

## **Fun n' FITchburg Mass in Motion Meeting minutes**

May 16, 2011

3:00-4:40 PM

MOC Conference Room 356B Broad St.

The meeting came to order approximately 3:00PM

There were 18 members in attendance. Introductions from members names and what their positions are and announcements/updates they had including: the recent neighborhood clean-ups, last health advisory meeting this week., June 2<sup>nd</sup> kick-off for Health Task Force and an introduction from Dr. Ledwith- Residency Director –CHC –healthy lifestyles teachings for residents in the program.

Introduction of the Elm St. Resident Mobilizer- Maritza Rivera and the open positions in Green Acres and Cleghorn area. This position pays a \$200/stipend -15 to 20 hrs/month to engage area residents into the process of putting Fun 'n FITchburg strategies into place in respective neighborhoods via resident involvement.

### **Parks and Recreation**

Donna Wysokenski gave a summary of the Parks PowerPoint and an overview of the Parks Board meeting. The meeting went very well with highlights including discussion of barriers around access and safety at parks in targeted neighborhoods with a focus on Lowe Park and Park Hill Park. An Adopt-A-Park program and MOU was presented to be adapted with verbiage used by Fitchburg Parks and Rec. This is a program where a community group or business can pick a park and they agree to clean and maintain them. Riverfront Park has already been chosen by a Muslim group in close proximity to the park. They are cleaning it on Fridays and in communication with Fun 'n FITchburg and Parks and Recreation. Donna mentioned the proposed park at Green Acres and the upcoming nature assessment with MA Audubon Society. She also mentioned that a UMASS- Amherst Landscape Architecture grad will volunteer her time to help create a visioning portfolio of the proposed park that will be useful in generating future funding. Transportation to the parks is a issue; the suggestion that all parks become a stop for the busses will be brought-up to MART as discussed at the Parks Board meeting in April.

The race a Fitchburg State University was mentioned and many suggestions on how to spend the money raised and donated should be spent which included repairing the sink hole at the skate park at Park Hill Park, fixing the graffiti at Lowe Park, toddler swing for Lowe playground, Lacrosse field set-up and bike helmets to be given away. Officer Paul McNamara stated that the police and a few businesses in the city are already sponsoring a helmet giveaway. A program that would piggyback the helmet program involving a bike giveaway program for the youth in the city was also discussed.

Mark Jackson mentioned the upcoming Police Association Community 5K race to take place on Saturday June 18<sup>th</sup> 12:00 at the Wine Cellar 14 Mill St. Proceeds to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project. It is publicized on Facebook and if anyone wants to set up a table they are welcome at the race. Fun 'n FITchburg will have a table with partners including the youth peer leaders to do BIA testing.

Mark also stated that the YMCA has started a basketball league and that the old court at Green Acres needs to be fixed. Mark also mentioned the issue with the safety perception of the parks and stated that the parks have been pretty quiet as far as police issues and reported crime. To handle those concerns he suggested that an exposé in the local media of the parks that highlight their assets and give awareness of the parks and interviews of people who use the parks may be beneficial.

### **Neighborhood Working Groups**

Review of the store audits was given. Highlights in Cleghorn are Sigue store has a large variety of fresh fruits and vegetables catering to Spanish cuisine. Elm St. is void of fresh fruits and vegetables at corner stores thus far.

Through further assessment, each neighborhood group has picked an area to focus on and become the pilot for the rest to follow.

### **Green Acres**

The main focus of this group is to create a safe and sought after park: this includes infrastructure chosen by area youth, adopt a park program and joint use agreements in the winter months. With the Charter school moving nearby, it appears that they will adopt the park and allow the neighborhood children access to the school during bad weather through joint-use. Many activities are planned at this location. The Nickels for Pickles program made possible by a grant through General Mills foundation where children will grow vegetables in the community gardens and then sell it at the farmers market.

Bikers from the Better Future Project's New England Climate Summer will bike into the city on June 21, to kick-off an awareness to decrease our need for fossil fuel and encourage active living to residents for one week. Suggestions for service learning projects for this group are welcome. Possibilities include building the raised beds for Nickels for Pickles at Green Acres big field.

### **Cleghorn**

This group is focusing on creating a policy for vendors and concession stands to offer healthy choices if they sell their products in the parks. This would not be possible to enforce this year, but for the future. The policy would be similar to the school nutrition bill that requires schools to offer healthy choices.

### **Elm St.**

This group main focus is on Complete Streets. During the audits it was apparent that this area had several deficiencies in the neighborhood as far as safety on the streets. Lack of

crossing signals, crosswalks, and sidewalks needing repair. In order for the pedestrians to walk or bike many areas need to be addressed.

A policy that encompasses Complete Streets would require that before any work is done on the roads or sidewalks meet certain criteria taking into all users of roadways. A pedestrian safety generator checklist was mentioned and discussion of an ordinance versus a policy ensued.

### **Presentation by DPW**

A presentation by Lenny Laakso - Department of Public Works - addressed the upcoming projects and improvements to the city. Main St.- next year grant monies will be used for installation and improvements for handicap accessibility.

- Sidewalks to go in on Elm St., Johnson, Lowe Parkway and Broad St. It was asked if the crosswalk connecting the sides of Lowe Park could be raised and/or include a speed table and if special paint material could be used for crosswalks that is more cost-effective. It was mentioned this material peels off with the plows.
- Other projects are to widen streets to accommodate biking and walking on Ashby State, Rindge and Summer Streets. Sidewalks on Ringe Road won't be raised above the street level due to cost.
- The Mayor has initiated mapping of the city streets for bike lanes. Bike lanes will be put in many projects going forward.

At this time there is no official policy in place for these projects to ensure projects include a public safety lens such as Complete Streets. There are subdivision regulations that go thru the planning board.

Paul McNamara stated that in the past when an event were to happen, each department head would be notified, so they could address any issues or concerns that they had. This was suggested for future projects. Another suggestion is that all projects be addressed at the Public Safety Committee meetings.

Paul also mentioned the grant that the Police Department is seeking to provide education and enforcement for speeding.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00pm