

## Flint Neighborhoods United Meeting

September 12 2020

Facilitator: Lucille James

### Resident comments, concerns, announcement, community partner updates

#### Question for everyone: "What are you doing to help eliminate blight in your community?"

- Netra Hughes, **Q:** heard that there is some type of funding now that we can use to obtain a dumpster for a neighborhood clean-up, who would I contact?
  - City of Flint Blight Department: <https://www.cityofflint.com/contact-office-of-blight-elimination-and-neighborhood-stabilization/>
  - Call (810) 237-2090
  - [FightBlight@cityofflint.com](mailto:FightBlight@cityofflint.com)
  - There's also the Flint City Litter Killers , doing a park cleanup for Longway Park on 9/27:
    - <https://facebook.com/events/s/flint-michigan-litter-killers-400309214288425/?ti=as>
    - Here is the overall Facebook page for Flint Michigan Litter Killers:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/323926358657846>
- Nancy Edwards, Keep Genesee County Beautiful: KGCB gives out gloves, bags, other clean up supplies for neighborhood groups for "anyone investing time and energy and talent into cleaning up the City of Flint"
  - We also operate the Adopt-a-Park program
  - If anybody wants to help in any park anywhere we are happy to make those connections and get folks those supplies for free
  - **Contact:** Nancy Edwards, nedwards@gcparks.org, 810-209-6011.
- Glenn Wilson: event coming up to celebrate the census, will be giving out tacos, activity boxes
  - Census Taco Tuesday: Tuesday September 15th from 3-6PM at the Community Enrichment Center, 340 E. Hamilton Ave!
- Edna Sabucco, Eastside Franklin Park neighborhood area is have cleanup on Saturday October 3rd and a craft fair on Sunday October 4 from 12-5pm
  - (810) 908-7654
- KGCB teamed up with United Way and Americorps and Kearsley Park Muskrats to do some work in Kearsley Park
- Jim Richardson: update to rental ordinances...encourage everyone to support this ordinance, which corrects problem that was preventing city from doing inspections on rental units
  - A lot of rental units owned and managed by folks not taking care of the property as they should
- Kate Cole, Traffic Taming Task Force: "I've lived in a lot of cities and Flint does a pretty good job with blight, but I'm bringing up a related issue, which is traffic taming"
  - Working towards getting information to people who can make changes
  - October is dedicated to distracted driving
    - Working on eliminating distracted driving; pledge people can sign
- Todd Womack, Community Roots, grassroots organization: Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation project, Community Roots is walking alongside them to reduce disparities
  - Courageous conversations on Race, Racism and Radical Change

- Sept 16th, 5PM, conversation in Dewey Park, September 21st, 5-7pm at Whaley Park
  - Allowing residents to vent, then move to common language, strategies and planning, report out, engage in ongoing dialogue
  - Using World Cafe model, solutions to problems in our community lay within ourselves
- Kathleen Gazall, Downtown Flint
  - Had a cleanup a couple of Sundays ago with Cafe Rhema and Kady Yellow
    - “Downtown needed extra love, was getting dirty and trashy”
- Torchio Feaster, Blight Court Judge:
  - Community resident concerns, working on enforcement, trouble due to staffing
  - (810) 410-1205, ext 2087
- Julie Lopez, Crimestoppers Fight Blight project
  - Going really well, billboard up in every ward; 10 total (extra one in one ward), yard signs, door hangers, “all about bringing the community together to help fight blight”
  - Blight can create more crime...use crimestoppers to report dumping
  - Crimstoppersofflint.com, or use Facebook page: tab that says “submit a tip”
  - **Q:** Can neighborhood groups get signs? **A:** Through the Mayor’s office
- Comment regarding blight
  - “Overwhelming, there’s so much trash, we cleaned up one area, by the time we get through cleaning it up, it’s still trashed again, need a city ordinance.”
  - “I’m too old, my feet hurt, we need help”

#### Mayor Neeley

- If you cannot keep up you cannot catch up...we take a great pride in our home, we have to make sure ppl are held accountable for dumping
- We have six laborers and 9 NSO officers for full city of flint, 30 sq miles; we need to make sure we lean in and aggressively go after these individuals
- “We need each and every one of you to be deputized, we need all of you to be agents in the fight on blight”
- Disrespecting our home, our city, making our place to live a little less honorable by the way they treat our community, treat our home like a garbage can
- Ramping up covid testing, new locations at Bethel, Word of Life, Macedonia
- Call 810 776-7346 to schedule appointments for conversation in the courtyard
- We are more likely Preach on a problem to activate on a solution
- We are at the intersection of crisis, good things working for us, working staff at City Hall, we’re in uncharted territory because of pandemic, social unrest, water crisis in which we’re still engaged
- We need everybody to activate in a positive way to be able to make sure we engage in the community we want to have
- “Thank you for your community patriotism”
- “We’re more of a social minded administration, we understand this, the overall goal, i don’t view the lawsuit as adversaries but as our allies...a lot of these things we’re cleaning up, we inherited these problems, we’re negotiating our way through that, working with contractors, providing very good service for the residents.”

