



## **Neighborhood Connections**

### **Neighborhood Representatives Meeting**

### **September 19, 2016**

Kick-off meeting for the Neighborhood Connections initiative; 20 neighborhoods were represented!

Josh Weinberg and Clay Frickey, co-project managers for Neighborhood Connections opened the meeting, introduced various staff members who were present, and shared general information about the project and the night's agenda. Josh then turned the meeting over to Kelly DiMartino, Assistant City Manager.

Kelly's comments:

- This initiative is a passion area for City Manager Darin Atteberry, as well as the Executive Leadership Team for the City of Fort Collins
- Mr. Atteberry has been interested in similar initiatives for over 20 years
  - He spent time in the Washington area where neighborhood organizations were and continue to be very active
  - He saw the power and benefits of these groups first-hand
  - He served as a liaison to his neighborhood and was able to experience how useful this can be for both a City organization and the neighborhoods it serves
  - He has a vision of expanding and connecting neighborhoods
- City has a history of engaging with the Community, but think there is much more that can be done; this provides additional opportunities to do so
- Really excited about the benefits this initiative will bring, including the social elements/connections that will be established, the problem-solving opportunities that will be identified, and the leadership capacity within the Community that will be developed
- Expect this to be a lasting best practice for neighborhood engagement
  - Will impact individual neighborhoods and beyond
  - Will set an example for other communities to follow
- Often get asked by others "What is Fort Collins' secret sauce?"
  - Big part is co-creating with residents on many things that results in a community that people love and want to be a part of
  - Engaging with residents is another factor
  - Fort Collins residents are engaged, involved, and have high expectations for their Community and the City organization
- Maintaining resources is another goal. In the Budgeting for Outcomes (BFO) process there are 7 Outcome areas. One of those is Neighborhood Livability and Social Health. This initiative falls within this outcome area and is part of several efforts that are a priority for Council and City leadership. These efforts are intended to keep Fort Collins special and to preserve the character of our City.
- Want to bring neighborhood visions to fruition. City leaders are excited to hear about what the goals/visions of each neighborhood are. Some things they have heard about include:
  - Want way to make more meaningful connections within neighborhoods
  - Want more customized neighborhood updates/communications
  - Want to sharpen leadership skills within the Community (CityWorks class is one option)

- City Manager is passionate about Neighborhood Connections and about the idea of co-creation with Community residents – this can be very powerful! City leaders are very excited to see what will come of these efforts!

In response to a question about how the pilot neighborhoods were chosen, Josh answered that this was done as an application process, that 28 neighborhoods applied (not all had complete applications), and that all 20 of the neighborhoods with complete applications were invited to participate.

Next, the meeting focused on what neighborhood representatives were hoping to get out of Neighborhood Connections:

1. Mountaineer - #11:
  - a. Generally a happy, healthy neighborhood; rep had lived here for 12 years
  - b. Primary concern is a new development under consideration in the area and that it does not fit with the character of the surrounding neighborhoods
  - c. Have a website for Rogers Park that is used extensively
  - d. Challenges noted:
    - i. Communication
    - ii. Keeping vision alive
    - iii. Finding common ground and respecting differences
  - e. Rep loves being involved in different neighborhood types, setups, etc.

Representative also mentioned that she has children who live in Martinez Park Co-Housing and that she has been very engaged in this concept since the 1990s. She gave specifics about the benefits of co-housing projects:

- Have intentional design
- Have common house/area with kitchen and dining areas so residents can have meals and spend time together
- Often have shared laundry spaces, shared equipment, etc.
- Good scenario to help others raise/supervise kids

2. North College Gateway - #2:
  - a. Have started efforts by getting people involved in arts
  - b. Have established partnerships with the City, Vida Sana, the bike coalition and others to further efforts
  - c. Have a focus on creativity and being healthy/active
  - d. Have a focus on collective equity and inclusiveness
  - e. Lots of issues are forcing displacement; hoping that focus on the arts will be a tool to help people
  - f. Neighborhood Connections provides an opportunity to capture diversity; have a variety of residents from low-income, to students, to very wealthy
  - g. Increasing interest in development; URA is providing some stimulus for economic development
  - h. Currently planning cultural events and holding formal monthly meetings where they talk about the flavor of the neighborhoods and the vision they want to create
  - i. Have left boundaries open to all who want to be involved – letting people decide for themselves. Open to Tres Colonias and others who want to participate.

