

westport community partnerships newsletter

june 2009

a turner development initiative

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Given the state of the economy and the difficulty in obtaining additional grant funding, the Clean Team had to be disbanded, but new ideas are already in the works. Westport Neighborhood Association is arranging community cleanups. Westport Community Partnerships is working with city agencies to step up their efforts, and more... read more on page 2.

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Westport Community Partnerships and Turner Development used Baltimore City recycling bins on holiday gift baskets which they packed with goodies for every family in Westport last December.

BALTIMORE'S FUTURE IN GREEN

"Going Green" has become an urban imperative, and some cities—namely, Chicago and New York—have taken their cue. Baltimore, however, has embarked on an ambitious journey toward a future of earth-friendly—and people-friendly—practices.

BCF staffer Mike Hankin, who started the Waterfront Partnership, became interested in cleaning up the whole city at the same time that Mayor Drees expressed the same interest, recalls Cheryl Casciani, BCF's director of community investment. "A lot of people had been doing excellent work around environmental issues for a long time—but they weren't connected to one another."

In quick succession, the city passed green building standards and created the Office of Sustainability. A Commission on Sustainability was formed to develop a Sustainability Plan and to oversee the work of the Office. Because of BCF's track record of bringing together disparate partners to lead innovations, Casciani offered her assistance. "We organized a meeting between a national climate change organization and representatives from nonprofits, foundations, and some green businesses—and we brought them together with city agency staffers who were already pursuing green practices within city government," she says. "All of a sudden BCF was getting calls because we were seen as connectors. And then I was asked to chair the Commission."

BCF agreed to "lend" Casciani to the cause, and her original estimate that sustainability initiatives would take 30 percent of her time became closer to 70 percent. She offered technical assistance to help nominees present their work. "Some winners wrote comments asking artists how they could buy their work," Wallow says. "Some artists have used the site as their virtual gallery. When they receive a request from a curator, they send a link to their work on our site. It's becoming a practical tool as well as an artistic forum."

Another feature of the site involved "curated exhibits" as a way to help visitors explore local brown figures in the arts, who had no involvement in selecting award winners, were invited to create exhibitions of works on the site. Public involvement was also encouraged through easy voting and voting rewards for interested...

acknowledges that the method chosen for developing a Sustainability Plan was the most time intensive—but it was also consistent with BCF's style. "I took on the tone of how we behave at BCF in all of our paths—involving lots of people, listening to what they say, and changing things as a result of what they say," she says.

DEVELOPING THE PLAN To involve as many people as possible, the Commission adopted three operating principles: 1) Engagement, including those not traditionally involved in the environmental discourse; 2) Inclusion, recognizing that our diverse population will define environmental issues differently; and 3) Translation, or using language that is accessible and meaningful to the entire Baltimore community. Six working groups were formed, and all ideas were viewed in relation to their impact on the "sustainability three-legged stool" of people, planet, and prosperity. For a while, there was tension around inclusion in the group. "People were asking—'who's in? Who's out?'" says Casciani. "We said, 'Everybody who wants to do the work is in.'"

The groups convened public meetings, working sessions, and community conversations that produced recommendations for the Plan. BCF coined "sustainability" to describe the plan's goals, which were presented for discussion at community meetings with discussions about the benefits of each in terms of people, planet, planet (greened and prosperity) (people).



ES Whitney Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New York Times, and many more. In addition, more than 1,200 outside sources linked visitors to the site. Judging by the enthusiastic response to the program, the Baker Artist Awards in their first year are already raising the profile of Baltimore as a creative city that nurtures and appreciates its artistic community.

AND THE WINNERS ARE As this publication was going to press, the Baker Artist Awards winners were announced on March 25 on Maryland Public Television's ArtWorks. To learn the identity of the winners and more about the artists and annual awards, go to www.bakerartistawards.org. The winners' work will be on display at the BMA from April 29, 2009 to June 28, 2009.

ambassadors" sought input at more than 35 community meetings. In addition, young people shared their ideas at GreenScope '08. "We engaged more than 1,000 people in this process," Casciani says. "The great thing is that we heard from people who were not the usual suspects. We got an earful about how people already talk about these issues in their neighborhoods—like throwing trash down the storm drain (like having it show up in your fish sandwich at McDonald's)."

