

**Joint Meeting of the
College/Seminary and HOPE VI Focus Area Task Forces
November 9, 2006**

Task Force members present Ald. Victory Bell, Ald. Linda McNeely, Barb Baptista una Freund (RPD), Becky Lichty and Joe Owen (ORCHiD), Marylan Dunn (NIU), Carol Nelson (District 205), Alan Zais (WCHA), Kerry Knodle (CCS), Steve Anderson (RHA), Lee Foecking (Jos. Behr), Reid Montgomery (City of Rockford), Kathy Ricotta (Habitat for Humanity)

City staff present Vicki Manson, Wayne Dust, Aaron Rucker, Ginny Gregory (CD); Kevin Ciabatti (Building); Jim Strey (Fire); Heather Beufils (HS); Kim Binder (Police)

Other interested parties Maurice Redd (SWIFTT), Dan and Kathy Waldron (ORCHiD), Barbara Sjostrom (Health Systems Research)

Surveys

Following introductions, Ginny Gregory explained that the survey form that had been distributed at the meeting was a draft compiled by Health Systems Research for the College/Seminary Focus Area. This was done in response to requests for such a survey at the previous meeting. She asked that anyone with suggested changes for the survey let her know since this form is still in the draft stage.

Barb Baptista una Freund explained that the survey being done by the Park District in the HOPE VI area will be mailed the next day. In response to suggestions at the previous meeting, they will also hold small meetings for residents in the area to attend and provide their input that way. They will do a reverse 9-1-1 on Saturday morning encouraging people to complete the survey, and will have a news release as well. In response to a question raised later in the meeting, she said it was too late to modify this particular survey since it is already set to be mailed.

Data report – Rockford Police Department

Kim Binder, Crime Analyst for the Police Department, explained that the Department is in the middle of changing how it compiles its data. What they have up to this point is more limited than what they will be able to produce starting with 2006 data next year. She indicated that, as could be seen from the maps she distributed, borders for police sub-beats do not match up well with the boundaries for either of the focus areas. She also provided a brief explanation of the data tables she had provided with the maps showing Part I offenses for both focus areas in 2004 and 2005 as well as the number of service calls. Kim also explained that Part I offenses decreased between 2004 and 2005.

Kim also pointed out that to find out which Community Service Officer serves in each area, check the Police Department's part of the City's website (www.cityofrockford.net) where there is a map showing service areas for each of the officers. This is, however, subject to change at the end of the year.

Questions for Task Force members to answer

1. Do you want the Police Department to continue to compile data for all of the sub-beats shown on the maps distributed at the meeting, or could some of them be dropped? If so, which ones?
2. What would you like Kim to map out? For example, would you like her to map the locations of all the Part I offenses, or just some specific ones?

Please let Aaron or Ginny know by December 1st so Kim will have a chance to do the mapping in time for the December meeting.

Data report – Rockford Human Services Department

Heather Beaufile, CSBG Program Coordinator, explained Human Services' role in the two focus areas rather than getting into specific numbers. Their role is to deal with families individually with the goal of improving their life skills. Ald. McNeely asked about a program to help people pay for water and/or sewer connections in the HOPE VI area. Heather explained that Human Services worked with Community Development to respond to this need and special funds have been made available in CD for that purpose. Vicki Manson explained that a letter had been sent to everyone in the HOPE VI neighborhood informing them of the program.

Data report – Rockford Community Development Department

Aaron Rucker reviewed several wall maps. The first showed housing conditions in HOPE VI with "New Construction" having been added as a category on the map as requested at last month's meeting. Other maps showed the overlap between each focus area and various Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts, while a final set showed 2005 final assessment for parcels in each focus area. [CD staff will provide a basic information sheet on TIF before the next meeting.]

In response to a question, Vicki described the number of rehabs underway in the focus area, the number of structures demolished (i.e. HOPE VI has rehabbed 10 homes and demolished 4 with more rehabs and demos to go), and the fast track process. The City will continue to do this, but it's not always an easy task. For example, we can't always find the owner of a property so we can buy it. We will continue our rehab assistance program in the two areas in 2007 (up to \$23,000 for renovation) and have just bought another property in College/Seminary at 521 College Avenue.

Joe Owen asked for a conditions map for College/Seminary. This will be done by the next meeting.

New Task Force members

Aaron thanked new members for agreeing to serve and for attending this meeting. He and Ginny mentioned that several people have been added as a result of suggestions made at the last meeting. These include representatives of local businesses (Joseph Behr, Haas Towing and Rockford Auto Parts in College/Seminary) with additional ones being sought in the HOPE VI area. We now have representation from NIU as well as a new Rockford School District member, both for the HOPE VI task force. Ald. McNeely suggested adding someone from Rock Valley College and from Rockford College. These will be pursued before the next meeting.

Assignments for December

Barb suggested that as the first step in moving past pure data collection that task force members start to think about what assets are in each focus area and where improvement should be focused. She also suggested that we start to think about what can be used as benchmarks to determine what would be considered a success. The following points were made in the ensuing discussion:

- ♦ The draft survey for College/Seminary does not have anything in it about jobs other than current employment status. This needs to be expanded to determine what needs to be done to improve employment possibilities. We need to find out how many jobs exist in each focus area, then set as our benchmark a specified number of jobs.
- ♦ Looking at assets is a good starting point; it can also serve as an indicator of what's missing.
- ♦ Has the staff looked at models from other communities in terms of content of their neighborhood plans and the processes they used to develop them? [Ginny and Aaron will provide a list of websites they have checked for this type of information.]
- ♦ ORCHiD has already produced a strategic plan; we should "google" SNAP programs to find similar efforts in other neighborhoods.

- ♦ An important part of our planning process is for each of the organizations represented on either task force to provide information on any plans they may already have in place for either focus area. These could then be incorporated into our final planning document for a comprehensive approach. Please contact Ginny or Aaron if you plan on sharing plans at the December meetings.

Next meeting

As we will be moving into specifics for each focus area at the next meeting, the consensus was to split into separate meetings rather than have one long meeting to cover both areas. Meeting dates and locations are

- ♦ HOPE VI – Thursday, December 7th at 5:30 PM at Park District Headquarters (same spot as November).
- ♦ College/Seminary – Wednesday, December 13th at 5:30 PM at 510 Seminary Street (RHA office at Jane Addams)

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.