

Summary of Citizens Comments

The Newark /Essex County NSP II Consortium members held ten public and community meetings over the last month to discuss proposed NSP2 activities and program design, reaching approximately 220 people and soliciting comments such as those summarized below. Local elected officials attended seven of the ten meetings.

The proposed Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 application was published in following websites:

www.ci.newark.nj.us

www.ci.east-orange.nj.us

www.ci.orange.nj.us

And was circulated in the Star Ledger (general circulation in target area and state-wide), the Orange Transcript, the East Orange Transcript, the Montclair Times and in the El Nuevo Coqui for persons with LEP.

Persons of the general public were given a ten day window of opportunity to comment on the proposed activities which terminated on July 10th 2009.

The following comments were noted: To: Vjackson@ci.orange.nj.us

From: Hendricksshirley@aol.com

Date: 7/3/09

I am a long time resident of Orange. I speak as a representative for the "Berkeley Ave. Area Crime Watch Group" and a member of the "Citizens for Responsible Government". Please pursue all avenues of funding available for the city. Thank you for your efforts to move our town forward during these pressing times.

*Shirley Hendricks
731 Berkeley Ave
Orange, NJ 07050*

From: Levinson.gail@gmail.com

Date: 7/2/09

I am writing to strongly support the pending application by the City of Orange. As a tenant on Freeman St, which provides studio art classes and gallery exhibition, we are dependent upon a strong emerging arts district and solid surrounding community. Federal rehab dollars will help to restore foreclosures and other abandoned properties in the City making it attractive to those whom we invite to visit our gallery and attend our classes. It is vital that the city find ways to maintain its appeal and vibrancy so that retail establishments and homeowners are motivated to make Orange their home.

*Gail Levinson
Executive Director
Arts Unbound
542 Freeman St
Orange, NJ 07050*

From: Bernice Dowtin

Date: 7/9/09

I am writing this letter in support of the Neighborhood Stabilization 2 Program. I have been living in Orange for the past eight years and I feel that the town can greatly benefit from this program. I have been renting my apartment for eight years and if the town implements this program I may have a chance to purchase a home in the town I love. Orange is a great town and I support the efforts of the town administrators and I support the NSP 2 application

Bernice Dowtin

Ironbound Community Corporation – Public Input Notes

Meeting Date	Description	# Attendees	Officials	Comments
June 24	Family Success Center Advisory Council Meeting	15	NO	"It's important to keep the neighborhood safe and stable. Vacancies lead to vandalism and problems. We need safe, affordable housing. This is a good program."
June 30	SUMOP Village Residents	8	Councilman Amador	Homeowners Assn. President: "It's good if you can help people and keep our neighborhood safe. It will also help our property values. If more people abandon their homes, this block will go down the drain."

East Orange Public Meeting and Comments: 10 residents present - 4 municipal staff - 2 Councilpersons
 Meeting began at 5:45pm and ended at 7:15pm in the East Orange Fellowship Circle Civic Center held on July 7, 2009
 Residents were encouraged to state number of years at current residence in the Greenwood Area.

Municipal attendees:

- Glenn Arnold
- Heather Jones
- Lynn White
- Naiima Fauntleroy
- Councilwoman Fields, Fourth Ward
- Councilman Holt, Fourth Ward

"There is a real problem in the teen streets of East Orange and that problem is the empty houses. I know that several houses which are empty are the result of foreclosures and the new property owners don't live in the houses and don't keep them up. Their houses are vandalized by gangs, drug dealers and prostitutes. Also, they keep different hours than the lawful resident of the teen streets. Most people work during the day and want to sleep at night, now in the summer the music is blasting all night long. When we call the police they come out and make them turn the music down, but as soon as the police turn the corner the music and undesirable behavior resumes. We have been looking around for a new home in another municipality; if the situation does not change we will be moving before the end of this year".

F.W. from 17th Street

"I grew up on the teen street in the 1970s and '80s. It was totally different than it is today. I think one of the main problems is the number of vacant houses and the number of rentals. "Back in the Day" everyone owned their homes and took pride in their home and their neighborhood. I remember my father and the man across the street trying to outdo each other for the best yard on the block. When there was a party on the block everyone was invited and brought a dish. We lived together and played together, the children all knew each other and walked to school together and we all went in to our respective houses when the streetlight came on".

Anonymous-18th Street

Minutes:

Mr. T. Benjamin
20 North 18th Street

Mrs. Benjamin Carter and her son have lived at their home for five years now; initially they expressed their appreciation to the City for the citywide street repair program that repaired the potholes and large cracks in their street and the community policing response to the rampant gang and drug activity however both noted the need for continued assistance in this area. Ms. Benjamin Carter described a neighborhood comprised mainly of non owner occupied housing. Renters, she explained, “replace the homeowners and act as though they have no stake in the community.” Mr. Benjamin described a loss of neighbors on both sides of his home due to foreclosure. The growing number of unoccupied homes leads to blight and an increase in criminal activity around occupied homes often within days of a vacancy.

Ronald and Amy Morrison
121 No 14th Street

Mr. and Mrs. Morrison have raised their family in the Greenwood area for more than 32 years. The Morrisons described a community that housed active block associations on every number block. Block associations often organized summer and back to school cookouts that serviced the needs of block residents. Organizers collected school supplies from local businesses and donations from block residents for area children in need. These days many of the block association organizers have since moved or passed on. Gone also are the days of block gatherings and parties. The Morrisons are not comfortable addressing their new neighbors, many of whom are not property owners, about property nuisances because of the lack of community. Neighbors no longer remind each other about municipal property maintenance ordinances and events

Glenn Sanford
North 18th Street

Has lived in his home for less than 10 years and mentioned the need for more police involvement on 14th, 15th, 16th and 18th streets; the foreclosed and abandoned homes are attractive clubhouses/meeting spots for teens home for the summer. Mr. Sanford expressed the sentiment that enforcement of legislation intended to safely curfew adolescents and curtail misbehavior is needed.

Mary Anderson
116 No 17th Street

Ms. Anderson has lived in her home for 23 years. Echoing her other neighbors sentiments she also longs for a neighborhood of homeowner occupied properties. Ms. Anderson’s experience with new neighbors leads her to believe tenants feel less of “stake in the community than homeowners.” She misses the days when neighbors talked while sprucing up the front of their home and free municipal assistance with foundation paint. She further noted that renting tenants still reside in a foreclosed home next door to her that has fallen into disrepair and blight because there is no management.

Residents and elected officials were welcomed and thanked for their attendance
Resident comments and concerns were recorded in order of longest residing homeowners to most recent homeowners.
Residents concerns were also recorded and forwarded to the Greenwood Area intra departmental task force to be addressed by the appropriate municipal agency.