

# discover together | South St. Paul

*OUR PURPOSE: discover how community members, community agencies, and Dakota County can continue to work together to invest in making South St. Paul a great place for all who live, learn, work and play here today and into the future*

*GUIDING PRINCIPLES: Believe governments can have a positive role by facilitating community conversations and enabling collective action to address shared challenges; magnify and leverage assets of the community; build and invest in relationships across differences; identify resources to act on ideas from all parts of the community to help South St. Paul continue to thrive; know this work will be sustainable if we play together and find joy in this work*

## **Core Team Meeting**

July 24, 2017

### **Discover Together South St. Paul Core Team Members Present**

Kathleen Simon (Dakota County), Andrea Zuber (Dakota County), Deb Griffith (South St. Paul), Connie Garling-Squire (South St. Paul Schools), Jill Pittelkow (Dakota County), Rev. Oliver White (Clark-Grace UCC), Stephanie Radtke (Dakota County), Jeanne Zehnder (South St. Paul Community Education), Jackie Forrester (Dakota County), Robin Phinney (Future Services Institute, Humphrey School UMN), Jen Mein (Future Services Institute, Humphrey School UMN)

**Core Team Members Not Present:** Rev. Patrick Joiner (Luther Memorial Lutheran Church), Jodi Sandfort (Future Services Institute, Humphrey School UMN), Daisy Medina-Cuenca (South St. Paul Schools)

### **Others Present**

(from South St. Paul community and administration) Ruby Steward, Lois Swanson, George Savanick, Linda Grotto, Branna Lindell, Mindy Ostrow, Ryan Garcia, Steve King (from Dakota County) Tony Schertler, Anna Judge, Lisa Honenstein, Rebecca Bowers

### **Meeting Purpose**

To build collective knowledge of Dakota County Community Development Agency services and programs, to grow understanding of housing needs and challenges, and to explore opportunities for us to work together to address needs in South St. Paul

### **WELCOME TO CLARK-GRACE United Church of Christ**

Rev. Oliver White offered a warm welcome. Huge thanks to Linda and others who provided the generous and delicious spread of morning refreshments and treats!

Rev. White shared a little bit about the church. Clark-Grace is a very socially oriented congregation, holding onto the belief that even the smallest things you do, can make a huge difference. They reach out to the community, example their feeding program. All are invited to a fish fry they are hosting Aug. 12 to support ministry and outreach. This is a very diverse church (age, ethnicities). They don't differentiate – welcome and accept everyone. It is a mixed race church (50% black and 50% white). No other church like this in South St. Paul. Only UCC church in Minnesota that is growing.

## INTRODUCTIONS

Each person in the room introduced themselves and responded to the prompt, “share one word you associate with home”.

Family, Safe, Chaos, Boxed, Love, Joy, Support, Maintenance, Weekend, Hiding place, Peace, Laughter, Relaxation, Tradition, Enthusiasm, Boys, Stability, Necessary, Acceptance, Projects

## PRESENTATION BY TONY SCHERTLER

Stephanie Radtke welcomed Tony Schertler, Executive Director of the Dakota County Community Development Agency. Schertler has been with the CDA since January 2016. Prior to that worked at a private finance firm for 10 years and before that in city governance in planning and economic development.

Community development in networking individualism – everyone would like to live independently and take care of our families as part of the American experience. Community efforts build up structures that shift and change as communities face changing dynamics. Helping our communities thrive has been a focus of many programs over the past 40 years.

A packet of presentation slides was distributed. Below are some highlights from the presentation and additional information offered:

The mission of the CDA is to improve the lives of Dakota County residents and enhance the economic vitality of communities through housing and community development.

- Over 10,000 people served by CDA rental housing programs daily
- Annually, over 700 households access homebuyer and homeowner education, loan, and grant resources
- Manage over 2,900 units of housing
- Administer state and federal rental assistance programs serving over 2,600 households
- Over \$11 million has been awarded to cities to address redevelopment needs

### CDA Today

- \$22M in housing vouchers
- \$400M in assets; 5<sup>th</sup> largest owner of properties of state
- \$98M is partnership with US Bank for workforce housing – townhomes, single moms
- 113 FTE
- Audited 15 times a year; no audit findings for the past 20 years

### CDA Strategic Priorities

- County Board appointed over CDA and highly engaged. Commissioner Kathleen Gaylord represents South St. Paul. Board currently exploring role of CDA as a developer and evaluating future housing production.
- Financial sustainability. Recognizing that federal funding will decline so will need to shift priorities and come up with creative programs, collaborate, invest sweat equity.

