



SWPC
SOUTH WEDGE
PLANNING COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT FOR JULY 1, 2008 TO JUNE 30, 2009

SOUTH WEDGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

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August 26, 2009

To The Board of Directors and Stakeholders of the South Wedge Planning Committee, Inc.

I am pleased to submit the 34th annual report of the South Wedge Planning Committee, Inc. (SWPC). SWPC is a non-profit 501 © 3, neighborhood preservation corporation.

The South Wedge Planning Committee builds community in the South Wedge, encourages a full range of housing opportunities, and promotes a diverse, historically significant, and commercially sustainable urban village.

The past year saw a world wide economic collapse the likes of which have not been seen since the “Great Depression.” This had a significant impact on our community and our organization. Despite this negative backdrop I am pleased to report that we made solid progress towards achieving our Mission.

The Mission is achieved by focusing on housing, business support and development, and community engagement. This annual report reviews the accomplishments in the program areas and then a review of the South Wedge Planning Committee’s internal operations.

Housing

In the past year SWPC worked with 23 income qualified homeowners to complete over \$209,000 in home repairs. This amount, included funds from the City of Rochester Residential Assistance Program, New York State Affordable Housing Corporation and The Federal Home Loan Bank. In a number of cases, additional repair dollars were secured from the Energy Star Program, Neighbor Works Rochester and other funders. The number of homeowners serviced in the current year is almost double what we had done in the previous fiscal year. In addition to the completed work there are 39 homes in the process of being improved.

In 2009 the City of Rochester revamped the Residential Assistance Program and renamed it the Emergency Assistance Repair Program (EARP). To implement the new program a Request for Proposal was issued. SWPC entered into a joint venture with NCS Community Development Corporation (NCS), North East Area Development, Inc. (NEAD), and Marketview Heights Association, Inc. (MHA) and was awarded the new \$1,000,000 contract for the entire city. There were eleven providers previously and that was reduced to the four entities. This will give us an opportunity to take advantage of scale and to leverage other dollars. The joint venture subsequently applied for and

received \$600,000 from the New York State Affordable Housing Program and \$510,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York. These funds will be used to improve owner occupied housing in the City of Rochester including the South Wedge.

SWPC is a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) and we work with the Rochester Housing Development Fund Corporation to rehabilitate homes and sell them to income qualified first time homebuyers. We completed 11 Nelson Street, 354 Sawyer Street and 49 Westgate Terrace. Additionally 95 Lark Street is underway. These homes are being rehabilitated using Green Community Building Standards.

We also referred approximately 25 people to other agencies for other housing assistance services, including foreclosure prevention and pre-purchase homeowner education.

The South Wedge/Corn Hill Tool Library has over 300 different tools that approximately 70 households borrowed last year to repair and maintain their homes. There were two workshops on the use of tools. We purchased new equipment to improve the selection and quantity available

In the past year a number long term projects that SWPC is involved with came to fruition. These will have a dramatic effect on our community.

The “missing tooth” on the face of South Avenue is being filled in. After an additional year of intense work with the developer and city officials, construction started on South and Hickory Place. This will be a four storey brownstone exterior building at 661-663 South Avenue with 33 various size apartments and 7,000 square feet of commercial space on the 1st floor. Thank you to all who helped with this, especially Howard Konar of Konar Properties in his incredible patience and Board Member Tanya Zwahlen for her persistence with City officials.

The housing complex, formerly known as Riverpark Commons, on Mt. Hope has been undergone of incredible change in the past year. This occupied a considerable amount of staff time in the past year. SWPC organized the community to demand improvements to the initial plans of the developer. We worked with tenants and management regarding the relocation of existing residents. The initial plan limited access to the river, had inadequate parking and the design was not a multifamily design and it did not incorporate the river or neighborhood.

The developer responded by hiring a new architect and completely redesigning the project. The following were the outcomes:

- All resident issues were addressed – 34 families and the Somali Community Center were successfully relocated.
- Access to the river was greatly improved. There will be a wide walkway with sculptures and water fountains. The river access will be very welcoming and easy to navigate.
- The project was totally redesigned to be unique to the site. The new design incorporates a variety of apartments, extensive use of glass to incorporate the

river views, porches and decks. The site will be very walkable and of “people” scale. The design is unique to the site and does not attempt to incorporate specific designs found in the Wedge.