As defined by the Plan, sustainability is "meeting the current environmental, social, and economic needs of our community without compromising the ability of future generations to meet these needs." The Plan—which consists of seven themes, 29 goals, and a number of strategies—will serve as a guide to future legislation, educational programming, and public/private partnerships geared toward sustainability.

A public comment phase concluded in January. The final Sustainability Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission as an amendment to the city's Master Plan and was approved by the City Council in early March. As the Plan's ideas are implemented, it will call on all of us to do our part.

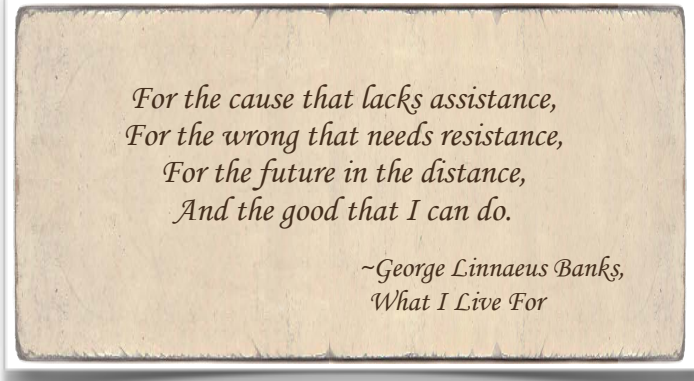
GROWING THE TREE CANOPY One small part of the Plan, for example, is "Greening Goal 1: Double Baltimore's Tree Canopy by 2017." The narrative states, "Trees are proven to stimulate economic development, clean and reduce the amount of storm water running into the harbor, improve air quality, reduce cooling and heating costs, and increase property values." The Plan also encourages to increase the canopy from the current 20 percent to a more desirable 40 percent. The Baltimore Tree Trust, which is supported by a fund at BCF, is one of several organizations that will be strengthened through the Sustainability Plan.

THE SUSTAINABLE CITY In 2008, Baltimore was named one of the top 10 most sustainable U.S. cities by SustainLane, an environmental advocacy organization. A survey considered such factors as air and water quality, green businesses, waste management, transportation, and city innovation. Moving forward, Baltimore expects to become increasingly green—and to continue to benefit from BCF's leadership. "BCF wasn't invited to be involved because we're the smartest people on town or water," notes Casciani. "They invited us because we have credibility. We have what I think of as the 'trust factor.' We had stepped up and helped with the Mayor's first environmental initiative—the initiative for a Cleaner Greater Baltimore. And we are viewed as having the skills to manage a complex process and lead in the field."

For more information, visit www.baltimorecity.gov/sustainability and www.sustainlane.com/city-rankings. A green project in Barclay coordinated by the Baltimore City Office of Sustainability may be the answer to the city's stock of vacant houses. Eco-offenders are provided with taking old houses apart so that much of the material can be reused. Disassembly is healthier and safer than demolition, which creates toxic dust and excessive waste in landfills. The clean building sites are then ready for new, energy-efficient homes.

WESTPORT PHOTO FEATURED IN BCF NEWSLETTER

The Baltimore Community Foundation is a nonprofit foundation that helps improve the quality of life in the greater Baltimore region. The Spring 2009 issue of the BCF's quarterly newsletter featured an article about "Baltimore's Future in Green." To illustrate the article, the BCF used a photo of volunteers in Westport as they helped to hand out recycling bins full of goodies to all the neighbors of Westport last December. It appears that folks around town are beginning to sit up and take notice of the exciting changes going on in Westport. You can check out the BCF newsletter online at www.bcf.org.



~George Linnaeus Banks,
What I Live For

KEEPING IT CLEAN

The Clean Team effort is temporarily suspended, but new ideas are in the works. Join your neighbors and help keep Westport clean by participating in community cleanups or simply by keeping *your* sidewalk and alley clean.



