



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Grants Management Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Mayor Laurel Lunt Prussing

FROM: Elizabeth H. Tyler, PhD., FAICP

DATE: October 8, 2015

**SUBJECT: A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE LIERMAN NEIGHBORHOOD
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT**

Introduction and Background

As a part of the pre-planning activities associated with the redevelopment of the Urbana Townhomes site and the renovation of Aspen Court, staff is recommending that the City Council formally adopt the 2014 Lierman Neighborhood Community Assessment.

The Lierman Neighborhood Community Assessment grew out of an urban planning class at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the Spring of 2013 on the subject of survey design. Under the guidance of Professor Andrew Greenlee, the class worked with the Lierman Neighborhood Action Committee (LNAC) to create several designs for a comprehensive neighborhood survey. The work initiated by the class was continued during the following year by the City's Community Development Department through the efforts of Planning Intern Aaron Bond, who worked directly with LNAC under the supervision of Planning Manager Robert Myers and Department Head Libby Tyler. In addition to members of LNAC, a number of Urbana City Councilmembers were involved in the effort, including Dennis Roberts, Bill Brown, Diane Marlin, and Carol Ammons. Aaron Bond's community planning work continued until his graduation with a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning in May 2014. He is now employed as a Neighborhood Planner with the City of Baltimore.

The purpose of the assessment was to gather information on the experience of Lierman residents in order to help residents identify and support present and future community development that will enhance the quality of life in the Lierman neighborhood and to create valuable opportunities for its residential community. The planning intern's work with the neighborhood resulted in a comprehensive survey conducted with neighborhood volunteers, an open house for Lierman residents, a planning charrette, presentations to the LNAC Board, the Community Development

Commission and to City Council, and preparation of a comprehensive assessment document. The process was also presented by the participants as a case study to the Regional Neighborhoods Networks Conference in Peoria in November 2013 and to the Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association Conference in Evanston in October 2014.

While the completed report was presented to the City Council in May 2014, and was identified as a part of the adopted City Council goals, the Assessment report itself has not yet been formally adopted. It would be beneficial to formally adopt the Community Assessment at this time in order to qualify for critical tax credits and funding for the Urbana Townhomes/Aspen Court redevelopment effort. These funding sources give priority for projects that are an outcome of planning documents that are officially adopted by the local municipality and/or by local non-profit agencies. Staff will also ask the LNAC Board to consider formal adoption of the Assessment at their next meeting.

A link to the completed report may be found at:

<http://www.urbanainllinois.us/LiermanNeighborhood>

A copy of the 2014 presentation to City Council is attached to this Memorandum.

Discussion

The Lierman Neighborhood Community Assessment was undertaken in response to neighborhood concerns about high vacancy rates and recurring incidents of crime in the area together with the prospect of redevelopment of the Urbana Townhomes/Aspen Court sites. There was a strong resident initiative to improve the neighborhood which lent itself well to a neighbor-initiated Community Assessment approach. Using the assessment methods of a neighborhood survey, open house, and planning charrette, the assessment sought to gather information about the experiences, assets, and needs of Lierman residents, to gauge the effectiveness of City services and to identify future opportunities for community development. Most importantly, the assessment process helped to bring residents and community members together in an effort to improve the quality of life for all Lierman residents.

The Lierman Neighborhood Survey was the primary focus of the effort and was developed and administered with the help of the LNAC Survey Committee. The survey included questions on a variety of topics, including demographics, social environment, built environment, economy, and health. The survey was administered door-to-door, online, at the Aspen Court Management office, and at the open house. Altogether, 160 households of the 614 in the neighborhood responded, yielding a response rate of 26%. The Lierman open house was held as an opportunity for residents to discuss issues relevant to the neighborhood and to connect with representatives from the city, LNAC, and the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District. The planning charrette was focused on identifying a number of interventions to enhance the quality of life in the neighborhood. Ideas for improvements were grouped under safety, housing/maintenance, youth/family, social opportunities, and wellbeing.

