

STEP February monthly meeting

February 22, 2010

Visiting Nurses Association

In attendance: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Andrea Yakovakis, Karen Molloy, Natalia Ospina, Daisy Cvellar, Maaza Mekusig, Naomi Slagowski.

Introductions

Updates and Announcements

- CAFEH study
 - The study is really moving along, there are 210 “active” in progress, they include 35 samples, 136 interviews have been completed, 79 people have refused.
 - They want to finish the Somerville interviews by the end of March.
 - We have money left in this project, and it will be used to finish the ISEE interview videos.
- Treasurer’s Report
 - Andrea presented a draft treasurer’s report that will be presented at the annual meeting. Now that we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit group, there are some annual filings requirements that we need to submit: IRS, Massachusetts Attorney General, Massachusetts Secretary of State, Massachusetts Department of Revenue (this one is only every 10 years).
- Comprehensive Plan for the city
 - There was an update on the status of the Comprehensive Plan being made by the city with the input of residents. The majority of the background information is over, and now the plan will start to be developed. A big problem in Somerville is the lack of jobs for the number of residents.
 - There was a story on the radio about how Vancouver re-defined itself, and we talked about how some of those plans might benefit Somerville. They focused on keeping views of the ocean and mountains by keeping the buildings thin and spaced out. They did a lot of planning to keep activities and public open space for residents.
- Community Corridor Project/Green Line Extension
 - Last week Kate Fichter from MassDOT came to the Community Corridor meeting. Somerville Community Corporation has been updating GIS maps so that people could come into an office where stations are set up to visualize what their neighborhoods will look like after the Green Line. This will eventually be hosted online, and will be beta tested in March. They are waiting to hear back from EPA to see if there is some funding available in small charrettes in March. The state might be able to participate in these, and these could be used for community involvement in station design.
 - Kate mentioned there is now an MBTA Project Manager for the Green Line - Mary Ainsley from Design and Construction. The Environmental Impact Report is planned to be done in July. They are also starting the New Starts (federal transportation funding) application. Kate mentioned that the public involvement process will mostly focus on station design.
 - There was some discussion on splitting up the planning into smaller pieces (like Lechmere to Union Square, groupings of stations up the Lowell Line...) For the local station area design committees, MassDOT is planning to ask for applications to participate in the committee to attempt to make them function as best as possible.
 - A bi-partisan group has put out a report on their analysis of the new New Starts funding rules, and how it could affect applications.
- Office Space
 - We are still looking at different locations in Union Square for an office for higher visibility in the community.

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Action Items

- The Barr Foundation has made an announcement that they plan to donate \$50 million to sustainability projects. We talked about potential ways to approach applying for this funding.
 - Community Path.
 - Wider-reaching regional issues – economic development.
 - Retrofits for energy efficiency in affordable housing units or other buildings (a good resource is Heather Clark, an expert consultant).
 - Jobs training.
 - Using networks for environmental data, public health data, transportation, etc. trends by tracking human behavior through networks of sensors. This is already being done with cell phone usage, and they have very high reproducibility.
 - If anyone has any thoughts about approaching the Barr Foundation for funding, please send them to the listserv.

Other business

There was discussion about how people first got involved with STEP. It started as a letter-writing campaign about keeping the Green Line extension moving.

Next meeting: March 22nd at the VNA Community Room.