3. North College Gateway – second speaker:

- a. Friend of Andrew, the first rep who spoke for this area
  - b. She is from Canada and runs the Youth Art Connection in her area
  - c. She is excited about this initiative in Fort Collins and thinks it has great potential
  - d. She mentioned the National Consortium of Creating Spaces that is occurring in New York yet this year that she, Andrew and City staff will be attending.
    - i. Josh and Clay have been invited to speak at this event!
4. Sailcrest - #18:
- a. Cul-de-sac with 29 units.
  - b. Have two HOAs they are involved with since Mountain Range Farms was incorporated.
  - c. Large area around them; they don't currently work with other nearby residents and would like to see this change.
  - d. Have some issues with City-owned property in their area not being maintained; seeking solutions to this.
  - e. Have a pond area/swamp land where this is a problem as well; want to partner with people, businesses, the City, or others who can help them get this area cleaned up.
5. Pelican Ridge - #20:
- a. Near Trilby and Lemay; so far south that they are not connected at this point.
  - b. Representative is the President of their HOA.
  - c. Have a very nice neighborhood.
  - d. Want to find ways to interact; hope this gives them opportunities to work with other neighborhood representatives and get tips on how to grow and connect.
  - e. Really hoping to find ways to get connected.
6. Pelican Ridge - #20 – second speaker/neighbor:
- a. She is from the East Coast and is finding there is a bit of a learning curve here.
  - b. It has been kind of up and down for her; trying to learn about affordable housing and related issues, CARE housing, and other items that impact the neighborhood. Still has lots of questions.
  - c. Transportation runs along the end of their street, but there is no opportunity to access the bus there; why?
  - d. No real walkability throughout neighborhood; forces you to have a car.
  - e. Parking is difficult; people are already parking on both sides of the street. Not a lot of opportunity or draw for people to come.
  - f. Have more development coming; concerned that the neighborhood will not be able to accommodate this.
  - g. Concerned about safety for the kids; everything seems to be so separate.

Question was asked as to how much power the City has to get developers to create neighborhoods that are more conducive to connecting.

- Layout makes a difference!
- Early on, their neighborhood was filled with elderly people; now changing.
- Have no front porches in their neighborhood and no place that is conducive to engagement.
- Aware of other neighborhoods, such as College Heights, where there are wide streets and large front yards with porches. Creates spaces where people connect!

City staff answered that Planning is encouraging this more as projects come in through Land Use Code requirements. In that regard, we do have a lot of pull in this regard since we write the code.

The current code encourages:

- Connectivity
- Walk- and bike-friendly amenities
- More public spaces

It was mentioned that even if people have the space and/or the amenities for engagement, they still have to be willing to do it. However, it was noted that it seems like it would be easier if the neighborhoods are set up in ways to facilitate communication/connection.

7. Hannah Farm - #4:

- a. Neighborhood is awesome!
- b. Mix of people who have been in the neighborhood for 40-50 years and some for 2; quickly changing.
- c. Good connections within the neighborhood.
- d. Have neighborhood clean ups twice a year.
- e. Participate in Neighborhood Night Out events.
- f. Have and use Nextdoor (but don't particularly care for it).
- g. No HOA.
- h. Tried to get someone to change the Fort Collins flag because they didn't care for the design; have since created their own neighborhood flag. Currently trying to get enough people interested in one so that they will be affordable for everyone.

8. East Side - #9:

- a. Moved to this area 1 year ago from the Kechter/Ziegler area.
- b. Has become very engaged.
- c. Does a lot of biking and utilizes MAX.
- d. Has connected with neighbors through his kids as he goes from yard to yard to find them!
- e. Near the CSU Performing Arts Center – gets the benefit from their bands occasionally.
- f. Have a mix of rentals and long-term residents.
- g. Utilize the Nextdoor app.
- h. Have a hoarder in the neighborhood that creates some issues. Has been hard to get something done about this.
- i. Equipment noise from the CSU property is an issue sometimes.
- j. Neighborhood holds events such as pumpkin carving parties (neighborhood provides 200-300 pumpkins) and wine parties!
- k. Excited to be a part of this and to see how he can help grow this project!
- l. Wants to enhance communications in his neighborhood and continue to grow things.

