

## **OCL Community Image Steering Committee meeting**

**April 5, 2011**

Attending: George Curry, Therese Driscoll, Joe Hucko, Tony Malavenda (co-chair), Sarah McIlvain, Maude Morse, Clyde Ohl, Donna Rohde, Janie Thibault, Mary Thompson, Merike Treier (co-chair) Rachel Pollack, Sandra Barrett

### **Agenda**

Ryan Brodovsky, Presentation: Community Image

An exploration of Civic image efforts in other communities

1. Beautification –includes litter pickup and snow removal
2. Signage
3. Civic Image-Greater projects, vacant housing problems, large scale projects

The entire presentation can be viewed by going to <http://prezi.com/ipip2tfu-o4r/community-image/>

### Pittsburgh

G-20 summit spurred need for improved image, spurring plantings/beautification.

Abandoned Buildings, using public art: Artist stenciled Andy Warhol images, community painted in the flowers and the boards put over abandoned buildings broken windows.

### Chicago

Millennium Park: A former rail yard is now a landmark park

Litter Clean-up shown

Chicago is also home to large scale volunteer efforts. An Adopt a Place in your Neighborhood, can commit to a smaller area or larger/flower bed vs. boulevard.

### Cleveland

ParkWorks is an organization leading in community image improvement: Litter Removal Day, Company sponsored flower beds. A campaign similar to Connective Corridor links a high school and art college in the city.

Explores ways to beautify public squares and spaces to revitalize different downtowns.

### **How does this fit in with the Parks Conservancy? (In Syracuse)**

**They tried to work with existing neighborhood groups and with the Parks Dept., and they try to act on what is missing but it is not quite the same as filling in the gaps.**

### Youngstown, OH

Beautifying space by linking green areas.

They have dealt with declining population, large industrial city. They are shrinking city to make more manageable.

People in city have been working together to spruce up areas, city trying to fund those volunteers. Paraphrase from Prezi: People got out their brooms and (took care of the area) before the buildings were torn down.

Led to discussion of Warren Street and the old radio station building that will be torn down.

On Mon, Apr 4, 2011 at 12:02 PM, Michael Stanton <[mstantn@gmail.com](mailto:mstantn@gmail.com)> wrote:

Two historic Warren Street buildings that once housed Syracuse's first radio station and the early Syracuse Chamber of Commerce will be torn down and turned into a parking lot. Owner Tom Quartier planned to remove the buildings in 2006, but the Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board denied his demolition request. Quartier took the city to court and won in 2007. The appeal turned on a technicality: the city did not have a copy of the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings" on file in the city clerk's office. They did the day following the court's inquiry, but by then it was too late.

The demolition will create the first opening in the streetwall on either side of that block. In an effort to preserve the walkability of Warren Street, a 12 foot wall will be built to hide the parking lot, allowing only pedestrian access. Cars will only be allowed to enter the lot from the back on Onondaga Street.

Old Radio Station building with art deco front, maroon, deco façade owner has let rot for the last five years even though he's gotten proposals. They are going to tear down, block in Warren Street and open up this gap that will create gap. Absolutely the worst thing that could be done from an urban design standpoint.

(Feb. 8 meeting notes from conversation with Kate about protecting buildings important to civic image:

*Greatest amount of protection towards community/neighborhood character is a local ordinance. State review only kicks in with federal or state funding.*

*Locally protected historic district is different, interested in image or character, then local protection is a really good way to advocate.*

*Demolition by neglect (deferred maintenance) is an offense that can be fined for, so that an owner can't abandon a property and then five years later come in and say it has to be demolished. Our suggestion is that people build that in.*

*In claiming demolition, we ask is that people include an economic hardship rule, so if someone comes in and says "I can't possibly use my building I need to demolish it," the ordinance now includes justification for it.*

***City doesn't have this law.)***

Continuation of Prezi:

Western Cities—

Corvallis, Oregon: reimbursement for projects in a public right-of-way or public area. Apply for funding of \$100-\$1,000; City's Corvallis Beautification and Urban Forestry Commissions (CBUF) will reimburse with interest from Endowment fund that was started by a local Garden Club. Sometimes matched or supplemented with funds from other Foundations or funding source. (this year CBUF didn't take applications because trust fund low and they have begun putting half the interest back into the endowment in order to reach \$1 million goal).

"Beauty Grows Here" Awards program, 40 awards, 4 landscape awards per one of nine local areas in neighborhoods. (Awards given by nine member commission.) This program recognizes "curb appeal" improvements on private property.

Corvallis P&R department also has "adopt a park" and "adopt-a spot" programs in which volunteer group agrees to maintain a park or section for one year, at least 4 times annually (Agreement attached).

**Syracuse:** Westcott Nation does bulbs and does something in terms of awards. Community Foundation has \$750 grants. Various TNT groups have tried doing this, but no central organizing. (Need for Central Organizing agreed upon)/

Another community (Janie Thibault mentioned): Apply for award, fee associated with it, becomes a rallying point and bragging method for local business, get recognition.

Downtown Committee, used to give awards some years ago, for window displays.

