

Facilitator Frank Cetera

Attendees: Gladys Smith, Frank Cetera, Mike Behnke, Hilary Donahue, Officer David Metz, Lt. Michael Yarema, Councilmember Chad Ryan & Joe Nicoletti, Andrew Maxwell, Marty Masterpole, Juanita Perez-Williams, Rob Bucklin, Richard Destito, Greg Smith, Tina Zagyva, Eric Ennis, Ken Jackson, Logan Reidsma, Neil Burke, Jamie McKinney, Kathy Miranda, John Miranda, Daniel Kolinski, Derrek Thomas, Ed Napiorkowski, Jeffrey Juli, Adriana Sereno, Edward Ott, Jeremiah Toles, Evan Melia, Andrea Turnbull, Michelle Sczpaski, Kelly Wise, Deborah Hundley, Rich Puchalski, Tim Rudd, Carol Johnson, Joanne Recupero

Issues for City Department Officials/SPD:

Captain Barrata has been promoted, Captain Shoff now covers the Westside. Lt. Yarema with the patrol division will represent Captain Shoff at the meetings.

Update on 524 Gifford St.: Through a high risk search warrant, 2 guns, heroin and marijuana were found
Officer David Metz is continuing efforts to improve the Westside through CPTED: Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. If you have suggestions on areas that could benefit from this program, please let the officers know.

Q. Is there a requirement for corner stores to have demarcation lines for parking? Also, what is the law in regards to signage that some of these stores place around their business?

A. Yes, both are Codes issues.

Q. Sometimes 911 has slow response, is there a better number to call?

A. If it needs an immediate response, call 911

Q. Explain community policing

A. 911 is what you should call. How Police are dispatched is determined by a priority system through 911. If it is a crime in progress, it becomes a 1 or 2. Community Policing tracks the calls to 911. There is a separation between 911 center (county) and the Syracuse Police Department. 911 is imperfect, but it is the best we have right now.

Q. A resident gave praise to the efforts regarding 524 Gifford St. Merriman Ave and Massena St. however are still major problem areas that have had issues for years.

A. Both of those streets have been targeted (with surveillance equipment) and are on the list for addressing through special investigative divisions.

Q. A couple years ago there were 2 homicides happened at 104 Holden. At what point do you look at the landlords?

A. The Nuisance Abatement Ordinance addresses the Landlords. (an ordinance that was strongly supported by SUN to become law)

Q. Nuisance houses take 6 months to a year for the ordinance to become enacted. At that point, they've destroyed a block. Is there a way for that process to hasten?

A. What is it that you want? If you continue to arrest the little guys, it is a short term fix, which only deals with combatting the problem. Targeting the suppliers/big dogs is like cutting the head off the snake. The Police Department doesn't have the manpower/resources to monitor 24/7. These guys memorize the cops/crime reduction teams schedules and work around them.

Q. If there are calls to 911 with complaints about a property, does anyone contact the landlord? Do you find the landlord cooperative?

A. Yes, the actual landlord is contacted. Landlords play a crucial role. In the event of a vacant property, the landlord provides a No Trespassing affidavit. Once this is in place, the Police can make arrests on the property. Landlords usually cooperate.

Comment: On Rand Ave, kids walk through the Byrne Dairy parking lot. There is a family with a Pitbull; children have been bitten by it. At this house, children have been seen holding large guns. As a regular person, it is difficult to call the police as they don't come to a black person, usually to a white person first. How can a woman be allowed to intimidate an entire block with her dog? There was a time when cops would walk around regularly and make people feel safer. People dump TV's and the only one who did something about it was Councilmember Joe Nicoletti.

Q. Calcanos Tavern on the corner of Geddes and Richmond Ave is a nuisance Thursday, Friday, Saturday between midnight and 2:30am. They block resident's driveways, throw glass bottles, beep horns and play music loudly. When 911 is called, they take the basic info of the person calling and no one shows up to address the issues. There is video footage

A. 911 call center takes basic info as a resource. Officers will call you back, that is why they take that info. It may seem intrusive, but it is helpful. Calcanos is on the watch list for nuisance property.

Comment: You don't have to wait for the city to call landlords. Look up their information on the City tax records and call them yourself (and give their number to all your neighbors to call as well).

