

## First State Community Action Agency

# Kent County Strong Communities Initiative Monthly Meeting Minutes

**FEBRUARY 23, 2011**

### **Attendees:**

Fran Cardaci  
Andy Lorenz  
Nanci Hoffman  
Emily Knearl  
James Westley  
DeWayne Phillips  
Lorraine Harris  
Deanna Campagnini  
Ava Stallings-Hardy

- *Opening Prayer*
- *Pledge of Allegiance*
- *Silent Reading of the minutes (accepted with corrections)*

### **Special Guest: Nanci Hoffman, CEO/Planned Parenthood of Delaware**

Ms. Hoffman, CEO of Planned Parenthood of Delaware was on hand to meet with the community leaders in Kent County as she'd heard about the wonderful collaborations between Planned Parenthood and Leaders of the Kent County Strong Community's Initiative. Planned Parenthood is in its 80<sup>th</sup> year, offering healthcare services in Kent & New Castle County, Delaware. Services provided are confidential, which include; family planning, contraception, cancer screening & pre-cancerous lesions in young women, STD testing & treatment, counseling on healthy life styles and referral services for services that they cannot provide. Planned Parenthood also offers HIV/Sexuality programs. Planned Parenthood accepts Medicaid as well as private insurance. There is a sliding scale used for income, however services are provided regardless of the patient's ability to repay. Statistics show that women are not getting the screening/checks and services they need. When the economy is tough, people don't take care of themselves as well as normal. In addition to its women's services, Planned Parenthood also provides STD treatment for men as well. Title 10 dollars are used to fund screening & testing.

Mrs. Harris, Star Hill Community Leader, gave Ms. Hoffman feedback regarding the Making Proud Choices! Program in the Star Hill Community:

- The Making Proud Choices! Program was an amazing program that was fun, informative and engaging for all the youth participants
- Parents enjoyed their participation along with their youth
- Dinner was provided which was an added plus as many of the parents did not have time to prepare dinner prior to participation in the program
- The last session of the program will be the graduation ceremony on March 7<sup>th</sup>. Each youth participant will receive a \$50 gift card as an added incentive for completing the program

In conclusion, Mrs. Harris stated she would like to see sustaining programs follow the Making Proud Choices! Program. Ms. Hoffman responded by advising Community Leaders to follow-up with Dr. Dukes as there are additional youth programs around abstinence, such as "Sexting" and "Twilight" (teen vampires) programs about teen sex & violence.

Mr. Westley, Community Leader at Capitol Park also added feedback by stating that although he was not directly involved in the program, he has heard positive feedback from residents stating the program is going well at Capitol Park.

*The goal of the Making Proud Choices! Program is to empower young adolescents to change their behavior in ways that will reduce their risk of becoming infected with HIV and other STDs and their risk for pregnancy. Specifically, this curriculum emphasizes that adolescents can reduce their risk for STDs, HIV and pregnancy by using a condom, if they choose to have sex.*

**Special Note of Interest:**

Nelson Dodd, President of the Kent County Crime Watch (for the past 10 years), was honored at Levy Court this month for his many years of dedicated service to the Community Leaders/Residents in Kent County, Delaware. Mr. Dodd will be retiring soon and this was a wonderful conclusion to his many years of dedicated service. Mr. Dodd has also supported/participated in the ***Kent County Strong Communities Initiative*** for many years as well and we Thank Mr. Dodd for his continued support. Congratulations!

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

### Fran Cardaci/First State RC&D Home Repair

Ms. Cardaci reiterated that First State RC&D emergency home repair is designed for low-income residents. Some of the requirements are that residents must own their home and have lived in it for at least 1 year & meet income guidelines. First State RC&D uses 50% of the standard Medium Income to determine eligibility. In November & December 2010, First State RC&D utilized \$60,000 to install furnaces for residents with no heat. Additionally, they can install floors, doors & windows—anything that could potentially be a major hazard. The goal is to prevent people from having to leave home because of unsafe conditions. The Senior Employment Program in Sussex County works with RC&D and community volunteers on projects such as installing floors, etc., which helps reduce costs. RC&D is working on putting together a team of volunteers in Kent County, partnering with the Modern Maturity Center in Dover. Volunteers must be healthy and strong enough to complete construction projects. Interested volunteers may call First State RC&D at 302-674-1952 to sign up. The program does cover volunteer mileage. Ms. Cardaci may be reached by email at [fcardaci@rcdhomerepair.org](mailto:fcardaci@rcdhomerepair.org).

