



BUILDING STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE

Executive Summary
February 24, 2005

Meeting was convened at 1:34 p.m.

a. **Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) Workplan (Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services)**

Upon motion by Councilmember Campos, seconded by Councilmember Pyle the Committee accepted the report and directed updated information be provided to the committee:

- Neighborhood Associations (to be provided to Councilmembers)
- Act and Leadership Community Outreach Guidelines
- Status report on progress of the collaboration with San Jose City College, Evergreen Valley College and the City.

b. **Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) Update and Discussion (City Manager's Office)**

The Committee accepted the updated report.

c. **Oral Petitions**

None.

d. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.



BUILDING STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE

Meeting Report
February 24, 2005

PRESENT: Chair Judy Chirco, Councilmember Nora Campos, Councilmember Nancy Pyle

STAFF: Jim Holgersson, City Manager's Office; Cynthia Bojorquez, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services/City Manager's Office; Kip Harkness and Laura Lam; San Jose Redevelopment Agency; Olivia Nunez, Mayor's Office; Norm Sato, City Attorney's Office

The meeting convened at 1:34 p.m.

a. **Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) Workplan (Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services)**

Cynthia Bojorquez, representing Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, introduced Dick Busse and Joe Amelio, volunteers with the San Jose Beautiful program. The program has been incorporated to compliment the NDC training programs. They are a good opportunity for individuals to become engaged in the community in their neighborhoods. She presented a brief PowerPoint presentation overview on the NDC's strategic objectives to: 1) cultivate and support community leaders, 2) inform and connect residents to city programs and services and 3) to share relevant and up-to-date information on communities and success stories in the neighborhoods. The mission of the NDC is to build strong neighborhoods by connecting individuals to information, technology and opportunities for civic engagement. She reviewed the training catalog distributed to the Committee that outlines the various classes being offered and addresses a concern from the residents on identifying beginning and advanced classes in leadership development. Staff is very happy with the redesign and the response the community has provided to the changes in the academy. She added that the Volunteer San Jose website outlines the positions, programs, upcoming events, handbook and how to get involved. Last year there were 20,000 individuals who volunteered through Volunteer San Jose; and, in this fiscal year that number has already been reached. Community Based Organizations (CBO's) provide a vital service for the Hub delivery model. They are partners in the community and, as resources continue to be scarce, staff is looking at new ways in partnering with the CBO's. Ms. Bojorquez stated that what the NDC does really well is partner with other groups. One of the benefits the NDC has is the San Jose Beautiful program.

Mr. Busse addressed the Committee on the Daffodil Planting Program. This year 35,000 daffodil bulbs were distributed to 71 groups with approximately 2,300 hours of volunteer time in planting. Orchard Supply Hardware donated 20,000 bulbs. Mr. Amelio addressed the Committee regarding the Beautification Grants that, twice a year, neighborhoods can apply for and get involved in. Mr. Busse informed the Committee about the Earth Balloon that is used as a

portable classroom. The balloon is available for rent and a good source of revenue. Mr. Amelio stated that the neighborhood is trying to work on getting a sign that is visible from the street for Monopoly in the Park (located in San Jose at Discovery Meadow) to help promote the game. Mr. Amelio added that the Neighborhood Improvement Award is to encourage citizen involvement to clean up their neighborhoods and homes.

Ms. Bojorquez stated that San Jose Beautiful recognized a need to raise outside funds and began a Friends of San Jose, 501 (c) (3) non-profit agency. Ms. Bojorquez shared a product for good bench building within the organization. She added that the City Manager's Office launched an initiative called the Art and Practice of Leadership that brought together individuals from different departments to go through a twelve-week training program. As part of that program, these groups were to identify a real project within the City that they wanted to work on. One of the groups decided they wanted to work on a community outreach handbook. Nowhere in the City is there a community outreach guide that provides comprehensive information on applicable council policies, the use of community facilities, resources that are available and a database describing community leaders and groups. Group 6 did an excellent job of putting together a prototype. What NDC staff has agreed to do is make this guide a live product. Staff will be working with them to incorporate the guide and train the organization so staff has consistency across departments on how the City does community outreach.