9. Trailhead - #3:

- a. Brand new to Fort Collins; left Texas where he had an acreage and no lives in Fort Collins and has no lawn!
- b. Has 2 HOAs that he is involved with.
- c. Likes Old Town and public transportation (within walking distance of a bus stop).
- d. Neighborhood meets their tastes/expectations.
- e. Most people know him because of his 120 pound black Newfoundland dog that he walks every day.
- f. Biggest problem is the people who move in not understanding the HOA; its purpose, etc. Also don't understand what the City can do for them; don't see the

City as a benefit of help for them.

10. Old Town West - #7:

- a. Lead for the Nextdoor application in her neighborhood – recently found a lost dog!
- b. Services on the Landmark Preservation Commission for the City.
- c. Writes a local history and transportation blog.
- d. Very involved in her kids' schools.
- e. Issues include:
  - i. Safe Route to School is not available for all
  - ii. Gentrification
  - iii. Parking
  - iv. Infill/redevelopment
  - v. Vacation rentals
  - vi. Affordability

11. Old Town West - #7 – Second speaker/neighbor:

- a. Comes from Atlanta.
- b. Finds Old Town West to be very friendly with good amenities.
- c. Loves to connect with people and loves to write.
- d. In Atlanta, her neighborhood was in disrepair; was a historic district. She was involved in an effort to create a festival and tour of homes for her area. They were able to net around \$75K per year (\$150K last year) which stayed in the neighborhood. They were able to use the funds to plant trees, solve legal issues, etc. They had neighborhood clean ups, helped people as they moved in, had a neighborhood newsletter (printed and then moved online), and had annual holiday events.
- e. In Fort Collins, she has invited a number of people to her house; wants to invest and get connected.
- f. She is concerned about affordable housing issues and interested in creative arts and in music districts.

12. Old Town West - #7 – Third speaker/neighbor:

- a. Now lives just outside of the City's limits; was in Old Town West.
- b. Lived in the area for 10+ years.
- c. Rented the entire time he was there; rent increased to the point that he could no longer stay in this area; gentrification is an issue here.
- d. Wants to build community in his new area; excited about the possibilities.

13. Old Town West - #7 – Fourth speaker/neighbor:

- a. Have been in the area for 30+ years; know a lot of about area and their neighborhood.
- b. There are a lot of engaged people in the area.
- c. Affordability and gentrification are issues; transitions are creating tensions.
- d. Love the Old Town area – walkable, near the Arts, attractive place to be, lots of people doing things.
- e. Spoke about Transition Streets – a program they are piloting in their area.
- f. Plan to get efforts going related to the City's Climate Action Plan.
- g. Neighborhood is about community resilience; working on a seven week program that will help the neighborhood deal with energy issues, waste, food, transportation, etc. Looking at ways to transition off of fossil fuels.
  - i. People raise chickens, have LSAs – working to become more resilient.

- h. Have expressive arts programs for kids.
- i. Have little free libraries and toy boxes in their neighborhood.

14. Old Town West - #7 – Fifth speaker/neighbor:

- a. Moved here in 1985; many neighbors had been born in the 1900s. Arranged potluck for the neighborhood and had the older neighbors tell their stories and talk about how the neighborhood had changed over time; neighbors really gelled over this!
- b. Used to have Helping Hand symbols on properties throughout the neighborhoods; don't see these anymore. This was a really good thing for kids. Used to be on City vehicles as well.

15. University Acres - #10:

- a. Utilize Nextdoor – have a love/hate relationship with it.
- b. Love events; want to implement a neighborhood Olympics event that would include food/drink and friendly competitions between neighborhoods.
- c. Involved in Neighborhood Night Out; think this type of activity should be done more than once per year.
- d. Provided information about an event in Canada where the Fire Department would host a party/barbeque for the community with trucks, sirens, etc.
- e. Interested in popcorn or other types of parties that could be held throughout the neighborhood so that more people could/would get involved.
- f. Interested in formalizing a brand for the neighborhood and getting flags, signs, etc.
- g. Concerned about the neighborhood being a direct route to the Emergency Room and the problems that are created as people are discharged and wander through their properties. They have had transients enter their garages; impacting their security. This is keeping people from connecting and engaging with one another because they do not want to hang out in front yards and/or garages due to this.