#### **First State RC&D's:**

**Mission:** The Council's mission is to provide leadership, initiative, technical support, and direction in developing and carrying out a plan to assist individuals and communities in the conservation and enhancement of their human and natural resources.

**Vision:** Prosperous diverse communities effectively developing and conserving the human and natural resources of the First State RC&D Area.

### DeWayne Phillips/Unison Health

Mr. Phillips, Community Outreach Coordinator with Unison Health stated as of **March 1, 2011, Unison Health will become United Healthcare**. This change has actually been in effect for the past 2 years. Benefits will not change and the Medicaid plan is throughout the United States. Unison Members will receive new cards & member ID numbers and all information will remain the same. The only change will be the new logo. All old literature will be pulled, however email information will be the same. There will be new/updated cell phone numbers. United Health Care representative, Lenora Reynolds will visit the Kent County Strong Community's Initiative meeting in the future to introduce herself. Ms.

Reynolds contact information is [Lenora.reynolds@UHC.com](mailto:Lenora.reynolds@UHC.com) or 302-729-4181/4183. Mr. Phillips may still be reached at 302-729-4182 or [dewayne.phillips@unisonhealthplan.com](mailto:dewayne.phillips@unisonhealthplan.com).

### **Andy Lorenz/Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA)**

Mr. Lorenz, Housing Analyst III with DSHA, was on hand to discuss the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and the housing rehab program. Please note, Mr. Lorenz' email address is: [andy@destatehousing.com](mailto:andy@destatehousing.com). Please update your contact information to reflect Mr. Lorenz' correct email address.

Mr. Lorenz advised that money from HUD will cover Kent & Sussex County (less in Dover) projects. \$2.2 million is to be split between the counties. As of July 1, 2011 (funding year that Congress has been funding with a continued resolution). The Senate is looking to cut the budget by 62%. At this point no one is certain as to what will happen. Currently, there are approximately 800-1,000 people on the waiting list for housing rehabilitations. Sewer and water hook-ups in Meadowbrook Acres & Capitol Park for the upcoming year that funding is possibly in jeopardy. Deadline for all applications (for rehab's) are due next Tuesday (March 1<sup>st</sup>). Kent County is applying for funding for rehab's in the Star Hill and Briar Park areas. The purpose of the rehabilitation project is to bring all homes up to code. Partnerships for the work include First State RC&D, generally for projects the County cannot handle. Sussex County is asking for 100k, but with possible budget cuts the County is unsure as to what they'll actually receive. There is a proposed infrastructure project in Kent County (for sidewalks) & Sussex County will apply for street maintenance & sidewalk infrastructure project funding. Deanna Campagnini/SE RCAP asked Mr. Lorenz about the State Penalty Revolving Fund application/funding through DNREC which covers EPA environmental impact issues associated with standing water/sediments, etc. Mr. Lorenz advised Ms. Campagnini he couldn't speak directly that question, however to contact James Brunswick, Community Ombudsman with DNREC. Mr. Westley, Capitol Park Civic Association asked Mr. Lorenz where the County was with rehab projects in the Capitol Park Community, stating that they were advised the projects would be completed by the end of 2010. Mr. Westley was advised to contact Albert Biddle's office at 302-744-2480 to verify statuses, but stated he was aware the projects were running a little bit behind schedule.

"The Community Development Block Grant Program" provides much-needed funding for a variety of housing activities in Kent and Sussex Counties. Recommendations for funding are made by an independent review panel whose

members evaluate each application's potential benefit to low-income persons, the management capacity of the applicant and the cost-benefit of the proposed activities, including: the severity of need, impact, cost reasonableness and feasibility. Kent County already has a number of "scattered-sites" receiving funding. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), funding covers a number of housing rehabilitation work, including sewer hook-ups. For application assistance, please contact Albert Biddle in Kent County at 302-744-2480 and Bill LeCates in Sussex County at 302-855-7777.