Q. Is there a digital connection, where someone can upload video to the Police?

A. No, but we can take the video through email.

Geddes St. Round Table Discussion

What is working

- 1) Jandis Restaurant (best food)
- 2) City Hardware is great, the parking is an issue.
- 3) Westside Educational/Athletic Center: Ray Rinaldi. The coach is also a social worker.
- 4) The Gear Factory: would be great to see more shows happening
- 5) Corners of Lowell & W. Genesee has seen about a million in development, has improved the area

What is not working:

- 1) Traffic flow on Geddes is great, except in front of schools (no one goes 20mph)
- 2) Mundy Branch library witnessed 2 kids getting hit by vehicles, issues with crossing the street safely
- 3) Vacant business storefronts
- 4) Need economic diversity, too many corner stores
- 5) Landscaping, facades, lighting would improve the overall appearance (needs to be similar to James St.) If developers see a visual difference, they would want to invest in the area
- 6) Encouraging places for people to relax
- 7) Train trestle bridge has drainage issues: a resident witnessed a woman with 2 kids getting drenched on a cold snowy day.
- 8) A driver of a wheelchair van who utilized Geddes St. often commented on how it looks like a 3rd world country
- 9) Conditions of sidewalks (both privately and publically owned) Need a better funded sidewalk repair program
- 10) Entrance underpass into Tipp Hill has had no maintenance in 10+ years, no lights, smashed concrete, etc. Marty Masterpole stated that the school district owns the overpass bridge and offered to contact the current superintendent.
- 11) Grand and Geddes St. gas station is abandoned and an eyesore. Landbank won't take ownership because it is a brownfield. Councilmember Chad Ryan stated that the city does not want to take the title of brownfield sites. There are often up to 10 cars parked in the parking lot, why can't they be ticketed or concrete blocks set up to deter parking? Western edge on Geddes, Car wash place looks like a junk yard.
- 12) Through the master plan for Skunk City, a playground was proposed for Grand Ave. It was placed at Delaware school and residents were told it would be open to the public, however, it is locked after school hours. When you treat kids like they live in a 3rd world country, they will act a certain way.
- 13) The neighborhood is not walkable or safe.
- 14) Geddes needs more trash cans & benches, treat people like people
- 15) Food co-op where food could be sold (great location would be the abandoned gas station). It was suggested to contact Jessi Lyons with Brady Faith, as she would have interest in this idea.
- 16) Geddes Street should get bumped up on level of importance. It connects to Downtown, the Zoo, Tipp Hill area, etc. People describe Syracuse as a pockety city, good areas and bad areas. Close the gaps between good areas.

Q. Why are there so many beggars all over?

A. It is not illegal for them to solicit.

Q. A resident who lives in the Park Ave neighborhood stated that community gardens should be going into the green areas.

A. 610 Gifford St. has a community garden that was funded by the Landbank.

Comment: There are vast amounts of vacant land on Geddes, why don't you just make that property development ready?

Frank Cetera informed the group of the Westside 5 year plan that is now 10 years old. The plan has bulleted items such as Improve Fayette St, Make Grand Ave safer, access street crossing, improve streetscaping on Geddes, etc.

Eric Ennis, Division of Business Development (with the city, NBD office)

There was a 6-7 month effort to write a NY Mainstreet \$500,000 grant that focused on façade improvements for Geddes. The targeted area was from W. Fayette St to Delaware. The application was denied because they didn't have a project plan in place. 25% of the grant has to be matched by the applicant projects and they did not have the support from the businesses. Financing is available SEDCO, offers a %3 interest rate loan typically up to \$120,000. This program helps people to get investment underway and assist with zoning and codes to get property across the finish line.

Q. Empire zoning could that be used to attract businesses? It offers 10 years tax relief and 5 years of utilities paid.

A. Empire zones were meant to be incentive; however, they are not taking any additional applications. The Westside fits in the CFA, geographical area that qualifies for distressed funding.

Q. Behind Marcellus there is a home for sale, should be deconstructed and rebuilt. Do you offer funding to help with that?

A. Home Headquarters is the biggest partner for projects like that. If you are income eligible, they will help with financing. If the city cannot help, they can direct you to those types of funding sources.

Q. Have you considered organizing a merchants association? BID (business improvement district). This is where businesses contribute a % to a pot that is put towards improvements.

A. Eric would be more than happy to help take the steps towards BID, however, you need to get enough property owners and stakeholders committed.

Q. Mortgage recording tax, we give away too much as a city as incentives. Can we get that towards our distressed neighborhoods?

Q. What other cities or corridors have gotten mainstreet grants?

A. South Ave, Grant Blvd have gotten mainstreet grants in Syracuse. Mainstreet has to go towards property physical improvements, the biggest issue is getting the property owners to agree.

Announcements

- 1) Beginning April 2nd, Providence Services of Syracuse will be starting a shuttle to work program. This will help provide an avenue for people to get employment. Pastor Pedro also provides fresh food during the fall that is donated from surrounding farms.
- 2) The Parks Conservancy is offering a \$1,000 green grant. You must go through a 501c3 in order to get the funding. TNT is currently not able to act as a fiscal sponsor.
- 3) The Landbank has property on Geddes and Seymour, they are looking for a developer. There will be some restrictions on the property.
- 4) March 29th at 6pm at the Mundy Branch Library, Landbank will have a public meeting regarding Pocket Parks on the Westside. There is funding for each one from \$4,000-\$5,000.