

WeCAN General Membership Meeting  
Minutes  
August 16, 2013  
Prepared by Leah Rounds

AGENDA

- 6:00 Call to order and Announcements
- Police Officer Report
- Councilwoman at Large Debbie Ortega
- Presentation from Dick Taft on a proposed senior apartment project overlooking the Lakewood gulch at Sheridan Blvd.
- Presentation by the new principal of Cheltenham Elementary and a representative from Colfax Elementary.
- Adjourn

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by Chad Reischl

No Denver Police in attendance; No DPD report this month

Announcements

- **Canning Classes:** WeCAN and Confluence are coming together to teach you how to preserve fruits and veggies from your garden. The two classes that were scheduled for this Saturday will be rescheduled for next month. Registration forms are available at Confluence Ministries or from Barbara Baker, [303-257-9808](tel:303-257-9808), [thanksb@comcast.net](mailto:thanksb@comcast.net). Some scholarship funds are available.
- **District 1 Police – Women’s Self Defense Class:** Saturday, August 17, 201, 8a-11a **or** 12p-3p at the George Wilfley Boys & Girls Club Branch 4595 N Navajo St (across the street from Dist 1 station) !!!ONLY 26 SPOTS AVAILABLE PER CLASS!!! To register contact:Community Resource Officer Carlos Montoya at [720.913.0461](tel:720.913.0461) or [Carlos.Montoya@denvergov.org](mailto:Carlos.Montoya@denvergov.org)
- **Save the Date: Fun on Federal – Thurs Sept 19<sup>th</sup>.** A new family-oriented evening out on north Federal Boulevard – more details to come.
- **WeCAN’s Board Meeting:** Wed August 21 6PM– Downstairs – All are welcome to attend.
- **WeCAN’s next General Meeting:** will be on Sept 10 at 6:00 pm. This will be a potluck meeting – more details to come.
- A thank you to all of those whole brought school supplies for the neighborhood schools. WeCAN will be collecting supplies again at next month’s general meeting; cash donations are welcome too.
- WeCAN received a nice thank you card from the woman who received the donation for the new windows.

- **Recycle metal** to support WeCAN: call Bill Baker, 303-946-8230 or email [bigbuddy2@comcast.net](mailto:bigbuddy2@comcast.net)
- **“Box Tops for Education”** program, bring your box tops to WeCAN meetings and Leah Rounds will take them to the local schools to support their programs.

Presentation from Dick Taft on a proposed senior apartment project overlooking the Lakewood gulch at Sheridan Blvd.

- Mr. Taft is the President of Rocky Mountain Communities, a non-profit that is state-wide that focuses on building affordable housing projects, currently with housing for 1,300 families state-wide
- Currently in the process of designing a 58 unit senior housing project on the South side of the gulch, just east of Sheridan (approximately 11<sup>th</sup> and Xavier)
- It will serve work-force level income (middle income and below)
- Chose this site because it is so close to the light rail station, and a way for residence to connect easily to family, friends, and jobs
- Opportunities to build along a major transportation corridor don't come along very often, so the organization jumped at the chance to build here.
- The site is currently a vacant lot
- Have filed an application with Denver for low-income tax credits, and the source of funding for this project is limited.
- The organization is very dedicated to this location and is hoping to be a catalyst for more building in the area, as well as increased connectivity to downtown, the West, and the whole fast tracks system
- Q&A
  - Is it the L-Shaped building [on the map]? Yes. The units will have balconies. It will be 5 stories tall and provide great views
  - What age group will be served? Seniors, 55+
  - Are they rental properties? Yes, not an assisted living community. The organization is also figuring out how to bring more programs and services in. Want to have opportunities for Medicare eligible residents to check-in. Many who live here will be completely independent, but generally as people age in place they like to take advantage of these types of services.
  - What is the average square footage of an apartment? Roughly 850-1100 sq. ft, 1-2 bedrooms
  - As residents age-in-place and their income levels change, will rents change? Believe so. You come in at a certain income level, but there may be minor rent decreases to match changes in income.
  - What is the average lease time? Annual leases
  - Is there land available closer to the Sheridan bridge? Yes. Currently there is some more vacant land closer to Sheridan. The developer feels that their building might be a catalyst for more development on the adjacent parcels. The organization is very focused on affordable housing, and is already looking at other lots along this new transit corridor for more possible projects.

- What is a work-force income? 50-60% ami, and rents will be at 50% ami
- With residents a minimum age of 55, will families be involved? Have multiple working adults they will probably be above the income level and cannot live here. No restrictions on children living with parents and custodial grandparents
- Will there be on-site management? No, but will visit the site daily.
- Will there be shops on the first floor? No. It will be meeting rooms, leasing office, community rooms, a place for health and wellness staff to come in and do health checks, etc.
- How much land and has it been purchased? Less than an acre, land has been purchased
- Is there another building similar to this one in the area we could see? Yes, the senior housing on the Old Elitches

Dan Shah of the West Colfax Business Improvement District (BID) had retail surveys passed out by Chad.