Among the findings of the survey was the need for improved safety and crime prevention in the neighborhood, improved maintenance of properties, improved access to community facilities and services, and the need to develop positive activities for youth. The need for continued community involvement in the Urban Townhomes/Aspen Court redevelopment and for continued surveying and engagement was emphasized.

The Community Assessment is directly responsive to the Urbana City Council and Mayor Goals for 2014-2107 as follows:

Goal 7: Quality of Life

Objective 3. Work with neighborhood organizations to address issues of health, safety, and opportunity:

- a. **Develop a needs assessment for the Lierman neighborhood.** Continue to work with other neighborhood organizations by assisting on steering committees and attending meetings as a resource. Active liaisons include those with LNAC, WUNA, SUNA, AMVETSII, HEUNA, Downtown Neighborhood Association, and UCAP. **[emphasis added]***

The Community Assessment is also responsive to the goals of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, as follows:

Goal 1.0 Preserve and enhance the character of Urbana's established residential neighborhoods.

Objective 1.1. Promote the organization of neighborhood groups to help advocate for neighborhood preservation and enhancement.

Goal 19.0 Provide a strong housing supply to meet the needs of a diverse and growing community.

Objective 19.2 Encourage residential developments that offer a variety of housing types, prices, and designs.

Goal 39.0 Seek to improve the quality of life for all residents through community development programs that emphasize social services, affordable housing and economic opportunity.

Objective 39.3 Implement strategies to address social issues related to housing, disabilities, poverty, and community development infrastructure.

Goal 40.0 Make affordable housing available for low-income and moderate-income households.

Objective 40.1 Promote strategies identified in the Consolidated Plan to provide additional affordable housing opportunities in Urbana-Champaign.

The City of Urbana and Urbana HOME Consortium FY 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan includes the following pertinent goals:

Goal 1: Provide decent affordable housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income households.

Goal 3: Preserve and improve supply of affordable housing.

Goal 9: Preserve and support Urbana's neighborhoods as vibrant places to live.

Options

The Urbana City Council has the following options:

- a) Approve the adoption of the Lierman Neighborhood Community Assessment.
- b) Deny the adoption of the Lierman Neighborhood Community Assessment.

Recommendation

In order to facilitate funding for the proposed redevelopment of the Urbana Townhomes site and renovation of Aspen Court and to reflect its consistency with the Urbana City Council and Mayor Goals, Comprehensive Plan, and Consolidated Plan, staff recommends that the City Council **APPROVE** adoption of the Lierman Neighborhood Community Assessment.

Attachments: Draft Resolution Adopting the Lierman Neighborhood Community Assessment Presentation from May 2014.

For a complete draft of the plan, please visit <http://www.urbanaininois.us/LiermanNeighborhood>

Hard copies will be provided upon request to tmandel@urbanaininois.us.

Cc: Lierman Neighborhood Action Committee
Kyle Peterson, Herman & Kittle
Ed Bland, Housing Authority of Champaign County

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-10-059R

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE LIERMAN NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

WHEREAS, the Urbana City Council has prepared and adopted a set of Urbana City Council and Mayor Goals, most recently covering the period of 2014 to 2017; and

WHEREAS, among the goals identified in the Urbana City Council and Mayor Goals is to conduct a neighborhood needs assessment for the Lierman neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2005 in Ordinance No. 2005-03-050, the Urbana City Council adopted the 2005 City of Urbana Comprehensive Plan, which includes goals, objectives, policies, future land use maps, and other recommendations pertaining to the entire City; and

WHEREAS, on May 4, 2015 in Ordinance No. 2015-05-047, the Urbana City Council adopted the City Of Urbana And Urbana Home Consortium (Champaign/Urbana/Champaign County) Consolidated Plan for Fiscal Years 2015 - 2019 and Annual Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2015 - 2016, which includes goals to promote affordable housing opportunities and to preserve and support Urbana's neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the policy direction of the Urbana City Council and Mayor Goals, Urbana Comprehensive Plan, and Consolidated Plan, and working in conjunction with the Lierman Neighborhood Action Committee and numerous residents, a Community Assessment for the Lierman Neighborhood was prepared over a several month period during 2013 and 2014,