WESTPORT CLEANUP THIS SATURDAY

Westport Neighborhood Association is working to keep Westport clean. **This Saturday June 13th** a community dumpster will be placed on the corner of **Kent and Cedley Streets from 9 am to 1 pm** for the first of five community cleanups scheduled by the WNA between now and the end of the year. (The dumpster will be placed at a different location in Westport for each cleanup.)

Stop by Kent and Cedley early in the morning, and pick up your cleaning supplies, (brooms and bags, etc.), and perhaps a donut and coffee to get you started. Return all full bags and other trash items to the dumpster by noon. The dumpster is not for dumping bulk pickup items, like old appliances and furniture, and it is not for use by contractors for construction debris. If you have any questions, contact WNA president Stacey McCracken-Jones at stacmack@yahoo.com or 240-818-1413.

Change has a considerable psychological impact on the human mind. To the fearful it is threatening because it means that things may get worse. To the hopeful it is encouraging because things may get better. To the confident it is inspiring because the challenge exists to make things better.

~King Whitney Jr.

PUTTING THE CLEAN TEAM ON HOLD

Unfortunately, the Westport Clean Team, which has been funded by Turner Development and managed by Living Classroom Foundation's Project Serve, has been suspended. When the program began in September 2008, it was based on the premise of finding additional grant funding to continue the effort beyond an initial three month trial period. But given the unfortunate state of the economy, available grant funding has decreased substantially, while the need for grant funding and the number of competing applicants have increased by even greater margins.

Turner Development extended their funding of the program and kept it going for nine months instead of the initially planned three-month trial. But without supplementation, the cost of a full time Clean Team working an entire neighborhood is prohibitive for one company to pay indefinitely. Regretfully, the Clean Team was suspended at the end of May 2009. The team will be missed - both in terms of the work they did for the neighborhood and just because they were nice guys. Many neighbors personally thanked the crew and a few even treated them to lunch during their last week in Westport.

The suspension of the Clean Team does *not* signal the end of the cleanup effort in Westport, however. Westport Community Partnerships is exploring other options, including potential partnerships with other nonprofit organizations and more. Ideally, a new Clean Team will come together in a way that also provides work for Westport neighbors.

Westport still has one big advantage over every other city neighborhood - the Clean Team left Westport a clean slate. No other neighborhood has had such a chance for a fresh start. Now it's up to the neighbors to keep Westport clean.

Fortunately, efforts to keep Westport clean are already underway. Westport Neighborhood Association is organizing a community cleanup for this Saturday, June 13th. (See article at left.) In May, representatives from Solid Waste Collections, Code Enforcement, Inspections, and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods walked the neighborhood with Westport Community Partnerships Director Bonnie Crockett, Clean Team Supervisor Mark Bailey, and Westport Neighborhood Association "trash" representative Hap Duffy, identifying problem areas of repeat dumping. Code Enforcement officers agreed to go through dumped bags to identify and ticket offenders. Tenants as well as owners who repeatedly dump and litter will be fined. Westport is serious about keeping it clean.

PROGRAM UPDATES...

FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

The Facade Improvement Grant program is picking up the pace. After an unusually rainy Spring that slowed down construction, things are starting to move along quickly. Westport Community Partnerships currently has 20 applications in various stages of the process; the first five facade improvements should be completed this month.

Turner Development Group donated \$50,000 to the Facade Improvement Grant program. And more than half the funds are still available. Westport homeowners and business-owners alike are eligible to apply for matching grants of up to \$2,000 to repair or improve the front of their buildings. Don't miss this opportunity! For more information, check out the Westport Community Partnerships website www.westportpartnerships.org or call Bonnie Crockett at 443-717-3627.

WESTPORT GREENING PLAN

The Parks and People Foundation has been hard at work filling tree pits with cinder blocks and wood chips to keep the tree pits from turning into mud pits while the young trees grow. So far, 65 new trees have been planted; 32 more trees are on order to fill the remaining tree pits for a total of 97 new trees on Annapolis Road and Wenburn Streets. With the help of Westport neighbors and other volunteers on the Westport Community Partnerships Green Team, a neighborhood greening plan is underway and a tree survey will soon be started. To get involved in the greening of Westport, contact Bonnie Crockett at bcrockett@westportpartnerships.org or 443-717-3627.