Presentation by the new principal of Cheltenham Elementary, Kal

- Kal has worked in Denver Public Schools for 3 years, most recently as the Vice Principal at Trevista
- Had a 1:1 conversation with all returning staff on the positives and negatives of Cheltenham. The positives include the collegial staff, and how some teachers have been there many years and work well together. Negatives include lack of discipline (in behavioral responses, no follow through, and loss of instruction time), and a lack of consistency (in curriculum, structures, etc.)
- 3 priorities for this school year
  1. Rigorous Instruction (aligning with the Common Core Curriculum and preparing for the PARCC testing for the 2014-2015 school year)
    - Students need to be able to think critically
    - This is not something that will change overnight; materials are still being developed, and instruction needs to be shifted (teachers need time to become more familiar with it)
    - There will be coaching models in place; coaches will be in classrooms to observe teachers and then follow up with 1:1 conversations, so feedback can be given and implemented the next day
    - Need teachers to have a better understanding of CCC and develop individually to teach it better
  2. Discipline
    - Have built flow charts for minor incidences, helping teachers to distinguish between minor and major incidents and having standard consequences
    - Make sure teachers have the best skills and tools to deal with discipline; establishing routines and rituals and having structures in place so students know the behavioral expectations
  3. Culture (students, teachers, and families)

- Cheltenham had no school colors, mascot, t-shirt, etc.
- Worked with DPS Marketing to help design a logo, colors, etc. Students will vote on a mascot that the graphic department with design
- Teachers will receive a Cheltenham t-shirt
- Redesigning the front office, lobby, and lounge; if hopes of encouraging people to stay and chat
- Ways to partner with WeCAN – Volunteering for cross-walk duty, homework support, being a mentor to a child
- The population of Cheltenham is changing as more families are moving out of the area for more affordable housing
- This fall there will be a food drive, coat drive, a “wishing” tree
- Q&A
  - What are you doing to increase parent involvement? There is a half time parent liaison. That person will hold monthly parent meetings at various times. Parents like to see their child’s work, so holding more Art & Author type evenings, Art shows once a month, Family literacy and math nights, and more events parents want to come to. It is a partnership and the school needs everyone involved, it’s not just telling parents what to do
  - Is there a music program? Yes, a full-time music, art, PE/Dance, and technology program

Councilwoman at Large Debbie Ortega

- Introduced a bag fee ordinance in council today; a 5-cent bag fee at grocery and convenience stores (facilities with 1500sq.ft. and 2% or more in food sales would be affected)
- 2-cents would be retained by retailers to off-set costs. 3-cents would be collected by the city to fund a program to buy and distribute reusable bags for those who need them, education to vendors of the front end, and cover costs of clean-ups
- Not intended to be a revenue generating program, but to change the public’s attitudes toward bag use and their environmental affects
- The ordinance will come back to committee next Tuesday and be brought to city council and have a public hearing soon after
- The goal is to reduce bags by 50%. It would go into affect on April 22, 2014, Earth Day, and is designed to change peoples behavior for a more sustainable environment for the future
- Denver has been talking about this project for several years, instituting a volunteer program in 2009
- This is a fee, not a tax
- Encouragement to reach out to council members to show support on this issue. Will continue to meet with neighborhood groups too.
- There has been some lobbying by the petroleum industry; there are no plastic bag manufacturers in Colorado
- Some vendors do have drop-off locations for bag recycling
- There are 111 7-11 stores in Denver, and they produce 32 million bags

- The goal of this program is to get as many reusable bags out there. That includes education (such as reminders to wash them) and having the resources to buy reusable bags and get them into the hand of low-income and senior residents. Another goal is to reduce the number of bags that are being produced and go into our waste stream.
- WeCAN feedback and Q&A
  - Why is it just grocery and convenience stores? The Environmental Health Office is administering this program, and they need to start small to manage it and then grow it. Start at a place that will have the greatest impact
  - WeCAN contacted council 3 years ago on this issue. What other cities have successfully implemented this type of program? 150 cities nation wide have some kind of bag fee program; Washington DC, Boulder has a 10-cent bag fee. With the larger low-income population in Denver, look into having vendors donate reusable bags
  - Will this include paper bags? Yes. Paper bags cost more to produce than plastic, so this ordinance would cover both types.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm

Respectfully submitted,

Leah Rounds  
Secretary  
West Colfax Association of Neighbors (WeCAN)