WHEREAS, a the final report on the Lierman Neighborhood Assessment was completed and presented to the Urbana Community Development Commission and Urbana City Council in May, 2014; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that it is in the public interest to formally adopt the Lierman Neighborhood Community Assessment, in order to promote the continued redevelopment and improvement of the Lierman Neighborhood.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CORPORATE AUTHORITIES OF THE CITY OF URBANA, ILLINOIS, as follows:

Section 1. The "Lierman Neighborhood Community Assessment" dated May 2014 is hereby adopted.

PASSED by the Corporate Authorities this _____ day of
_____, 2015.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTAINS:

Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

APPROVED by the Mayor this _____ day of _____, 2015.

Laurel Lunt Prussing, Mayor



Lierman Neighborhood Community Assessment

Assessment Pretext

- High Vacancy Rates (nearly 20% in 2010)
- Recurring Incidents of Crime
- Re-development of Urbana Townhomes and Aspen Court
- Strong resident initiative to improve the neighborhood

Streetlight at Hunter Street and Austin Drive



Lanore/Adams/Fairlawn Multi-Use Path



Neighborhood Clean-Up



Lierman Community Garden



Opportunities Board



Assessment Vision

- Lierman Neighborhood Action Committee (LNAC)
- Professor Andrew Greenlee's Urban Planning 508 Class

