

The Northside Voice

September 2015 : Issue No. 2

Neighborhood Initiative Program: Northside

The City of Spartanburg is the recipient of an award as part of the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority Neighborhood Initiative Program (NIP). The aim of this program is to help prevent foreclosures by eliminating blighted properties and stabilizing neighborhoods. As part of this program, the City has partnered with Northside Development Group (NDG) to work with area contractors to demolish identified homes and improve the remaining parcels. The program will allow NDG to purchase, demolish, and green residential vacant blighted properties within an approved target area.



NDG is spearheading this program for the City of Spartanburg in the Northside neighborhood. NDG has been allocated nearly \$800,000 for this program. The goal is to roll out the program in several phases, with priority areas targeted first to remove as many troubled properties as possible in order to have the greatest impact. Funds can be used for acquisition, demolition and greening. After demolition, the site will be maintained as a green space, ready for redevelopment in line with the Northside's approved Transformation Plan.

Demolition/Deconstruction: Job Training Job Creation

The City recently partnered with Soteria CDC of Greenville, and the Butterfly Foundation to offer a job training/job creation opportunity for residents of the Northside and City of Spartanburg.

Soteria is a Community Development Corporation committed to providing reentry services for incarcerated individuals, as well as promoting affordable housing opportunities in our area, and the Butterfly Foundation is a local agency that works to provide training in job skills and to provide housing to key groups.

The program focuses on increasing valuable trade skills for participants. Participants will work with

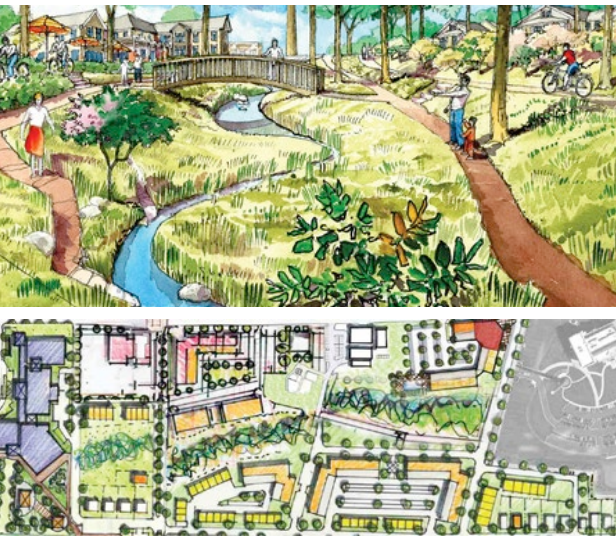
Soteria to demolish several houses in the Northside. The City identified 3 properties that were slated for demolition on the Northside. We were able to establish the 3 houses as a job-training site that would employ the students while they learned the demolition and deconstruction trades. Butterfly Foundation provided the soft skills (classroom) training and Soteria provided on the job training. We had a total of 3 trainees with one being a resident of the Northside. We have identified additional structures to demolish, and will be looking to add two more trainees to the program - hopefully from the Northside.



Our Partners



C In The Community



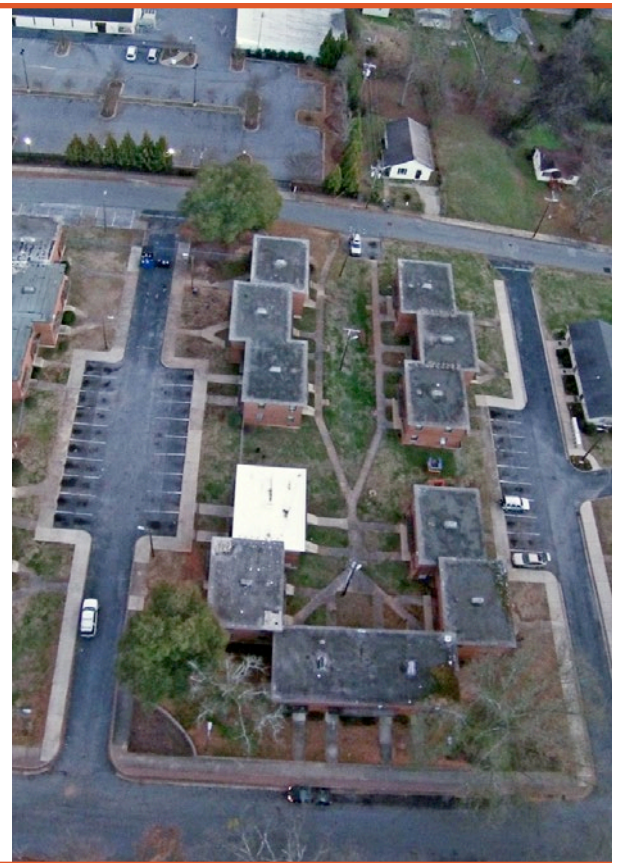
Butterfly Creek: Daylighting Project

Our last issue included a story about the project to uncover Butterfly Creek, which runs through the Northside past the Oakview apartments. The goal is to create a linear park with a greenway behind Harvest Park for local families to enjoy for play and exercise. The plan is to have the linear park begin near Cleveland Academy of Leadership and terminate near VCOM. As of now the funding for this project has been secured, and the final plans have been submitted. We are now waiting on the final approval of the plans by the U.S. Army Corp of

Engineers (USACE). Since this is a very innovative project it has required additional assessments from the review team, so there is not a current timetable for when the plan will be approved. Although the review process is taking longer than expected, we do believe that the plans will be approved, and work can begin on the project. We do not currently have a date set for groundbreaking, but we expect to have further news for you over the next few months.

