

Vista Partnership: Arts & Culture –Meeting I

11/24/2014

“Accelerating the revitalization of a 20-block area in Southwest Detroit with a focus on economic opportunity, social equity, and most importantly—resident planning and partnership.”

Overview

On Monday, November 25th, Vista staff and residents convened for the first meeting of the Arts and Culture work group. During this meeting, residents and staff discussed two topics related to Vista such as: *what are some possible arts and culture related events that could be hosted at St. Anthony’s Church and in the Vista area? ; And, what has to happen for these possibilities to be realized?*

St. Anthony’s Church

Vista staff and local residents visited St. Anthony’s, a former church which is located at the corner of W. Vernor Hwy and 25th St, to encourage the envisioning of what the building space could be used for. The church is a beautiful historic building that is being renovated for a mixture of commercial uses. The intent is for the upstairs area to be utilized for and by the community as a gathering space for events and activities, affordable and accessible to residents and stakeholders.

Arts and Culture Possibilities

After a brief walkthrough of the building, the work group collaborated to express some of their ideas about what the possibilities are for community events and activities within this space. The following ideas are listed below:

- Performing arts, theatre (great staging area), arts & crafts vendors (make it work their while)
- event planning, once-a-month family event, summer programming (day camps), partner with CHASS and have cook-offs?, create a calendar of events
- Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math (STEAM) programs, after-school programming, marketplace for artisans (bazaar), co-working space/entrepreneurial incubators
- Día de los niños/cultural holidays/quinceañera , movie nights
- Posadas/Christmas caroling
- multipurpose space: health fairs, job fairs, community space, mini-carnival, resource fairs, Cinco de Mayo, “revolving mural” projects, adaptable space with mobile furniture

Realizing the Possibilities

After brainstorming some initial ideas for the possibilities regarding St. Anthony's, participants were asked—*What has to happen for these possibilities to be realized?* Here are some key thoughts:

1. Identify key audiences
 - a. Who would want to participate in these events/activities?
 - b. Who are the artists, musicians, and community leaders?
 - c. How do we draw in local community members?
2. Funding
 - a. Where do we get the funds to help make these possibilities a reality?
 - b. Must have sustainability, must be feasible
 - c. Must be affordable for the community
3. Sound/Lighting adjustments
 - a. Acoustics are key for performances
 - b. Lighting might need improvements
4. Signage
 - a. To promote St. Anthony's (electronic announcement event board)
 - b. To promote the Vista area (local businesses, attractions)
 - c. Vacant lots (mural projects)
 - d. Using creative art for signage (sculptures, tires)
 - e. Designated signage "zones" for Vista development area

Follow Up Questions

Towards the end of the meeting, participants were asked some questions to think about, and then re-visit at them next meeting on Monday, December 15th at 5:00pm.

- How do businesses feel about events, partnerships, and sponsorships?
- What do we need to learn to increase the presence of the arts and encourage those who already are involved?
- When you have attended events or seen certain things, have you ever said "if only we had..."? What are those "if only's"?
- What do we need to do to promote activity in the arts within the Vista geography?
- Who will research which areas?
- Who will report on what they find?
- How do we attract money to this area?
- How do we pay for more and better space, events, organization?