- The “high rise tower” – now known as the “Hamilton” is being totally renovated – residents report being very happy with the new kitchens, bathrooms, windows and other improvements. Everyone kept their own apartments, after shifting temporarily to another apartment while renovations took place. The drab grey tower is being repainted in a unique multi color scheme. You either love it or hate it.
- The best news is that the “low rise” apartments have been totally demolished and the concrete is being recycled as fill for the site. After many years of delay the project is moving forward.

BUSINESS ADVISING AND DEVELOPMENT

In the past year approximately 45 individuals and businesses received advisory services through the Small Business Development Center at SUNY Geneseo or through one-on-one sessions with Executive Director Robert Boyd.

SWPC administers two New York Main Street Grants for South Clinton Avenue. There are 7 projects currently under way: ABVI Goodwill, Medical Motor Services, Weider Hall, Spring Sheet Metal, the Cinema Theater and two streetscapes. One project was completed this year - 699 South Clinton. There is \$400,000 in NYS Main Street money that was matched with approximately \$1,500,000 in private funds resulting in building improvements totally \$1,900,000. This is a major step in the redevelopment of South Clinton Avenue.

The Mt. Hope Street improvements will commence in the fall and reduce Mt. Hope from 4 lanes to 2 lanes and add bump outs to make Mt. Hope more pedestrian friendly. We are also members of the Evolving South Clinton Avenue Places and Environments (ESCAPE) committee which is focused on South Clinton Revitalization, including \$750,000 in street improvements along the length of the avenue.

We provided logistical support to Business Association of the South Wedge Area (BASWA) and South Clinton Merchants Association. This included assisting with grants from the Arts Council and the New York State Department of Parks. SWPC actively participated in Cinema at Sunset last August and in the public art on the South Avenue parking meter totems.

SWPC works with BASWA to maintain the planters on South Avenue and Star Alley. We maintained Nathaniel Square under contract with the City of Rochester.

SWPC received a \$93,061 grant the New York State Urban Initiative Program for improvements to 224 Mt. Hope Avenue – this included significant brick work, a new roof and a new handicapped accessible ramp. This will contribute to the long term commercial development on Mt. Hope and sustainability of the organization.

Throughout the year we worked with St. Joseph's House of Hospitality on façade improvements as well as quality of life issues.

SWPC assisted both Konar Properties and Flower City Management on their Restore NY application. Unfortunately funding was not provided for either one.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The South Wedge Victory Garden developed from ideas of how to address certain needs of the community, as well as how to use the vacant lot at 122 Hamilton Street so it did not distract from the recent improvements on the street.

The South Wedge Victory Garden provides 34 families with plots to garden and produce food for their families. It also builds community, reduces family food costs, provides access to fresh vegetables and improves gardener's physical and mental health. More than 70 families wanted space but only half could be accommodated. Three of the plots are accessible for people with disabilities.

Volunteers built raised beds, an arbor, work table and a 3 bin composting system. They spread wood chips for walkways and created a community herb garden. Over 100 individuals contributed over 700 man hours to transform the site to a place for residents to relax and grow food. It has developed neighborhood pride and enjoyment.

SWPC engaged over 125 Clean Sweep Volunteers twice last year to clean up the community. Many other volunteers from schools, United Way Day of Caring and the University of Rochester helped improve the neighborhood.

The WEDGE newspaper was published 6 times and expanded to 12 pages and full color. The content was changed to focus more on what has happened and what is going to happen in the neighborhood.

The "Wedge" web site was updated during the year.

SWPC participated on the redesign team, with residents including Board Member Chris Jones, for the new Highland Hospital Parking Garage. The ramp was completed and the final product is significantly better than what was proposed initially.

SWPC provides logistical support for the South Wedge Farmers Market, acting as their fiduciary and enabled them to take food stamps, debit and credit cards.

SWPC is an active participant in Neighbors Building Neighborhoods (NBN) Sector 6. This included participating in the State of the Sector meeting and the development of the Sector's Strategic Plan. Eileen and I each chaired a committee.