16. Capitol Hill - #5:

- a. Moved to the area six years ago from Lee Martinez Park area
- b. Created a physical newsletter for her previous area for years
- c. Previously neighborhood held monthly meetings at the Farm
- d. Feels somewhat lonely in her new neighborhood; people have been there for a long time and has been hard to connect with people
- e. Went to Neighborhood Night Out event at Hannah Farms for connection this round; simply didn't have the energy to try to get something going in her neighborhood.
- f. Would like us to explore having a physical newsletter.
- g. She teaches a course at CSU on communication – this is a passion of hers. She mentioned that a focus of this group could be to explore what Neighborhoods can do for the City, i.e., with initiatives such as the Climate Action Plan.
- h. She is a proponent of the arts! She recently read an article that stated that the arts are what make communities successful/great!

17. Indian Hills West - #14:

- a. 38 units
- b. Enjoy location; love the Midtown landscape – worry that we may soon lose Ash trees throughout the community due to the Ash bore.
  - i. A number of people are anticipating this and doing what they can to be forward-thinking about this issue.
  - ii. City has some programs available to help neighborhoods increase their tree

canopies.

- iii. Planning does not allow Ash trees any longer.
- iv. Forestry Department actively inventorying where all of the Ash trees are; these make up approximately 1/3 of all trees throughout the community – trying to protect as many as they can in certain areas.
- c. Neighborhood has mature demographic of owners; only have one younger family in the area.
- d. Revitalization and reconnection with the community is of huge interest to them; lots of opportunities exist with surrounding neighborhoods – garage sales, Neighborhood Night Out, other events.

18. Buckingham - #6:

- a. Has been in the area for 11 years; loves it – really great neighborhood!
  - i. By the trail
  - ii. Close to breweries
- b. Have seen a lot of transition – lots of younger families are moving in.
- c. Development keeps coming; has brought some “colorful” activity up and down Linden and into their park.
  - i. Want to preserve the character of their neighborhood.
  - ii. Want to feel safe and be able to walk Downtown without fear.
- d. Connected with a few moms on each side of her street, have some connections with the elderly in her area, have a wine club that meets occasionally.
- e. Looking for a unified voice and better connections for all.

19. Avery Park - #12:

- a. Has been in the area for over 20 years.
- b. Has seen a lot of transition in the neighborhood.
- c. Raised his kids here; now is raising his grandkids here.
- d. Demographics vary greatly from 18 year olds who just want to drink beer, to the elderly, to people who want to live here long-term and raise families, etc.
- e. Use Yahoo groups, neighborhood watch, etc., but doesn't work for all residents.
- f. Talked about the Seppo project and how this resulted in creation of their neighborhood association; call themselves a steering committee.
- g. Just held their annual meeting. Talked about:
  - i. Improvements made and coming to their park
  - ii. Tree canopy
  - iii. Ditch maintenance
  - iv. Sidewalk improvements
  - v. Traffic
- h. Encouraged people not to be afraid to ask for BFO funding to get things done.
- i. Spoke about increased efforts with code compliance and U+2 compliance and how this has improved the neighborhood.
- j. Spoke about efforts with the utilities on various projects.
- k. Spoke about addressing safety issues with Police.
  - i. Highlighted potential Campus West Police satellite office they may get funded.
- l. Issue with infill development and short term rentals in this area.

20. Crestmore - #8:

- a. Located south of City Park.
- b. Mix of housing; lots of student rentals.

- c. Lots of young families and people who have been here since the neighborhood was built – have a lot of diversity in this regard.
- d. Have been able to do lots to connect
  - i. Were able to get a reduction in trash trucks who move through the area
  - ii. Kids walk to school together
  - iii. People in the area are involved with beekeeping
  - iv. They borrow and implement good ideas they hear from others, the schools, etc.
- e. Looking to find ways to keep connections going and to keep people in the neighborhood.

Next, meeting shifted to discussion around building leadership capacity within the Community with Martin Carcasson from the CSU Center for Public Deliberation.