

## Vista Partnership: Communications work group

12/9/2014

*"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 Tuesday, December 9th, Vista staff and a resident convened for the Communications work group meeting. During this meeting, discussion around several topics occurred: *Current communication strategies, preferred types of content, methods of engagement between meetings, and roles and responsibilities for communication.*

### Current Communication Strategies

At the meeting, staff briefly recapped current communication strategies to the resident who attended. We've been using a variety of methods, but are open to ideas that will effectively help us communicate information and events.

#### Facebook & Twitter

- Currently we are receiving help from a resident to manage our Facebook and Twitter accounts; checks it once per day
- Looking to include more people in that process

#### Bulk Mailings

- Using bulk mailings as a tool to inform local residents about 90 day community meetings

#### Phone Calls

- Phone calls are often a strategy used for recruiting attendance in work groups and community meetings

#### List Serve

- Using list serve as a tool to inform residents about community meetings
- A tool to inform about some of the employment opportunities that have arose from Vista

#### Word of Mouth

- Residents are the experts in their neighborhoods; face to face contact seems to be the most effective way to get people interested in involvement

#### Website & Links

- We're in the process of developing a Vista Partnership web site so people can directly access information and updates
- We're looking to create links to documents that the public can access on Facebook and the VP website

#### Newspaper

- Had a front page article about the Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> community meeting; was very nice, hope to be able to utilize that in the future

Group member mentioned he would follow the Vista Partnership Facebook page. Staff asked the resident, “How did you find out about our community meeting on Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>, and what ultimately made you come?” What catches your attention? How were you drawn to the community meeting?”

- Word of mouth, neighbor told him to come; heard about it from 2 or 3 different sources
- Knowing someone who is attending often gets people interested in attending as well; word of mouth can create a sense of legitimacy; creates a sense of comfort
- Postcard mailing that reinforced location, date and time of meeting
- The community is bombarded with so many different things (events, info, business mailings), not quite sure what can catch people’s attention

## **Types of Content**

We discussed opinions about what kind of content would be preferred to display on our social media sites. Vista staff mentioned that they would hope social media sites could serve as an additional resource to the community.

- A way to create interest about what Vista is currently doing
- A way for people to stay in tune with Vista updates/employment & volunteer opportunities/ and Vista activities and events
- A way for people to stay in touch with other community & business events and activities
- A way to promote businesses within the Vista area
- A way to inform others about programs that may offer services and aid in the community

Response to question: “Would you be willing to contribute to the Facebook page? Resident stated that he would help relay information of events and activities to us for the FB page. He also stated that he would be willing to find historical information & photos about the Hubbard-Richard neighborhood to create additional value for our efforts on social media → what a great idea!

## **Engagement between Meetings & Events**

### **Methods**

Resident and staff agreed that it’s important to maintain contact between the organization and the community in between meetings and events. Resident stated he likes to be reminded via e-mail and phone calls to be kept in the loop of updates and happenings. Here are a few suggestions that Vista staff and resident came up with—ways we can communicate info and maintain engagement between meetings and events:

- Creating a website for public to access at any time
- Providing links on the website and/or FB page so public can access documents (survey, survey results, brochure, maps, work group meetings, etc.)
- Resident suggested creating an e-mailing list; bi-weekly e-mails updating all of the Vista participants thus far
- Regularly sending minutes of work groups back to the community and participants
- Resident suggested possibly creating a bi or tri-monthly newsletter for Vista
- Call residents and stakeholders to participate in work groups
- Outreach in the community at key places in order to establish and enhance relationships
- Staff attends other community events and activities
- Resident recommended keep scheduling to after work hours or on the weekends to lessen confusion and make things more convenient for others

## Contact Lists

There are several levels of contacts that have developed as a result of various events, activities and meetings.

1. Focus groups/living room conversations
2. Community meeting attendees (meeting I and meeting II)
3. Those who are interested in participating in work groups
4. Those who have already participated in work groups

## Roles and Responsibilities

We briefly discussed what the resident, who participated in the meeting, would be willing to do in order to help Vista communication efforts. Staff also extended invitation to the resident to join other work groups if so desired.

- Resident was asked if he was willing to host, or knows anyone willing to host, living room conversations that would be facilitated by Vista staff, and food would also be provided. He stated he can ask around to see if anyone was willing to do that
- Resident stated he can try to help keeping us up to date with any community events or activities that we might miss
- Resident stated he would like to help collect historical information about the Hubbard-Richard neighborhood to share with the community; has a connection at the Wayne State Library
- Would like to know more about past community organizations such as: Mexicantown Development Corporation and Hubbard-Richard Citizens District Council - "Where are they? What are they doing these days?"

## Conclusion

The meeting was full of good information. We were able to take away interesting ideas to hopefully implement for future use, such as:

- using Vista has a way to make historical connections to the neighborhood
- creation of a newsletter for communication efforts
- complimenting efforts and/or communications with other community councils/orgs/businesses
- ideas about e-mailings for different contact lists

The next Communications work group meeting will be at 1920 25<sup>th</sup> St. at Lithuanian Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, on Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, at either 5:30 or 6:00 pm.