
WICK NEIGHBORS, INC. UPDATE

A Status Report on Recent News

March 2006

WNI Panel Reviewing Strong Developer Proposals for Wick District Plan

A Wick Neighbors, Inc. committee is reviewing three strong proposals submitted in February by experienced developers seeking to carry out the Wick District-Smoky Hollow Development Plan. Two developers in Cleveland and one in Pittsburgh responded to a Request for Proposals.

A nine-member committee, whose chairman is WNI Board Member Josh Butler, is evaluating the developer proposals based on elements outlined in the RFP. Those elements include: previous experience in similar mixed-use, large-scale developments; financing capacity; principals in the proposed development team; local participation; and marketing.

The committee, which includes representatives from Wick Avenue churches, trade unions, homebuilders, Youngstown State University trustees, city council, city schools and WNI staff, met with each of the developers early this month.

WNI took the major step of issuing an RFP on Dec. 5. RFPs were sent to developers across the nation experienced in mixed-use, urban developments, with an emphasis on developers in Northeast Ohio and Western Pennsylvania.

Harwood Report Author Returns to City to Speak at WNI Annual Dinner



Richard C. Harwood, whose organization prepared the 1999 report “Waiting for the Future: Creating New Possibilities for Youngstown,” returns to the city May 4 as the featured speaker at the Wick Neighbors, Inc. Annual Dinner.

Harwood, a noted national expert on strengthening communities and improving public life, is the founder and president of The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation. The nonprofit organization in Bethesda, Md., is dedicated to helping people act for the public good.

Harwood’s six-month study in 1999 involved one-on-one interviews with Youngstown citizens and community leaders. The report findings outlined feelings of community weariness and frustration with the city’s economic and social declines, a lack of connection between groups and a sense that public life wasn’t working correctly. The conclusion was that residents felt constrained by such conditions, that Youngstowners felt “stuck” and that the city was a “place in waiting.” The report, however, noted there were several elements of civic pride and hope in the grassroots efforts from churches and neighborhood groups, the efforts of institutions and a strong religious faith and generosity among city residents.

WNI believes the community has a new momentum and is undergoing positive change. As the Harwood report suggested, the community is seeking a common sense of direction; looking to new kinds of leaders; coming together as a community; fighting negative perceptions; and awakening a can-do attitude.

Reservations for the dinner can be made by calling the Wick Neighbors, Inc. office at (330) 259-1750.

Save this Date!
Thursday, May 4, 5:30 p.m.
WNI Annual Dinner
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church

WNI Neighborhood Reinvestment Workshop Series Starts in April

Wick Neighbors, Inc. starts a series of workshops next month that will raise awareness and issues surrounding neighborhood reinvestment in Youngstown.

The four workshops, titled “Neighborhood Reinvestment – How To’s” are aimed at increasing the understanding of what works and seeking solutions on how to rebuild Youngstown’s neighborhoods. The workshops address one of WNI’s four main goals, which is to be a catalyst for Youngstown’s revitalization efforts.

The workshops are:

- “Key Actors in Successful Neighborhood Development – Perspectives from City Hall, Bankers and Development Corporations” on April 12.
- “Who Speaks for Neighborhoods? Who Sets the Neighborhood Agenda?” on May 17.
- “Financing Neighborhood Reinvestment: How Do Cities Do It?”
- “Vacant Land: Neighborhood Liability or Asset?”

Details on the workshops will be announced.

Wick Neighbors, Inc. and City Council Members Open a Dialogue

WNI Chairperson Rev. John Horner, WNI Board Member Germaine Bennett and Executive Director Margaret L. Murphy have been meeting with council members. Together, they’ve been discussing the Wick District-Smoky Hollow Development, the next steps and answering any questions or concerns. Council members, in turn, have identified difficulties the city faces, issues affecting their neighborhoods and the visions they have for their future. The discussions have resulted in a common understanding of the challenges community leaders face, Murphy said.

The ongoing dialogue came at the suggestion of Artis Gillam, Sr., a Wick Neighbors, Inc. Board Member and the First Ward city councilman whose ward includes the Wick District.

Wick District Design Review Committee Begins Work

An official Wick Neighbors, Inc. Design Review Committee formed in February with the task of establishing a user-friendly and developer-friendly document that will preserve the values associated with the Wick District and the Wick District-Smoky Hollow Development Plan.

Four sets of Design Guidelines have been drafted or will be ready soon. The Design Guidelines are for: new development and construction in the Wick District; existing residential structures; existing commercial structures; and Wick Avenue.

Fr. Richard Murphy is the committee chairman. Committee members are: landscape architect Joe Jenderasik; Mike Kovach representing the Andrews Avenue Business Group; architect Rodney Lamberson; architect Bob Mastriana; Hunter Morrison, YSU Urban and Regional Studies; architectural historian Rebecca Rogers; Susan Russo, YSU Art Department; and Anthony Worrellia, Smoky Hollow resident.

Alternate members are Donna DeBlasio, YSU History Department, and Mary Kay Driscoll, WNI member. Ex-officio members are Bill D’Avignon, City Planning Director, and David Reed, Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio.

WNI GOAL: BREAK GROUND IN 2006