Councilmember Campos asked how the Mexican Heritage Plaza (MHP) is being staffed in terms of number of days and hours. She wanted to know what the NDC staff's current role is at the MHP. Ms. Bojorquez said the agreement with MHP calls for two things: 1) for SNI staff to be housed at MHP – that is current, staff is there; 2) the role from NDC is using MHP for a training facility and offering the Spanish language academy at MHP on a recurring basis.

Councilmember Campos asked if the SNI staff is there five days a week. Kip Harkness of the San Jose Redevelopment Agency added SNI staff is at MHP five days a week, but they may be in and out in the field with the community.

Councilmember Campos stated that the community is concerned that the evening hours between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. are not staffed and available for them. She was under the impression that staff would be available days and hours that would benefit the community. Councilmember Campos said she remembers discussing doing business a different way that would truly serve the community. Not everyone working with the City would be working a 9:00 to 5:00 p.m. job. She asked if there were one or two days a week that were staffed with someone in the evening. Ms. Bojorquez replied that NDC's focus was to use MHP as a training facility since they have classrooms and computers. She will work with Mr. Harkness to figure out a solution to get more staff coverage for the evening. Jim Holgersson stated they also want to explore ways that staff can mutually reduce costs since MHP is also having its challenges in staffing. Staff will update the Committee regarding the MHP facility and staffing. Mr. Harkness stated that there seems to be an immediate need to get staff scheduled consistently. He asked if it was known which evenings most needed to be staffed and added that City staff could get a proposal to Councilmember Campos by next week. Councilmember Campos said she does not know what hours would be necessary but right now there is no consistency.

Councilmember Campos complimented the daffodil planting program and said getting young people to start volunteering at an early age is important. Ms. Bojorquez wanted to acknowledge that, in the past, the daffodil bulbs were paid for by the City, and that this year Orchard Supply

Hardware donated half. Councilmember Campos requested that Orchard Supply Hardware be commended at the Council meeting through the BSN Committee for their generous donation of daffodil bulbs.

Councilmember Campos stated she always thought the Neighborhood Improvement Award was a great concept when thinking of her district and others areas with homes that need a little helping hand. She asked how the work was getting out to people to start looking at this as an asset and to participate. Neighboring businesses could also utilize this and they are part of the neighborhood. Mr. Amelio said this is the first year for the award and information will be distributed out to all the council districts and SNI staff. In the application, the first question for a nomination for this award that makes it possible for anybody. Councilmember Campos asked if staff has thought about opportunities for interns to come into the NDC and assist. Ms. Bojorquez said the NDC currently has an intern through the youth employment program.

Councilmember Pyle stated it was discouraging to find out all the bulbs planted the year before had been dug up in a certain area and asked if that had stopped. Sara Hensley, Director of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services said last year they were planted in an area where staff mowed over them and this has been stopped. Ms. Bojorquez added that Margaret Wagenet works with the General Services Maintenance staff to ensure they know where the bulbs were approved for planting.

Chairperson Chirco stated what she is looking for is a contact person for some of the neighborhood associations that may contact their council offices and ask for information or guidance on how to do neighborhood organizations or have questions about services. Ms. Bojorquez said she would provide a list to all the councilmembers referencing staff assignments and contact numbers.

Chairperson Chirco stated she really liked the response to the community regarding the diversified training and commitment to on-going training. Also, in reference to the youth internships, maybe some of the members of the YACS could step up when a youth commissioner position becomes vacant and this may provide them with a better understanding. Chairperson Chirco requested that information be provided to all the council offices regarding the Earth Day, daffodil planting and beautification events. This would be just another layer of communication that would assist in getting the word out further.

She wanted to know how the art and leadership handbook was going to be distributed. Ms. Bojorquez stated that this not known yet. Staff just finished the class and need to review and proofread the product. Mr. Holgersson added that outreach would need to be done passing it by the neighborhoods and council offices to make sure it addresses the outreach expected. She requested staff return to the Committee to provide an update on the progress of the handbook.