*In addition, the County is always looking to improve their programs & services and community input is always appreciated. Mr. Lorenz advised (at the end of 2010), that DSHA is in line to receive approximately \$200k per county in 2011 for housing rehabilitation work. Mr. Lorenz can be reached at 302-739-4263 or [andy@destatehousing.com](mailto:andy@destatehousing.com).*

### **Deanna Campagnini/SE RCAP**

Ms. Campagnini discussed the possible reductions in program funding with proposed federal budget cuts. She mentioned a particular interest in CDBG hook up appropriations for both Kent and Sussex County. Ms. Campagnini communicated that the Town of Ellendale may consider CDBG funding for water hookups in the next fiscal year.

The Town of Ellendale has completed two in a series of required public workshops for application of a Water District. The proposed water system would move forward in a two phase project. The first phase of development would include the Town Proper (Annex) and the second phase would include unincorporated areas outside of town. The estimated user rate for the treatment system would be approximately \$38 month. Ellendale has been approved for a (100% forgiveness) Loan for the first phase of development (\$3.6 million) at no cost to the Town. The Water System referendum vote is scheduled for March 05, 2011 at Ellendale's Town Hall.

Ms. Campagnini added to comments by Andy Lorenz (Delaware State Housing Authority) about his discussion on funding cuts related to a project in Georgetown. She communicated that the project may qualify for other funding due to multiple components which include potential drainage issues. Ms. Campagnini asked Mr. Lorenz for more information to address the project with other agencies.

## COMMUNITY LEADER UPDATES

### Capitol Park/James Westley

Mr. Westley stated he was in attendance for Capitol Park's President, Lamont Pierce. Things have been running great. Speeding is down due to weather conditions (like snow). Per Mr. Westley, Representative Bennett stated money is available for speed bumps in Capitol Park. There is an issue with abandoned homes in Capitol Park, as has been for several years and they are an eye sore for the entire community. Mr. Westley asked Mr. Lorenz what could be done to tear down the abandoned homes in the community. Mr. Lorenz stated they could apply for demolition dollars through Albert Biddle's area. \$10, 000 - \$20, 000 in funding is possible on a lien could be placed on the property. Mr. Westley was advised to contact Mr. Biddle at 302-744-2480 for the demolition application/procedures. In addition, Mr. Westley was advised by Community Development Specialist Ms. Stallings-Hardy that the association could also contact Code Enforcement to make complaints. The County would try contacting the property owner to make corrections, but if they were unable to make contact with the owner, the County would clean-up the property and bill the property owner - or take whatever necessary steps per their procedures. Ms. Hardy followed up with Code Enforcements contact information to Mr. Westley.

### Star Hill/Lorraine Harris

Mrs. Harris stated the "sign-dedication" for Star Hill has been postponed due to the weather. Mr. Blakey is assisting the Civic Association with the dedication and states the re-scheduled event should be sometime between March and May 2011. The association will keep us updated. Mrs. Harris stated the new entryway sign looks great. As far as crime updates, Mrs. Harris stated that GTF has not been available to give updates. However, there's still an on-going battle with drugs, crime and gang activity in Kent County. Mrs. Harris stated more efforts are needed from residents (and police) to curtail the increasing gang activity.

### Nelson Dodd/Meadowbrook Acres

Not in attendance this month.

### First State Community Action Agency/Ava Stallings-Hardy

Ms. Stallings-Hardy, Community Development Specialist for Kent & NC County gave the following updates:

- The Criminal Justice Council is offering a free grant writing workshop in March 2011 at Delaware Technical & Community College, Dover. Funding is between \$5000 and \$15000 for community groups/non-profits & faith-based organizations involved in preventing crime and reducing recidivism in Delaware. Ms. Hardy has sent notifications to each community leader to sign-up for the workshop. Community leaders must attend the workshop to apply for this federal funding
- Per First State Family Consultant Mrs. Strain, information and brochures were distributed regarding the Promoting Safe & Stable Family program, the COPE (youth-based) program, the PSSF Community Advisory Board (CAB) and the Fatherhood Initiative
- First State literature & information was distributed reflecting programs and services
- Ms. Hardy will schedule Strategic Planning and training with Community Leaders over the next few months

*"PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE BUILD COMMUNITY"*