SWPC worked with residents on Hamilton and Gregory Street to develop block clubs. Both streets had a "hot dog" roast to get to know neighbors.

SWPC supported the River Park Commons Tenants Association, now known as the Hamilton Tenants Association. We assisted in the election of new officers, helped organize a trip to the South Wedge Farmers Market and other activities in the tower for residents.

SWPC worked on the relocation of the Somali Community Center from Riverpark to space at 775 South Plymouth Avenue. We assisted them with capacity building and obtaining non-profit status. This resulted in a formal summer program with a lunch program and nutrition and cooking classes.

SWPC works to improve the image of the neighborhood by keeping the media, community leaders and others focused on our success. As Executive Director I spoke at numerous meetings throughout the community. The overall “brand” of South Wedge continued to grow.

SWPC ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

SWPC needs to be a sustainable organization in order to continue serving the community. That includes financial sustainability and the sustainability of volunteers including the Board of Directors.

During the past year the organization updated its Strategic Plan for the period 2009 to 2012. The plan was developed based on the input of the community and stakeholders. Over 200 residents met in small groups with the Executive Director and members of the Board or responded in writing to a survey. Some stakeholders were interviewed by Enterprise Community Partners. The Board of Directors held a planning retreat and numerous follow up sessions.

The strategic plan continues to focus on creating a “sustainable” urban village while providing diverse housing opportunities, a vibrant business district and an engaged community that makes the South Wedge a great place to live, shop, recreate and work. The full copy of the strategic plan is available on request.

The economic collapse reduced contributions and availability of funding. We were also informed that Enterprise Community Partners will discontinue operating support after December 31, 2009. The organization managed expenses tightly and increased the amount of income earned by construction management and other fees. Instead of reducing programs, we increased them and tried to become more visible in the community. The organization ended the year with positive cash flow which will offset a portion of the lost revenue from Enterprise Community Partners.

Citizens Bank contributed new office furniture and the Housing Council contributed a new phone system. Thank you to both organizations.

The financial results of SWPC are audited by Hevron and Hevron. The audited financial report for June 30, 2008 is available at the SWPC office or on line at www.northstar.org.

The audited financial report for June 30, 2009 will be available by the end of October 2009.

The Board of Directors is critical to the success of the organization. Last August the Board attended a session on the roles and responsibilities of a Board presented by Enterprise Community Partners. The Directors provide leadership, set strategies and policies, and monitor the financial activities and performance of the organization. They are also the source of many volunteer hours by serving on committees and doing the work of SWPC. I am extremely grateful to the entire Board for their support and dedication.

The professional team has stepped up and gone above and beyond the call of duty this past year. Thank you - Allison Clark, Butch Horton, George Lorson, Nancy O'Donnell and Eilleen Thomas for their dedicated work in the past year.

I would also like to thank all of our funders: New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Enterprise Community Partners, the United Way of Greater Rochester, JP Morgan Bank, HSBC Bank, Citizens Bank, the Arts Council of Rochester, New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the Rochester Housing Development Fund Corporation. Thank you also to the over 200 individuals and businesses that made financial contributions and memberships last year.

Thank you to the over 100 volunteers who worked on the South Wedge Victory Garden; especially Eagle Scouts Ian Steltmann and Teddy Bradford. Finally to all of the individuals who volunteered countless hours to make the South Wedge a great place to live, work and play – I extend my deepest thanks!

What about the future?

SWPC will continue to forge ahead to create a sustainable urban village by working with all residents, businesses, stakeholders and interest groups.

If you're happy with what has happened please consider renewing you membership at a higher level and becoming more involved. Help is especially needed in organizing block clubs.

If you're not happy with what has happened please call to set up a time to have a cup of coffee to discuss what could be done better. We welcome new ideas and people to volunteer to implement new ideas.

