

Kupfrian Park PACE-EH Project
Meeting Minutes
November 27, 2006

Mary Beverly, facilitator from the Escambia County Health Department opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. by giving a brief overview of the Kupfrian Park PACE-EH Project with a Power Point presentation. Graphs were presented breaking down the survey results and other data collected. Recent photos of the Kupfrian Park area were also reviewed and showed evidence of the issues noted in the preliminary survey such as flooding, lack of lighting, overgrown drainage ditches and lack of sidewalks. One of the photos indicated an immediate safety issue for children and pedestrians crossing at the Avery Street roundabout. There are no signs indicating the need to slow down and watch for children crossing the street at the daycare located on the corner.

Fifteen attendees were noted on the roster and Ms. Beverly requested that each agency representative introduce themselves to the group. It was noted at that time that a contact list for agency representatives had been developed and copies were available for the group.

Ms. Beverly reported that an article has been written for the newspaper regarding the Kupfrian Park project in an effort to educate and involve more residents of the community. After review by the Escambia County Health Department Public Information Officer, Ms. Molly Payne-Hardin, it should be printed soon.

Ms. Joy Blackmon, County Engineering, spoke to the group and informed everyone that work had already begun on the planning for improvements to the area. The county is currently working with Thompson Engineering to develop three plans to address the issues. The first plan will be a "sky's the limit" plan and will outline the best case scenario, without regard to budget and funding. The other plans will be trimmed down versions and reflect budget and funding restraints. Ms. Blackmon stated that she was excited about the project and encouraged the group to provide recommendations to her agency for the development of these plans. Ms. Blackmon stressed that this community "belongs to the residents" and that she would not do anything without the approval of the residents.

Mr. Chris Dugas, Baptist Hospital Representative, reported to the group on further expansion plans of the hospital. There have been rumors going around regarding Baptist and plans to "buy out" residents. Ms. Rosa Stallworth stated that when she went door to door trying to get surveys completed, a resident told her that she was not interested in participating because Baptist Hospital is going to buy her property and has plans to buy out several properties. Per Mr. Dugas, at the present time, Baptist Hospital has acquired all the property they are interested in obtaining for future growth. He said that they do not plan to buy any more properties within the Kupfrian Park footprint. He also reported that the hospital has been working with Habitat for Humanity in developing some of their properties into residential structures in order to maintain the residential aspect of the Kupfrian Park area. Group members were encouraged to call John Porter, Executive Director of Baptist Hospital with any further questions or concerns.

Per Mary Beverly: A map was presented generated through ECUA. The map shows an overlay of Baptist Hospital's properties with ECUA existing sewer lines and proposed sewer lines for a sewer expansion. Data on failing septic tanks is something that will be investigated to get enough data to indicate a public health issue and environmental impact. Mary Beverly volunteered to go to homes that want to participate and do an inspection of the septic system. It will be useful to know the age of the systems and whether they are functional. Also, it will be useful to know the location of the water table in relation to the system for impact to groundwater and surface water. This would help to make a "public health argument". Also, we need more signatures on the petition.

District 3 Escambia County Commissioner, Marie Young, was in attendance and stated her support for the project. Ms. Joy Blackmon, County Engineering, encouraged the group to think "outside the box" when making recommendations such as possibly diverting traffic from Avery Street to prevent speeding in this high pedestrian area. Ms. Young also stated that her contacts with city and county officials would be beneficial to the project and offered her assistance and support. She said that she has been working in this area for a long time.

Mr. John Wyche was introduced to the group. He informed the group that he and Ms. Beulah Black worked together to get the traffic calming "round-a-bouts" installed. He went door to door in the neighborhood a couple of years back and got signatures from everyone on a petition for sidewalks, lighting and traffic calming. He said that it is time something has been done about the flooding.

Ms. Christine Harris-Lewis, Kupfrian Park Team Member and resident, expressed her concern over the round-a-bouts. She said that they do not work. People just accelerate through them. She said more needs to be done to slow the traffic to protect pedestrians and the children crossing the street at the daycare. She also said that more help is needed from the residents of the area and wanted to know what more could be done to get neighborhood folks interested.

Per Mary Beverly, an article was written for the newspaper that could not be published this time around. However, the Escambia County Health Department will make sure that an article is published prior to the next meeting. With more press involvement, maybe more residents will understand that we are serious.

Commissioner Young stated that sometimes it is difficult for elderly people to make it to evening meetings. She suggested reaching residents by letter, or door to door. She also said that it would be very costly to remove the traffic "roundabouts" (\$20,000) and suggests putting out (children crossing signs).

Note:

On September 16, 2006, Mary Beverly along with Rosa Stallworth and Ms. Hooks and NAACP Youth Group went door to door conducting surveys and inviting folks to the meetings. Every month flyers are mailed out to the residents advertising the meetings. This month a formal invitation letter was mailed along with a flyer. Rosa Stallworth and her sister, Christine Harris-Lewis have been going door to door trying to collect more surveys and get the public sewer petition signed. To date we have a total of 20 signatures on the public sewer petition and 29 surveys returned. An article will be advertised in the local newspaper and minority paper to announce the next meeting. Discussions are going on now regarding inviting the press to the meetings, radio advertisements and a small health fair.

It was decided that due to the busy holiday season we would postpone meeting until January 29, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.