the group, \$50 for the year
- Meeting February 19 from 6-9PM at Factory 2

2020 Census

- Very important for our community; whatever you can do to encourage friends/neighbors to participate/complete the census; the funds that come into our community are determined by how many people complete the census/are counted by the census

Flint Water survey;

- Hard copies of the survey for a study; can mail back to Thomas Wrobel (address on paper)

Legal Services of Eastern Michigan

- Looking for fair housing testers!
- Need a more diverse pool
- \$25 each time you go out
- [Bit.ly/fhtester](http://bit.ly/fhtester)
- Wellness services is hiring for different positions

Crime Stoppers

- Had an event on January 23; Leslie King; can see clips online
- On January 27, Crime Stoppers director went to Washington DC for safe house project/symposium; provide safe houses for victims of human trafficking
 - Set a goal to have houses in every state; 10 in Michigan over the next few years
 - Flint is on the radar
- Annual Crime Resources Fair
 - Saturday May 2nd Berston Fieldhouse, 11am-2pm
- Available to come to block club meetings to talk about Crime Stoppers, how it works
- Amanda Emery:
 - (810) 875-2208
 - csamandaemery@gmail.com

Carma

- Next Month we'll be in the Masonic Temple on Saginaw Street
- Main floor; accessible; parking is free in downtown Flint on Saturdays
- Are you agreeable to that? Yes
- We look to be there until the library opens back up