Sincerely,

Robert Boyd
Executive Director

THE SOUTH WEDGE PLANNING COMMITTEE, INC
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
August 28, 2009

Executive Team Board Members Standing for Re-election

Board Chair:

Lyjha Wilton
175 Nunda Blvd
Rochester, New York 14610
Business
Founder and President Boulder Enterprises
BS Communications, SUNY Oswego

Vice Chair:

Tracy Saville
54 Comfort Street
Rochester, New York 14620
Resident
Johnson and Johnson – Ortho Clinical Diagnostics

Treasurer:

Anthony Sciarabba
22 Schoefield Road W
Rochester, New York 14617
Business
Normandy Group
MBA Simon School University of Rochester

Secretary:

Sarah Johnstone
46 Menlo Place
Rochester, New York 14620
Resident
Sr. Research Analyst, University of Rochester
BS SUNY Brockport
Public Relations and Professional Writing Certificate RIT

Existing Board Members Standing for Re-election:

Bo Clark
Rochester, New York
Resident
Girl Scouts of America
MS in Special Education
NYS Teacher Certification Elementary and Special Education

John Dennis
82 Hickory Street
Rochester, New York 14620
Resident
Owner Hart Exhibit Services, Inc.
BA in Technical Theater and Studio Art, SUNY Geneseo

Dave Halter
159 Caroline Street
Rochester, New York 14620
Retired
BA in Industrial Arts, SUNY Buffalo

Demetrius Castro
296 Hamilton Street
Rochester, New York 14620
Resident
Visiting Nurse Services of Rochester and Monroe County

Chris Jones
216 Linden Street
Rochester, New York 14620
Resident
Owner Historic Houseparts
BFA SUNY Potsdam

Monica McCullough
370 Frederick Douglass St.
Rochester, New York 14608
Stakeholder
Executive Director, Providence Housing
Juris Doctor, Syracuse University School of Law
Admitted to Practice Law in New York State

Ben Munson
73 Averill Street
Rochester, New York 14620
Resident
Co-founder and CEO, Newdigs.com
BS in Finance RIT

Cheryl Stevens
124 Averill Street
Rochester, New York 14620
Resident
Medical Coder, Maximus Federal Services
AS in Business Administration, Monroe Community College

Joann Thomas
11 A Green Knolls Drive
Rochester, New York 14620
Relocated Resident
Home Health Care Aide

Michael Trojian
31 Jefferson Road
Pittsford, New York 14534
Business
Director of Commercial Properties, Konar Properties
Masters of Project Management, Northwestern University
Professional Engineering License

John van Kerkhove
99 Hickory Street
Rochester, New York 14620
Resident
PAETEC
BS Mathematics, SUNY Albany

Chris Widmaier
3 Burkhart Place
Rochester, New York 14620
Resident
School Teacher, Rochester City Schools

Tanya Zwahlen
17 Mulberry Street
Rochester, New York 14620
Stakeholder
President, Highland Planning
Masters in Regional Planning, Cornell University
Member American Institute of Urban Planners

New Board Members to be approved by membership

Tom Kicor
4 Blakney Place
Rochester, New York 14620
Stakeholder
Planner, Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council
MS in Urban and Regional Planning, University of Buffalo

Donna Lenhard
63 Bond Street
Rochester, New York 14620
Resident

Rachel Chaffee
157 Gregory Street
Rochester, New York 14620
Resident
PhD Candidate University of Rochester Warner School of Education
MS SUNY Brockport

Frank Logan
112 Comfort Street
Rochester, New York 14620
Resident
Senior Marketing Consultant, Stephens Media Group
BFA – Alfred University

Professional Staff:

Robert Boyd
Executive Director
MS in Leadership and Innovation RIT
CPA in New York State

Eileen Thomas
Program Director
Masters in Public Health, UR School of Medicine and Dentistry

George Lorson
Construction Manager
BS in Business Management, Cornell University

Allison Clark
Community Engagement Coordinator
BA in English, Roberts Wesleyan College

Phinis (Butch) Horton
Facilities and Tool Library
BS in Business, University of Wisconsin at Madison

Nancy O'Donnell
Wedge Editor
MA in English Literature, University of Maryland

Volunteer Staff:

Ken Everhart – General project help
Bobby Blocker – Office Support
Anthony Wallace – Landscaping Support

Interns:

Victoria Walsh – SUNY Geneseo
Ashley Radonski – RIT
Courtney Atkinson- SUNY Geneseo
Alexandra Gorden – Bennington College

Eagle Scout Projects:

Ian Steltmann – Troop 208
Teddy Bradford – Troop 208