

# Greensboro Neighborhood Congress (GNC) Meeting Notes Thursday, June 11, 2015



GNC Co-Chairperson **Susan Taaffe** convened the **June 2015** GNC meeting at the Central Public Library beginning with our traditional introduction of all participants followed by presentations by guest speakers.

## Guest speakers:

**Vincent Russell**, a volunteer with **GreensboroPB**, explained the basic premise of **Participatory Budgeting (PB)**, a process by which community groups may propose, evaluate, and vote on projects to receive up to \$100K city funds/year in each of five Greensboro City Council Districts beginning 2016-2017. The PB concept was initiated as a grassroots effort in 2011 and in October 2014 was adopted by the Greensboro City Council, replacing the city's former Neighborhood Small Projects grant process. \$200K will be used to support this new PB process -- \$100K from the Neighborhood Small Projects fund and \$100K from external funding -- including funds for PB community outreach/education efforts, childcare and translation services during PB community meetings, and 2.5 additional city staff to manage PB.

The PB funding process is envisioned to be a more democratic, transparent, accountable, process because it **encourages local people to work together to envision and develop projects that benefit their City Council District**. Funding decisions are then made by participants who vote on the projects presented.

**Spoma Jovanovic** lead attendees in a mock-PB process during which we presented quick sales pitches for potential city funding requests of \$10K to \$100K for proposed neighborhood-specific or district-wide improvements such as neighborhood: cleanup and beautification, entrance landscaping, playground relocation, park events, street lighting, city boulevard entrance improvements, and evaluation of benches, lighting, and restrooms along public city trails. Participants then voted, increasing the sense of community-wide engagement and decision-making that is anticipated through the participatory budgeting process. For details, visit <http://www.GreensboroPB.org> or find GreensboroPB on Facebook & Twitter.

## Committee Reports:

**Membership** – Several GNC volunteers manage check-in and membership updates as we continue to seek a Membership Committee Chairperson. Contact GNC Co-Chairpersons Linda Bennett [lbennet@uncg.edu](mailto:lbennet@uncg.edu) or Susan Taaffe [susantaaffe1@gmail.com](mailto:susantaaffe1@gmail.com) to volunteer. All GNC Committees invite your participation.

**Issues and Bylaws** – **Marsh Prause** [marsh.prause@smithmoorelaw.com](mailto:marsh.prause@smithmoorelaw.com) reports this committee will soon bring a final draft of updated GNC Bylaws. They also continue discussing the concept of “pocket neighborhood” development in Greensboro. “Pocket neighborhoods” are residential infill developments -- a series of single-family dwellings that are compact, detached, and have a common area in the center, making efficient use of land and intended to foster close connections among neighbors while maintaining a degree of privacy.

## Announcements/News:

- **June 16** is a free groundbreaking ceremony for the Renaissance Co-Op and Renaissance Shops at Phillips Avenue.
- **June 13** is the free kick-off gathering at the Greensboro Police Department for neighborhoods planning a National Night Out Against Crime event.
- **June 14** is a League of Women Voters of the Piedmont Triad fundraiser with music (\$10/person) at Common Grounds Coffee Shop, 602 S. Elam Street at Walker Avenue, to raise money to oppose NC Senate Bill 36.
- **June 20** free lunches will be available at the Peeler Recreation Center.

- Every GNC participant is asked to **inquire if their neighborhood would contribute \$25 or more/year to the GNC**, which has no other source of funding.
- Attendees were asked to place an **X** mark by their GNC membership list name **if they do not want** their or their neighborhoods contact information made available to the City of Greensboro, to receive various city communications.
- The **July GNC meeting is cancelled** because summer vacations greatly reduce attendance.
- Add [TheGreensboroNeighborhoodCongress@outlook.com](mailto:TheGreensboroNeighborhoodCongress@outlook.com) to your e-mail address book to insure GNC e-mails reach you.

The next GNC meeting is **Thursday, August 13, 2015, 7-9 p.m.** at the Greensboro Central Public Library.

Our guest speaker will be City Planner **Mike Kirkman**, sharing information about our City of Greensboro zoning and rezoning process. **Dave Wharton** of the Aycock neighborhood will share what he has learned about the politics of neighborhood planning.

Visit the GNC website at [www.GreensboroNeighborhoodCongress.org](http://www.GreensboroNeighborhoodCongress.org) for notes of previous GNC meetings.

Respectfully submitted by Ann Stringfield of the Fisher Park Neighborhood, June 11, 2015.