Chairperson Chirco asked if staff has considered north, south or west San Jose for off-site training as well as NDC and Mexican Heritage Plaza (MHP). It sounds like there is growth and interest, especially with 20,000 volunteers. Ms. Bojorquez clarified that last year staff was at eight different sites and more spread out throughout the City. The current three sites are only for the first quarter of this year and, as the year goes on, staff will be moving around throughout the City to make sure they have the presence. Staff is working very closely with the community services representatives in PRNS who operate the Hubs and talking about how to get access to

their sites to provide training on an on-going basis and having bulletin boards at sites for sharing information. Ms. Bojorquez stated that it is absolutely critical to make the connection and have communication; and staff is out there to talk about the issues. Chairperson Chirco asked when the internships were discussed. Staff mentioned De Anza Community College, San Jose State University and San Jose City College She asked if these are pilot programs.

Ms. Bojorquez stated that she visited with Brian Murphy, president of De Anza Community College. Mr. Murphy is open to the idea of partnering with San Jose. His real interest and desire is to replicate the Urban Institute which is out of San Francisco State University that works with communities on actual projects and community training. Chairperson Chirco requested a status report be provided to the Committee regarding the progress of the collaboration with San Jose City College, Evergreen Valley College and the City. She asked which community centers are involved in the leadership academy. If the council offices are aware of the classes, that can be another level of getting the information out to the communities via email or newspaper articles. Mr. Bojorquez stated that staff appreciates the support and dialogue with council offices. Matt Mayo of Council District 2 also provides information at the SNI Council Assistants meetings.

Chairperson Chirco asked for more details regarding the report staff made reference to at a February 10th meeting. Ms. Bojorquez said staff had a meeting with six community-based organizations that represented a cross-section, funded through the City, being small and large and with different constituencies to start the dialogue on how we work together in terms of planning and joint use of facilities. The meeting was exciting and had good dialogue and a recognition that staff is going to need to continue with additional meetings providing a framework for a larger discussion with all CBO's. Staff is not going to be able to work the same way as in the past and how the structure is going to change will require discussion. Chairperson Chirco extended her compliments to the volunteers with the great programs and requested information be provided to the council offices and they will help spread the word.

Upon motion by Councilmember Campos, seconded by Councilmember Pyle the Committee accepted the report and directed updated information be provided to the committee:

- **Neighborhood Associations (to be provided to Councilmembers)**
- **Act and Leadership Community Outreach Guidelines**
- **Status report on progress of the collaboration with San Jose City College, Evergreen Valley College and the City.**

b. Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) Update and Discussion (City Manager's Office)

Jim Holgersson introduced Kip Harkness and Laura Lam of the Redevelopment Agency. Kip said that the PowerPoint presentation will share with the Committee some of the partnerships the SNI staff are working on which connects with the same theme as the NDC. A short video "San Jose in Focus Summer 2004: New Realities-Strong Neighborhoods" was presented to the Committee. A victory list shared with the Committee consisted of 708 things that have happened as a result of neighborhood work and Council and Mayor's opportunity created with Strong Neighborhoods. He added that each and every neighborhood that has a Business District says their business district is important to them.

He introduced Dayana Salazar of San Jose State representing the Service Learning Collaborative with the community/university/city. Ms. Salazar is the Chairperson of the Urban Planning

Department at San Jose State University and has a much broader vision about how neighborhoods, universities and cities can work together.

Ms. Salazar addressed the Committee on the guiding principles and goals of the Service Learning Collaborative. She explained that the partnership is a means to weave together the resources, effort, talents and skills available at the university, the community and the city with the partnering organizations to address and solve some of the community identified issues. Ernest Guzman, chair of the Project Area Committee (PAC), addressed the Committee. He stated the neighborhood is very excited about the projects being in the implementation stage and the frustration of the neighborhood associations and PAC is turning into enormous excitement as these projects move forward. Mr. Guzman thanked the City Council in supporting a lot of the projects.

Chairperson Chirco extended her gratitude for a great report. She stated that she looks forward to the lessons learned in the SNI neighborhoods being utilized throughout the City.

The Committee accepted the updated report.

c. **Oral Petitions**

None.

d. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.



Judy Chirco, Chair
Building Strong Neighborhoods Committee