

WeCAN General Membership Meeting
Minutes
November 8, 2011
Prepared by Leah Rounds

AGENDA

- Healthy Potluck dinner, canned food drive for neighborhood food bank
- 6:20pm call to order, announcements, Shane Wright
- WeCAN Do Great Things award, Chad Reichl
- New member drawing, Suellen Mack
- Denver Police Officer Jay Whittenburg
- Announcements and Sign-up sheet for elections of 2012 WeCAN Board of Directors, Ben Stetler
- Speaker from Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (Bette Iacino, Director of Education and Advocacy), introduced by Carolyn Bellicci

MINUTES

- The meeting was called to order at 6:20pm by Shane Wright, proceeding the healthy potluck
- WeCAN Do Great Things award, awarded to neighbor on Irving, Nina, who through the “Denver Digs Trees” program canvassed her block and got 17-18 new trees planted on her block
- Prize envelope for a new members in attendance
- Announcements
 - Nonperishable food will be collected for a local food bank, Set Free Church on 10th and Perry, at WeCAN meetings
 - Tudors are needed for the neighborhood after school Whiz Kids program at Confluence every Tuesday, 4:30-7:00 pm. For more info call 303-377-3050.
 - Recycle metal call Bill Baker, 303-946-8230 or email bigbuddy2@comcast.net
 - WeCAN Board of Directors meeting, next Wednesday, October 19, 6:00 pm
 - Next month’s WeCAN General Membership meeting is December 13. The speaker is from Denver Urban Renewal Authority with information on programs for West Colfax home repairs and emergency needs.
 - Bike enthusiasts happy hour is the 4th Friday, 5pm at the Viking Bar.
 - On The Fax Holiday Arts & Crafts Sale will be December 11 at Confluence. Artists & craft vendors contact Noni Strawn, onthefax@yahoo.com
 - Land Use Committee meeting, Nov. 9, 6:00pm at 1400 Osceola Street
 - Support WeCAN by volunteering to be a board member (3-4 hrs/month). Also is the opportunity to serve on the various committees
- Officer Jay Wittenberg is the neighborhood’s new Denver Police Dept. representative. He has worked in District 1 for 11years in the graveyard shift, so he is adjusting to his new position.
 - He passed out a crime statistics handout.
 - There were questions about the crime trends (including auto thefts) of our neighborhood over the past 11 years – in general we are better off now than 11 years ago, but Colfax is Colfax, there are still common things to be aware of, be aware of your surroundings at night, we know who our neighbors are, the familiar cars, etc., if there is anything suspicious just go ahead and call, no matter how small you think the issue is.
 - Officer Wittenberg can be reached on his cell at 720-641-0294, but if you see a crime being committed call 911
 - The concern of dumping was raised, if you witness it happening call 911. Don’t confront anyone doing it, just call Officer Wittenberg

- Guest Speaker, Bette Iacino, Director of Education and Advocacy, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, introduced by Carolyn Bellicci
 - Began with a game asking us to think of the words we associate with “homeless person” – shopping carts, signs, students, pan handling, mentally ill, smokers, Vets, sick, dirty, children
 - “Homelessness” definition – A condition associated with poverty, when a perfect storm of events put a person in a condition without housing and a support network.
 - Stats on homelessness – Average age of homeless is 9, majority of people facing homelessness are families and single parents (60% across the country and in CO), there are 1.5 million children (3 million total) without housing across the US, in the metro area roughly 50k people (20k children and youth) will experience at least one night of homelessness, 40% of homeless are working
 - “Chronic homelessness” is repeated and long-term bouts of homelessness (often due to mental illness, substance treatment, chronic diseases). 40% of chronic homeless are Vets
 - Challenges include 1) no housing as the cost of living is huge, so affordable housing is needed. 2) with rising health care costs many have to decide between health care and rent/food – these challenges put a wide range of the public in the way of that perfect storm
 - Solutions (and triad of what the CCH does) – 1) support services 2) health care and 3) housing
 - Housing model – to move people into more stable and safe housing. Help people on the edge to prevent homelessness. Out of 100 apartment homes, a percentage of those are for working people who are having trouble making ends meet, another percentage is for homeless people without income, helps these people get into fed and state assistance programs. A CCH case manager also helps. CCH does not have shelters or food banks, but a strong outreach program
 - Housing First Model – provide housing first so people are stable and then move them into treatment (this can save the municipal/city costs by providing services like detox, public health, etc)
 - There will be more families in the West End building (the one scheduled to open this Spring on Colfax and Yates). On the street level there will be a health care clinic, an integrated clinic primarily for homeless, focusing on families, and as a Medicaid resource. There will also be a Cop Shop. The building is “green” of the highest quality and conscious of costs.
 - Other questions and concerns that came up at the end of the presentation – One big challenge right now is budget cuts. Background checks are run. There are time limits on occupancy, it depends on income, but most people do want to improve and move on and are usually in the program 1-3 years
 - More information can be found at <http://www.coloradocoalition.org/>
- Dan Pabon, the state representative from House District 4, was there to make a few announcements about the budget – as there is a decrease in revenue there is increase of demand for services (Medicaid, Auraria campus experience large growth, etc.), and the state needs to fund these things. This year there will be no senior property tax exemption. To help minimize cuts to K-12 education, there will be less of a cut this year to that area. Please contact Dan with questions, comments, or complaints.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm

Respectfully submitted,

Leah Rounds
 Substitute Secretary
 West Colfax Association of Neighbors (WeCAN)