Oakview Apartments

As part of the Northside Redevelopment Plan, the Oakview Apartments have been identified as the future site for the Dr. TK Gregg Community Center. The City has successfully condemned the units for public purposes, and is waiting on the final ruling that will state when the City can take full ownership. The main debate is over the monetary value of Oakview Apartments, and will be decided in court. The City will continue to operate the Oakview Apartments as a multifamily site until further notice, at which time residents will transition into a Section 8 voucher program. Residents are not in any immediate threat of relocation due to the condemnation of the property. The City is being very deliberate in its actions and is committed to ensuring the safety and housing of the residents of Oakview Apartments. Residents are encouraged to remain in their units until they hear from the Spartanburg Housing Authority about the Section 8 voucher program, at which time they will have help from a caseworker to look for new housing. It is important that residents of Oakview Apartments maintain good standing and meet all lease requirements. The City wants to reassure residents that they are not in any threat of being suddenly displaced.



Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity of Spartanburg recently began construction on several new homes in the Northside. 3 new homes on N Forest Street are under construction with the hope that they will soon provide new homeownership opportunities on the Northside. These homes will be available for families earning income below 50% of the area median income and must qualify through Habitat for Humanity of Spartanburg. Northside residents that meet all the eligibility requirements will be given preference. One of the homes will be completed by Denny's employees during their yearly Denny's Habitat Build. The homes are scheduled to be completed early in 2016.

Habitat for Humanity of Spartanburg has been very successful in building transformative housing across Spartanburg. The Voyagers were able to tour communities with Habitat Homes as well as tour the interior of homes under construction.



Dr. TK Gregg Community Center

The planning for the Dr. TK Gregg Community Center, which will eventually be sited on the Oakview property, is making great progress. The new center will be adjacent to the Cleveland Academy for Leadership and will be near the beginning of the new Butterfly Creek Linear Park. The City recently selected McMillan, Pazden, Smith as the Architects for the new facility. They will work with the City, NDG, Voyagers, partners, and all the residents of the Northside to plan and design the new facility. The center will include a training and learning center, some outdoor play equipment and ballparks, and many other fun and helpful features for the Northside residents to enjoy. As plans for this center develop further, resident input about the desired features will be key. There is currently not a specific timeline for this project, but we estimate a 2016 start.



Cleveland Heights Neighborhood Improvement Program

The City had initiated an owner occupied rehabilitation program last year to support emergency and minor repairs needed by existing homeowners in the Cleveland Heights area. Due to the limitations of using federal funds, many households have not been able to qualify for the program. Yet, the need for repairs is one that is ever present in the Northside. The Northside partners are still committed to offering this program, but have had to rethink and reevaluate the program parameters and think about a new strategy to deliver these needed services to homeowners.

NDG is currently looking at a new approach using private funding and developing new program parameters to work with partners and Northside Voyagers. NDG's goal is to reintroduce this program in September with the intent to be able to help more people. Homeowners will still need to qualify and there will still be limited funding available per house for repairs, but we hope to leverage other funding and partners to help the most families and also help expedite the program. Additionally, it is NDG's hope that we will be able to make a significant impact in as many homes as possible in the Cleveland Heights Neighborhood.

Brawley Street Phase 2 Update

Many of you may have noticed that the house on the corner of Brawley Street and Farley has come down. This property had long been vacant and was in complete disrepair. Partners demolished the building to make way for future development as part of the Brawley Street Model Block redevelopment. In addition to clearing the corner of Brawley and Farley Streets Phase 2 Brawley Street housing development will be underway any day now.

Homes of Hope, a nonprofit affordable housing developer will be building 8 new units of mixed income rental housing that will serve families earning 50%-120% of the area median income (between \$25,500 - \$61,000 for a family of four). They expect to offer rents from \$575-\$895 for the 3 bedroom 2 bathroom units. NDG is working with the Greenville based, Homes of Hope to develop the units. Homes of Hope has worked in several other Spartanburg communities.

Construction will take about 8 months once ground has been broken. Northside residents will have the first choice of renting these homes if they meet all other leasing requirements. Leasing applications will not be taken until later this year, but we will be sending information out to you once they are available. We will also be looking for skilled workers for job opportunities for the construction activity.



Upcoming Events

Hub City Farmer's Market

Saturdays from March 28-December 19 at Harvest Park

Monarch Cafe

Open Daily
498 Howard Street

Cleveland Park Northside Neighborhood Association Meeting

(Every second Thursday at 6pm) September 8th, October 15th, November 12th at Cleveland Academy

Northside Advisory Committee Meetings

(Every other third Wednesday of the month at 8:30am) September 16th at VCOM and November 18th at Mary Black Foundation.

Cleveland Park Playground Community Build

October 20-25th.
Volunteers Needed!
Lunch/Dinner and childcare provided. Learn more at SpartanburgNDG.com or call Marcia Murff at 864.494.1801

V From The Voyagers

New Voyagers!

A few months ago, the Northside Development Group and the existing Northside Voyagers team sent out a call for new members. New members bring a renewed energy and perspective to the leadership group. After an interview process, conducted by the Voyagers, several new members were selected and began a six-month leadership training working with Stan Davis, a local grass roots leadership trainer. The Voyagers now have five new members, who have been attending training classes to learn how to make the most out of their community leadership positions. Leadership training sessions have focused on the best tactics and strategies on how to inform, teach, and engage with their communities. As new team members gain more and more experience, they will be taking more initiative roles throughout the community.

New members include: Linda Askari, Joy Downing, Maxine Kelly, Cassandra Lindsey-Williams, and Ebony Woody. All new members are excited to be a part of such an innovative and energetic team. We at NDG congratulate all the new members on joining such an invigorating endeavor.

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