Steve Harris, city and county arborist mentioned his desire for a Tree Committee. Steve's point, if not willing to take Tree Committee recommendation seriously not worth having.

Urban tree ordinance passed some time ago? We are looking into that.

Emeryville, CA conduct yearly clean up day, 1000 pounds of trash, able to do a lot of pickup

**Litter Discussion:** Syracuse, recent Downtown Committee Clean up of Downtown and University Hill: 180 people, count bags afterward, Earth Day, coming up and that one even bigger, people went up on embankments,

Downtown Committee and Center of Excellence trying to get with OCRRA, launching for earth day, website that can do similar, volunteers pick a street, ask people to volunteer with you, having more social interaction, trying to launch for Earth Day, not just downtown .

Sandra and Merike recently participated on a Sierra Club Panel on Litter, 30 people came out and everybody really interested. ("What can we do? We're ready to sign up.")

Lack of Neighborhood participation in trash pickups: a lot of times when I participate, I'm in somebody's neighborhood picking up their trash. Need neighborhood participation: Nice to get buy in from community.

Clean up along Onondaga Creek, 80 percent of people from far away. But people in neighborhood have been taught, "Don't send your kids out on the Creek. They might drown." Think of it as dangerous.

Litter enforcement came up: need to educate people to not litter; we don't have money for clean-up or enforcement.

To some extent can be combined with neighborhood watch in a community. National Night Out in community Janie came from, city divided into districts, and one person has to step up, getting people out, getting them to talk about different crimes, creating dialogue, knowing who your neighbors are.

City could hand out door hangers. One person representative for our neighborhood would ask, "Will you donate?" Neighborhood Challenge, people willing, not only to help out with labor but with supplies.

For that type of thing to be successful in Syracuse needs cooperation of city government, need city to pick up trash that day. Trash collection: In city don't have those covered bins, maybe sometimes when trash gets thrown some of blows around; that may be the problem. Point is that people who collect the garbage need to pick up garbage that falls out.

Why not segregate recycling at a street level? We don't have any public space recycling? Segregate more. Business model, implement, thinking for downtown, people putting things out on different days. City at one point, double bin? Half for garbage, half for recycling in city neighborhoods. Can't be that much money to set up the systems.

Greener Corners is a business for public space recycling. They provide separate bins for garbage, glass paper, put advertising on bins, take all profits from advertising, and then after three year period profits from sold advertisements shared with city. That is how they make money. Would have been no cost but someone has to pay for hauling, and we didn't think they'd get advertising revenue projected.

Need to get DPW, transportation person at next meeting.

Back to Prezi:

### **Litter prevention**

Keep America Beautiful, Largest volunteer-based community action and education organization

Focus on why littering occurs, when people see litter, they are more likely to litter, litter begets litter.

They are trying to redo the education on litter.

One of main parts of littering is cigarettes; high percent of trash is cigarette butts.

Graffiti prevention: Education program matched with grant program, fairly successful in use.

KAB, setting up awards, a series of awards that they try to generate excitement about those awards.

### Keep Cincinnati Beautiful

Dealing with vacant and dilapidated buildings, set up local artists, architects, planners.

Shown: A building that has been painted over to improve image of area.

### Signage:

#### Pittsburgh

Directional Signage reinvented, formerly geared for people driving; signage is now updated for bikers and walkers.

Oakland District of Pittsburgh: Branding themselves with oak leaf and circle, for high-tech movement, relatively recent attempt on their part.

Cleveland sign; using mural as a sign. "Welcome to the neighborhood" mural on the side of building.

### Civic Image:

Pittsburgh is embracing its history, reuse of buildings.

Chicago: seating bus stop, beautified by flowers.

Toledo: Art Commission of Greater Toledo, branding as an arts city, known for glass work. Fund raisers keep money coming in for arts based projects. Improving conditions for artists, creating opportunities for artists. Artomatic 419: Every year take two abandoned buildings and turn them into art galleries.

Revamping transportation system: adding art to buses, images to buses.

Minneapolis Great Streets Program: Businesses pool into fund for façade improvement, e.g. West Lake Street, working together to making commercial street more appealing.

Buffalo: Complete Streets: First Project completed 2010, have a Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Board

Walkable Streets, Dom Nozzi - Guides for creating walkable streets, step-by-step guidelines.

Portland creating a bike friendly culture and supporting local purveyors of bikes.

Davis, California, bike and pedestrian paths.

Additional Comments:

Let's focus on things that are already being done in Syracuse: Pointing to what is right and what can be built on.

Part of image is connectivity, finalizing our image, connecting the pieces together.

Diane Kuehn, at ESF, has action items for connectivity for parks, relating neighborhood to parks, etc.

Lots of things that can be done privately in beautification, but what can't be done privately is signage. In Syracuse, the lack of good signage can be frustrating to visitors. City had Matching Grant on wayfinding signage, never used, (Merike) study done it was for pedestrian signage.

What other partners do we need on board? How do we get them invested in the process?

Direction gets everyone involved volunteer driven, where they can get in and have some coordinating mechanism.

Sandra will work on outline for Report