



Morristown United for Healthy Living

May 22, 5:30pm- 7:30pm, St. Margaret's Church

Agenda

Minutes in blue

5:30 **Welcome & Introductions**

5:40 **Updates/Upcoming Events**

- Gateway Totem Project Artist Showcase (Early St. Garden, May 26th, 6:00-7:30pm)
- Landlord/Tenant Information Session (Morris Twp. Library, May 31st, 6:30-8:00pm)
- Habitat's Hammers for Heroes event (Habitat ReStore, June 3rd, 9:00am-3:00pm)
- Housing Partnership Annual Meeting (County College of Morris, June 9th, 8:45am-11:30pm)

5:50 **Joint Learning Opportunity**

- "The Future of Neighborhood Revitalization" (Blair Bravo, Chief Executive Director, Morris Habitat for Humanity)
 - o Morris Habitat in its 33rd year (founded by four churches due to need for safe and affordable places to live)
 - o Their first home was a four-plex on Garden Street (and three of the four families are still living there)
 - o They are currently working on a large project on MKL
 - o 30 of their families live in Morristown
 - o "We can't build our way out of this issue;" there is a lack of good-paying jobs, rents are increasing, and home ownership is out of reach for many
 - o There is a need for more holistic neighborhood revitalization that involves many organizations and community members coming together for change.
 - o Habitat has also made the decision to focus on census tract 435
 - o Habitat currently helps municipalities meet housing requirements and build 100% affordable developments
 - o Intention is to help by helping people move up the housing continuum, making room for others
 - o Habitat also does home repairs (with an Aging in Place initiative) and conducts safety audits
 - o In summary, Habitat works toward the creation of new homes, the preservation of homes, works with veterans and seniors, partner with others and refer people to services/agencies, and runs the Re-Store to support their work and help others afford home repairs.

6:05 **Policies for Action Review**

- An edit to the policy was suggested to clarify if each person or each organization gets a vote in workgroup decision-making. The consensus decision was made to allow workgroup members to



vote as individuals unless there is a conflict of interest or other workgroup members have concerns (at which point the issue should be brought to the Steering Committee before proceeding).

6:20 Funding Request Review

- Homeless Solutions
 - o A Funding Request was submitted by Homeless Solutions for \$15,000 to go toward the construction of affordable housing units at 23 Abbott Avenue (for a copy of the proposal, email Ashley.anglin@atlanticealth.org); the proposal was accepted at \$10,000.
- Family Promise
 - o A Funding Request was submitted by Family Promise for \$500 to go toward the development and implantation of Good Neighbor Training (for a copy of the proposal, email Ashley.anglin@atlanticealth.org); the proposal was accepted at \$500.

6:35 Break-Outs by Group

- Those interested in working on “trainings” will meet together
- Focus on action steps for selected strategies

7:10 Report-Backs by Group

- “Training” break-out group
 - o Action Plan:
 - Recruit residents who are in need of housing to participate in a focus group where we can learn about their needs first hand.
 - Multiple Focus groups will be held to accommodate the needs of the different resident subgroups.
 - The following categories of residents were developed:
 - Precariously Housed Residents
 - Homeless Residents
 - Undocumented Residents
 - Residents seeking to become homeowners and need guidance
 - It was decided that names for the focus groups from each of the above categories will be gathered by June 2nd. Person who will recruit for focus groups: Sydney Williams, Maria Vargas, Carlos Sotelo, Joylyn Espuet, Linda Murphy, Maria Vargas, Diana Mejia, Michelle Riley
 - Develop focus group questions:
 - What is your current housing situation?
 - What is the biggest barrier to housing?
 - More to come
- Community Infrastructure/Sense of Community group
 - o Patriot’s Path renovation
 - Dominique met with the Senior District Representative for the Boy Scouts; there is interest in working on the trail and some ongoing efforts we can join



- Decision was made by the City Council not to support a proposal to put in a garden at the Patriots Path trailhead/kiosk area (on MKL); the feeling was that the community would prefer a park.
 - Carlos also met with a local Scout Troop who are interested in installing exercise equipment at this site as part of an Eagle project
 - Can we be involved in the creation/design of the park? The workgroup is interested in putting together an event at this site once it is “open”
- There is already funding in place to improve the trail, but there is a section of the trail along the train tracks that needs to be fenced before construction can move forward on the trail; that section is owned by the DOT and there is some kind of hold-up; the group is working to figure out how to help things move forward
- Healthy Corner Stores
 - Everything is in place to start this initiative; we just need a leader for this strategy (who would work with Carlos, Sol, and Ashley). Training, funding, and connections to store owners are readily available
- Youth and Arts
 - The group continued the discussion about how to make Meet Me in Morristown more accessible/integrated, such as holding a youth-specific event in the neighborhood, changing the music
 - Opportunities for programming around the totem sculptures (sound system, lights, and small stipends for performers are available!)
 - Carlos successfully recruited a few artists to perform in this space; upcoming event will be held on Saturday 5/26 at the community garden on Early St.
 - Plan to get the Board of Education to approve a letter to go out recruiting youth musicians/bands (**Michelle Harris** will take the advertisement to the Board of Education once we have it together; **Ashley** will reach out to Morris Arts re: putting together a call for musicians)
 - Idea to engage youth to create artistic window dressings for neighborhood stores/restaurants
- Two new proposals coming up from Sustainable Morristown were discussed
 - Proposal to install trash/recycling containers in the neighborhood
 - May also be another good art/community engagement opportunity (e.g., recycling art, educational opportunities, decorating/building the containers)
 - Proposal to out in a soccer field at the small park on Speedwell and Cory Road
- Group is also interested in working with Morristown High School and the Town on a joint-use agreement regarding the use of school grounds (especially ball fields and other areas for recreation/physical activity)
- Another area for repair/redevelopment the group may want to pursue are the tennis courts on Hillary Ave which need maintenance or re-design (currently used as a skate park)

Next meeting June 26th, 5:30-7:30pm



Our Impact Statement: We will improve the condition of existing homes, increase access to affordable housing stock (rented and owned), and improve the built environment/community infrastructure via resident education and outreach, policy change/advocacy, improvements to the physical environment, and oversight of existing protections for all people living in 435 with a particular focus on equity.

Morristown United for Healthy Living: Impact Model

Result: Affordable, accessible, fair, equitable, healthy, safe and smart housing for all residents of Morristown's census tract 435

Improve Condition of Existing Homes

Increase Access to Affordable Housing

Improve Community Infrastructure

Education, outreach and relationship-building

Policy change/advocacy

Improvements to the physical environment/infrastructure

Oversight of existing protections