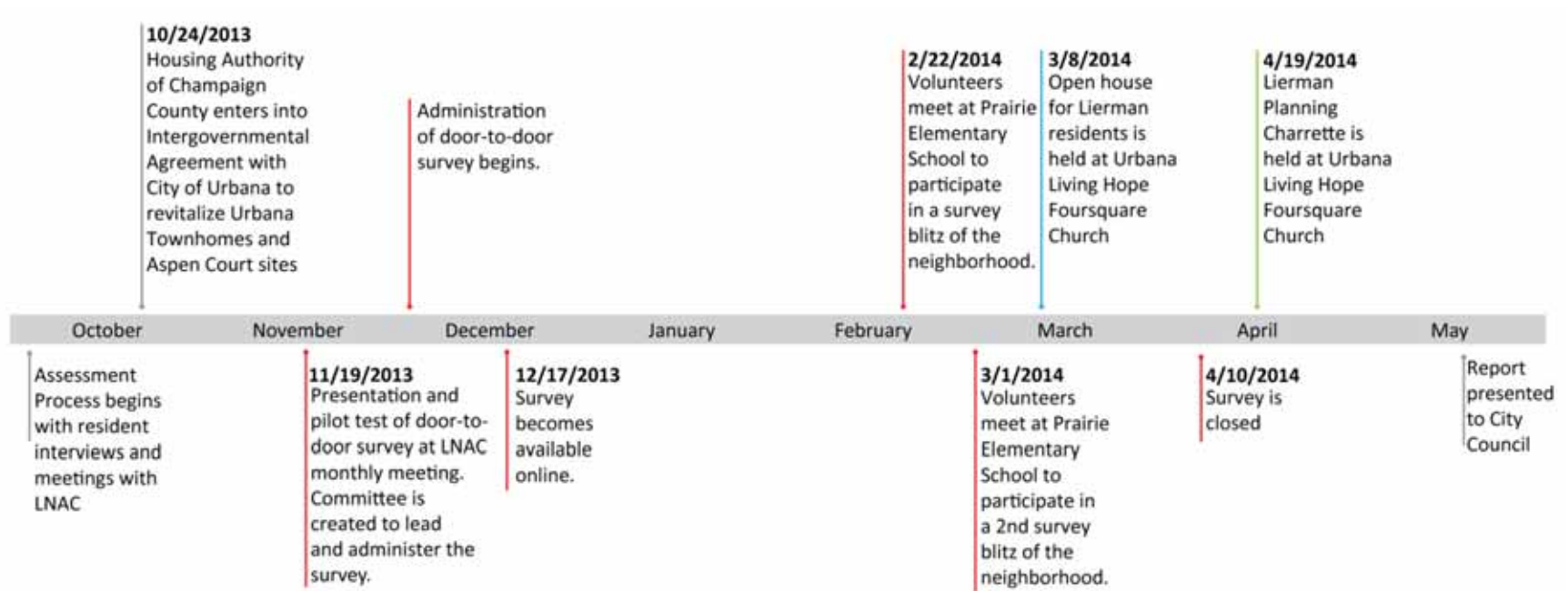
Purpose of Assessment

- Gather information on the experiences, assets, and needs of Lierman residents
- Gauge the efficacy of past and present City services and community development in the neighborhood
- Identify future opportunities for community development
- Bring residents and community members together in an effort to improve the quality of life for all Lierman residents.

Assessment Methods

- Lierman Neighborhood Survey
- Lierman Open House
- Lierman Planning Charrette

Process Timeline



Lierman Neighborhood Survey

- 34 questions
 - Demographics
 - Social Environment
 - Built Environment
 - Economy
 - Health



- Three Residential Zones

Lierman Neighborhood Survey

- Informed and Administered by LNAC Survey Committee
- Administered Door-to-Door, Online, at Open House and Aspen Court Management Office
- Two Volunteer survey blitzes
 - Feb 22
 - March 1
- 160 household responses out the 614 households in Lierman (26% response rate)

Survey Blitz



Lierman Open House

- For residents to discuss issues relevant to the neighborhood and connect with representatives from local government and different City Departments
- Representatives from:
 - Urbana Fire Department
 - Planning Division
 - Grants Management Division
 - Champaign County Public Health District
 - LNAC
- Mapping Exercise and Survey

Lierman Open House



Lierman Planning Charrette

- Residents, City staff, and other community members generated a list of interventions to enhance quality of life in neighborhood.
 - Safety
 - Housing/Maintenance
 - Youth/Family
 - Social Opportunities
 - Wellbeing

Intervention Lists

Housing/maint
Individual List:

Name: Nancy Barrett

Safety:

1. ^{sober} streetlights ^{up} at the Faulkner path
pathways/
sidewalks to ^{lights}
2. calling police w/ issues
3. neighborhood watches / groups
? city yard patrols

Housing/Maintenance:

1. landlord enforcement of leases
2. tenant screening
3. tenant education (long term)
how to be a good tenant

Table Members:

Table List:

Safety:

- Cut down bushes in front of your house - clippers
- Turn on your post light / porch light at night. - individual
- Get a motion light. - electrician or get electric eye feature

Housing/Maintenance:

- Remove Trash Cans ^{from sidewalk/curbside} after garbage pick up - individual
- Mow the lawn - individual or landlord.
- Repair exterior / maintain + paint ^{individual/landlord-}
house inspection - city, dept

Youth/Family:

- Sand lot baseball in community garden - community development
- Skateboard park with ramps - public works dept.
- GED ^{community center in neighborhood} or neighborhood work
testing Internship programs - Parkland College. day
JOB FAIRS -

Social Opportunities and Wellbeing:

- Block Parties · fish fry
- Music night in the neighborhood - parks dept.
time donation by band (?)
- Food Pantry needs to come to this area (table 3)

Findings

- Neighborhood Improvement
 - Safety and crime prevention*
 - Maintenance
 - Positive Activities for youth
- Discrepancy between Zone 1 and Zone 2 & 3
 - Access to Opportunities, Services, Amenities
 - Quality of Housing Rating
 - Satisfaction with Housing
- Low use of nearby facilities

Implications for Moving Forward

- Surveying's capacity to foster relationships and public engagement
- Need for transparency and resident inclusion in Aspen Court and Urbana Townhomes Re-development
- Safety
 - Community-wide issues
 - Resident communication and interconnectedness are key
- Surveying could be an ongoing and iterative community process