WESTPORT WEBSITES



Check out the updates on the Westport Community Partnerships' website. Watch a clip from a recent PBS Video, *Sprawl*, featuring interviews

with Pat Turner, Bonnie Crockett, Colleen Vanskiver owner of Westport's Colleen's Corner, and Deborah Guest, Westport neighbor. Take a look at the Westport Spring Fair photos in Westport Community Partnership's latest photo album. www.westportpartnerships.org.



For the latest on the upcoming waterfront development, check out the newly released Westport Waterfront website at www.westportwaterfront.com.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND NOTES...

WESTPORT BUSINESS ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The Westport Business Association, founded by current president, Colleen Vanskiver, celebrated its one-year anniversary this month. For one year now, the businesses of Westport have worked together to help each other and to help the neighborhood. For more information or to join the Westport Business Association, contact Colleen Vanskiver at Colleen's Corner, 410-547-1136.

WESTPORT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION TAKES A SUMMER BREAK

Summer is here and neighbors are busy with Little League and cookouts, so the Westport Neighborhood Association will be taking a break for the summer. Toward the end of the summer, be on the lookout for WNA flyers announcing their next meeting on the first Thursday of September. In the meantime, the WNA board will still get together to work on fundraising and events for the rest of this year. For more information or to get involved in the WNA, contact Stacey McCracken-Jones, President at stacmack@yahoo.com or 240-818-1413, or Debbie Eanes, Vice President at dreeeme@aol.com or 410-227-0492.

NEW TRASH RULES AS OF JULY 14

Baltimore City's new trash collection plan goes into effect July 14. According to Mayor Sheila Dixon, the new plan will save the city as much as \$7 million, it will free up more crews to clean the city's alleys, and it will encourage citizens to recycle more. The city will be hiring 20 new code enforcement officers to write citations.

Beginning July 14th:

- Trash will be collected one day of the week, recycling will be a different day of the week.
- City will enforce rules that all trash must be in cans with tightly fitting lids.
- Residents can put out cans 6 p.m. the night before collection day.
- Trash volume will be limited to 96 gallons; recycling volume is unlimited.

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

~Anne Frank

COMMUNITY EVENTS...



The Friends of Middle Branch want to invite you to two fun festivals on the Middle Branch Harbor this Summer...

Waterfront Jazz and Arts Festival
Saturday, July 4, 2009, 6pm to 11pm
Middle Branch Park

Join Baltimore City Dept. of Recreation and Parks for the 9th Annual Waterfront Jazz and Arts Festival. Enjoy a front row seat on the beautiful Middle Branch waterfront and watch the best fireworks display in the city. Live jazz and cultural arts performances. Food booths and special treasures for sale. The event is free and open to the public, but there is a nominal fee for parking.

Harbor View Festival
Saturday and Sunday, July 11-12, 2009, 1pm-9pm
Reedbird Park

Baltimore Education and Cultural Institute, Inc. presents the 9th Annual Harbor View Festival in Reedbird Park in Cherry Hill. Enjoy the tantalizing music of steel bands, delicious food and libations, and more. The festival features an exciting Steel Band competition on Saturday, and a youth showcase and cultural expo on Sunday. Free admission. For more information, go to www.beci-inc.org.

WESTPORT - MT. WINANS HOMES
The Cleaner Greener Community
presents the

2ND Annual
SPRING FLING
and
DEDICATION & GRAND OPENING
of the
NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK CENTER

Saturday June 20
10:30 to 3:00
2500 Block of Maisel Street

ALL ARE INVITED!

Lots of fun things to do! Kids games! Fun Festival Food! Live performances, including the STEP SHOW performed by the IOTA PHI THETA FRATERNITY and the BALTIMORE CHRISTIAN WARRIORS MARCHING BAND. All food and games are FREE! Ribbon cutting ceremony at 11:30

WESTPORT SPRING FAIR PHOTOS

Find lots more on Westport Community Partnerships' website, www.westportpartnerships.org.

