

Mountain View Neighborhood Plan

Business Focus Group

Location: Credit Union 1

Date: December 3, 2008, noon

NOTES

Attending:

- Aleesha Towns-Bain, Rasmuson Foundation, Economic Development
- Angela Jimenez, Mountain View business owner
 - Hispanic Service Center
 - Also on ACLT Board
 - Need to understand the community
 - Ethnic diversity, multiple possibilities for growth
 - National Main Street Program, ACLT (union of businesses in Mountain View Drive corridor – currently dormant, waiting for more stability)
 - Small Business Administration (SBA) loans: requirements too tight for beginning entrepreneurs and the loans are too small
- Leslie Ellis, Credit Union 1 President
 - Goal is to open Credit Union 1 in December 2009
 - Moving to Mountain View is a way to fulfill the social mission of the credit union
 - Including a community room at the Mountain View branch
 - Want to provide services for zero to low credit - starter credit cards, loans
 - just got an award for an innovative new loan program
 - Transportation: 70% of MV residents don't own cars – need credit; market for car loans
 - Also a business opportunity – no competition! Incredible that there is no bank in Mountain View.
 - 38 Credit Union 1 employees will be taking part in Mtn View Thanksgiving event
 - Arts is a destination (people will come from outside the neighborhood)
- Sue Lukens, Anchorage Community Development Authority
- Carol Gore, Cook Inlet Housing Authority
 - 4th generation Alaskan, grew up in Mountain View – Mountain View was so alive [when she lived there]!
 - feel privileged to be able to put work/effort into community
 - Trying to do economic development as well as housing –revitalization is the goal and housing is a means to that goal
 - CIHA sees themselves as being a catalyst for Main Street – making Main Street investments, “We're here for the long term”
 - CIHA had vacant commercial space for 2 years, so it's risky
- Jeff Judd, Cook Inlet Housing Authority
 - Listening process: takes several years
 - Housing density in Mountain View: 1100 parcels, 2800 households
 - Drive through daily, see many kids walking to school

- Own 6 commercial lots adjacent to Brewsters & Wizard Car Wash Store (which has significant environmental problems)
- Ron Pollack, Anchorage Community Development Authority
 - Need another A&W
 - ACDA has the capacity to do real estate deals; it can do things the city cannot do
 - Movie Theatre deal didn't work out; believes it was a casualty of the national economy
- Bill Gee, Hickel Investment Company
 - Also President of Board of NeighborWorks Anchorage
 - change in leadership at Hickel – new direction; wouldn't have been at the table a year ago
 - “re-doing” properties
 - Tearing down East Side Storage, working with RIM Architects to build 1-2BR apartments in a 5-story building (120-150 units); Army and Air Force preferred tenants
 - Spruce up shopping center (w/Red Apple); hope to break ground in spring
 - Making these improvements partly because the Bragaw-Glenn Interchange has changed the area, made it more visible to people outside the neighborhood
 - Might be a retail “wet blanket” for the group, from having been in the business 21 years
- Wally Hickel III, Hickel Investment Company
 - Excited about project
 - Future leadership of the company
- Jewel Jones, ACLT
 - Sadlers Building; trying to get tenants – currently have Campfire & Foraker. Trying to get Catholic Social Services
 - Former Nobles Diner. Resident training program (great cookies and pies)
 - Chevron stepped in and did remediation work
 - Arts Center (John's RV site); one piece of the puzzle, but not enough
 - Carey property (gallery, ACLT) artist in residence, Alaska Theatre of Youth
 - Initial concerns of parents regarding the Theatre of Youth being in Mountain View, but it's turned out okay
- Rachel Ramsey, Credit Union 1 (marketing)
 - Organizing Mountain View parade
 - Employees want to be involved and want to move to Mountain View
- Mac Carey, Carey Homes
 - Also Nanuk Inc – property management
 - Own and Mac Carey own Carey Homes
 - 57th year in operation

Initial Ideas

- Mountain View is the only location where Hickel hasn't had to have security
- Angela Jimenez has been doing business in Mountain View for 5 years, no problems with security
- Cook Inlet Housing Authority - many more problems with vandalism and Theft in South Anchorage and Eagle River
- Leslie tried to get the Muni to put in a bus stop with quality appearance – Muni stubbornly resisted putting in a bus stop for fear of vandalism. Now Leslie has to volunteer to maintain a covered stop & has had to get changes in landscaping easement

- But the press continues to perpetuate a bad image of Mountain View
- Marketing the neighborhood is the biggest issue – publicity, change perception/image
- Build on cultural diversity
 - Credit Union 1 is hiring bilingual employees for Mountain View branch (hired a company to test them)
- Desire to bring in new demographic(s) to the neighborhood
- Bringing more people into the neighborhood is partly dependent on the housing available
- Bicyclists on trail system – seeing new people in Mountain View already
- Need more local businesses, not just rely on National chains
- Be realistic about retail
- Not just retail businesses – office and others
- Mountain View is 5 minutes from Downtown
- Workforce in Mountain View – people want to be able to walk to work
- Mountain View Drive improvements are a priority
- Business group will visit businesses along the Mountain View Drive business corridor and talk to them about their needs
- Look at Weed 'n Seed application for key information about Mountain View
- Some have concern about the upcoming change in Mayoral administration; others pointed out the much of the power of Mountain View investments is in departments and organizations that span mayoral administrations, so not so worrisome

How will this effort differ from all the past planning meetings?

- Set priorities/get things done
- Means for collaboration
- Involve the whole community
- Bring to bear more resources
- Get Muni on board

Priorities for action

- Work on road improvements
- Improve image of neighborhood
- Meet with businesses; get all of them involved
- Commercial loans? (NeighborWorks)
- Create a town center