

CommUnity Team

August 7th 2024

Riverside Park- South Shelter House

Members Present: Sue Trampf, Karen Winkel-Dishong, Marie Reilly, Michelle Cassidy, Bobbie Erdmann, and Tim Ludolph

The CommUnity Team meeting was called to order at 10:04 A.M. by Tim Ludolph.

Community Action Partnership - Strategic Planning and Action Plan

The meeting's first item was a discussion about shifting the focus to something more like a Community Action Partnership and how the CommUnity Team could plan strategically and contemplate action steps. Karen Winkel-Dishong brought up some concerns about how bad weather has been affecting community needs and could lead to issues down the line. Bobbie Erdmann pointed out the need for more volunteers and stressed the importance of sharing the Community Team's history with the board.

After that, the group went over updates on the Boys and Girls Club's Operation Backpack, which is set for next week. This update fits right in with the team's goals. The discussion then shifted to bigger issues around civic engagement, mentioning that, civic groups are struggling with volunteerism and getting people involved, especially with younger folks facing time constraints and shifting interests. There was reflection on how the pandemic had impacted social groups and made it all the more difficult to get people out of their homes.

Promotion and Local Business Support

The conversation turned to boosting the local economy by focusing on promotion. It was pointed out that businesses such as CorNutrition at 227 N Washington Street could really benefit from more visibility in the community. Additionally, Advocap is seeking someone to rent their back-office space and sees the stagnation of the Broadway district to make this less viable than it could be.

Recruitment and Promotional Activities

The team chatted about different ways to promote things and how important it is to communicate better about recruitment needs for various groups. They all agreed that using the current infrastructure is key for successful promotion.

Collaboration with Educational Partners

The meeting pointed out that there were no representatives from the School District present. Moving forward, Future efforts will focus on improving collaboration with educational partners.

Maintenance and Beautification of Community Areas

The discussion moved to maintaining and beautifying lawns, trees, and community spaces. Emphasis was placed on the importance of taking pride in properties and addressing the condition of vacant buildings. Projects such as Bootify Berlin and the Berlin Farmers and Artists Market are working to enhance downtown aesthetics with new lighting, block by block. Support from organizations like AARP or Main Street may be needed.

Additional Relevant Topics and Solutions

Bobbie Erdmann shared a piece of history about the gazebo in Nathan Strong Park, which was built back in 1895 for less than \$150. She really appreciated the hard work of local groups and encouraged everyone to keep pushing for empowerment.

Tim Ludolph gave some updates on the Truesdell and old Domino's buildings.

Karen Winkel-Dishong recommended that small businesses facing closure reach out to Kathy Doyle at the Fond Du Lac office of Advocap for some technical help.

Marie Reilly mentioned that the Olive Oil and Cheese Shop is still getting their space ready next to Eskimo Comfort and plans to open when everything's set.

The group briefly discussed Scott Zabel's successful acquisition of a tree grant from the DNR, marking the first step in a fresh approach to beautification.

Informal Group Updates

Karen Winkel-Dishong provided a brief update on the Housing Task Force aimed at preventing homelessness, referencing a detailed presentation from the previous month.

Sue Trampf shared insights from the ABC Group regarding their thoughts on the July 3rd celebration and their exciting plans for the holiday season. This includes the enchanting park lighting and a Christmas parade themed "Celebrate Kindness and Gifts." Additionally, she highlighted the Lions Club's upcoming zone meeting scheduled for August 21st, their Cheese Box fundraiser taking place in September, and their annual coupon sale set for October.

Michelle Cassidy provided an update to the group regarding the Farmer's Market, which will be running until the end of September. Mark your calendars for Bootify Berlin on October 19th, where local businesses are invited to showcase their inventive vodka cocktails. The American Legion will host a chili supper on November 7th, and River Shores Church is set to restart their complimentary community meals on the first Wednesday of each month beginning in September. Additionally, the Save the Pool fundraiser is scheduled for the Saturday prior to the community cruise, and everyone is encouraged to participate in this important event.

The meeting concluded informally at 11:10 AM.