#### NRDC, Sarah Tallman

- Working with community group sin Fint for over 5 years on water crisis and lead contamination
- In 2016, NRDC and ACLU and group of Flint residents sued the City of Flint and officials

- Safe Drinking Water Act, law to protect tap water throughout country
- Settlement in 2017 requires City to find and remove all lead and galvanized steel water service lines by the end of this year; the State of Michigan must pay for this work
- This is different from class action settlement recently announcement
- If you had an active water account in March 2017 or have an active water account now, the City must inspect your service line and replace it (if necessary) at no cost to you
- The City is asking all residents to submit their consent forms no later than September 18th 2020
- The City plans to end its service line replacement program by November 30th this year, including the restoration of property, the backfill of the hole dug by excavation and replacement processes
- Contact Laura MacIntyre:
  - [lmacintyre@gmail.com](mailto:lmacintyre@gmail.com)
  - (810)618-6006
- You can also visit: [www.flintpipemap.org](http://www.flintpipemap.org)
- NRDC does not run or manage the pipe replacement program; our role as a party to this lawsuit is to oversee what the City is doing and monitor to make sure they're meeting their requirements and to make sure as many people as possible are able to participate in this program
- Here's NRDC's contact info — please reach out if you have questions or are having trouble connecting with the City regarding the pipe replacement program: 312-651-7918 or [flintpipereoval@gmail.com](mailto:flintpipereoval@gmail.com)

### Discussion

- Properties that may have been sitting vacant for a long time, may not have had an active water account during the period covered by the settlement
- Concerns about technical oversight leading to more properties staying stagnant and adding to blight challenges
- Worried about the effect of these restrictions regarding active water accounts, 5-10 years out
- Many properties that may be currently vacant that have lead pipes; people moving in to the home will want to know the material of the pipes, if they haven't been replaced (because if the home was vacant), then the value of the home will be low
  - Homeowners should have received notice...they can turn their account on temporarily and opt-in...no cost to reactivate, or a nominal fee
- There is nothing stopping the City of Flint from continuing to replace pipes...
- Under Michigan's Lead and Copper rule, all cities in the state will be required over time to replace their lead pipes...so Flint will be covered under this obligation
- **Q:** What is the cost for activating a water account? Will that cost prohibit people from being able to participate?
- **Q:** Mayor Neeley, that's great to hear that that the deadline may be extended because we've been hearing the concern from community groups regarding the fast approaching deadline. One follow up question. You raised a very good point about the need for pipe replacement on Land Bank-owned properties. Is there anything we can do as residents/grassroots groups to support your administration in making sure that happens? For example, would it be helpful to send letters to the Land Bank in support of pipe replacement on their properties? Can you say if the Land Bank is agreeing to pipe replacement on at least their properties that are in good or fair condition?

Kay Schwartz

- <https://www.facebook.com/flintpubliclibrary/videos/655583738672620/> Please pass the word that Flint Public Library @ Courtland Center is open for business - you can come in for an hour to "browse" and check out materials or use the computer. It's a beautiful library space to tide us over until the renovation on Kearsley St is complete!

Presentation from Kady Yellow, Director of Placemaking

- Concept of placemaking, travelled to different places to do similar projects, helping places come alive through art and culture
- "Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being"
- Have already gotten outdoor spaces downtown activated through people and programming
- Point of my position is to make downtown more accessible, diverse, and truly inclusive, get people to use spaces in ways that are culturally appropriate to them
- "What's Up Downtown" Project
  - Remove barriers to access
- Farmer's Market and Chevy Commons are "known" nationally...
- Porch Fest
  - Went through a "time-consuming decision-making process" with the community
  - People "got to choose the activities" in vacant lots
  - On West first avenue we had a total activation of every parcel based on its condition and use, and how the neighbors wanted them to be activated and used
  - 60 people walked to downtown, to Brush Alley to an "underground art show" in an abandoned, forgotten about part of Brush Alley
  - Program was deemed successful because of community engagement process and activation of space
  - Brush Alley received a facelift to get electricity and lights and seating installed so it can look better next time it's activated
- Partnership with Neighborhood Engagement Hub to bring Porch Fest to other parts of the city
  - Neighbors will choose what the programming looks like
  - We'll be able to celebrate in hyper local ways, how to activate blighted or abandoned homes...
  - I've identified over 40 placemakers in Flint, exemplary placemaking, will share their stories with the world, 8 panels with 40 people in Flint that are doing placemaking well
  - Newspaper stands go in and around downtown for Free Art Friday
  - Live outdoor music
- Follow on instagram, website, facebook
  - Calendar, info on parking, programming, etc.
  - [www.whatsup-downtown.com](http://www.whatsup-downtown.com)
  - facebook/whatsupdowntownflint
- **Q:** Youth involvement? Through schools, etc?
  - **A:** typical mode and models of involving and employing youth don't work right now; trying to understand how we gather when we have to be socially distant