### Major Housing Program Areas

- Rental Housing – senior, workforce, public housing. As of June 1 waiting lists closed with 1500-1700 on waitlist (meaning 1 year + until they can find housing)

- Public housing - 1978 last public housing building built; 1987 tax credit public/private partnership to make housing affordable for 15 years (extended to 30 years) where developer gets a tax credit; CDA became a private investor with US Bank
- Youth Supportive Housing – ages 18-24, homeless; addressing need for those aging out of foster care system

#### Rental Market vs. CDA

- Why Dakota in the business? Only to meet the need for more affordable housing. CDA monitors the rental market so not to cannibalize.
- Money is cheaper for Dakota County and so we can pass savings onto renters
- Encourage those who become stable through housing program to move into the rental market once stabilized
- Folks are struggling, many silent benefits of the programs (health and wellbeing, education)

#### CDA Housing Units by City

- CDA seen as an Urban pioneer
- Need to be very transparent of those we are helping; especially with challenging populations like the youth housing in Eagan

#### Senior Housing Program

- Levy supported (Dakota County taxes), no federal programs
- 1700 units, 29 developments, 3 in SSP (170 units)
- 54.5+
- Also offer premiere spaces that are at or closer to market rate
- For 35% of residents in senior housing programs, social security is their sole source of income

#### Housing Choice Voucher Program

- 600 landlords participate (private property owners)
- Honoring tenant rights
- Dakota County brings in money, inspections to pass Housing Quality Standards

#### Other Rental Assistance Program

- All programs require referrals from Dakota County Community Services or the VA

#### Challenges and Changes

- Decreasing federal funding
- Landlord participation balancing act
- Community support for affordable housing
  - CDA pays attention to curb appeal; high maintenance to ensure community support
- Aging cities and housing stock
- Changing workforce demographics
- Rising senior population
- Increased need for CDA programs – long waiting list

**Q: What do we know about homelessness in Dakota County?**

Difficult to count this population, but we know that in December, 20 people were sleeping in cars that Dakota County knew of. At the end of January there were 60 persons who were homeless and 300 households in need of housing based on central intake/coordinate entry (some have vouchers). Four churches in southern Dakota County serve as emergency shelters; two 8 month old babies to a 72 year old woman were among those served.

Only 2% of apartments in Dakota County are vacant. During these tight market times, landlords can be more choosy. Renters compete with each other – landlords choose someone without a voucher and sparkling credit. During higher vacancy time (5%+) landlords look to the voucher program as a revenue stream – guaranteed renters.

**Q: What about the single family homes teenagers are living in in Apple Valley?**

Not a Dakota County CDA housing program. A number of other service agencies in the county serving at-risk populations.

**Q: Notice there is no workforce housing in South St. Paul. Why and what are some community perceptions about that kind of housing?**

Would go through a process to evaluate the need. CDA workforce housing program right now is a townhouse development serving single moms in partnership with private developers. South St. Paul has limited land and townhome-like property may not be possible. May need to explore multi-family housing option.

Could be blue color work force housing for people who work in South St. Paul. Where would you put it? What is the style? Other tax-credit programs used by developers. A lot more flexibility with regards to target population. Income limits – family of 4, \$44,000; 50% of area medium. Can't go below \$16,000 a family.

In Rosemount Townhome project, community raised concern about who the people were that were moving in. Once they had more information and mayor vocalized his support, community more supportive. The development is high quality – CDA does not underfund maintenance.

## **DISCUSSION**

We had the opportunity to process what we heard in small groups and then shared back what was bubbling up for us and what opportunities we saw.

- Can we explore senior/youth combined housing?
- Mental health important component of the any housing conversation
- Clark-Grace interested in meeting with CDA to learn more about how crisis sheltering
- Need to educate the community on lifecycle housing
- Need to address rumors, perception of the South St. Paul ordinance; privatization of group homes, zoning
- Explore workforce housing and challenge negative perception of residents who live in workforce housing
- Need to build environment for small business to connect with government to better understand the opportunity out there for housing investments

## VILLAGE NEWS

SSP Community Space Workgroup launching - workgroup meets on 7/31. Members include:

- Jennifer Anderson-Tuttle, Principal Director of Education and Public Sector, LSE Architects
- Matt Carter, Executive Director, Historical Society
- Bob Damon, President, Historical Society Board of Trustees
- Connie Garling-Squire, Director of Early Learning, South St. Paul Schools
- Leslie Greaves-Radloff, Board member, South St. Library and Historical Society
- Deb Griffith, South St. Paul Community Liaison
- Kathy Halgren, Director, South St. Paul Library
- Steve King, South St. Paul City Manager
- Peter Middlecamp, Owner, Black Sheep Coffee Cafe
- Rev. Amanda Olson de Catillo, Pastor, Luther Memorial Church
- Matt Smith, County Manager, Dakota County
- Charlie Thompson, President and CEO, Neighbors Inc.
- Dr. David Webb, Superintendent, South St. Paul Schools

### Upcoming Pop-up Engagements

- Food Truck Wednesday (Wednesday, 11:00-1:00pm, Bridgepoint Business Park)
- Swimming under the stars (Wednesday, 7:30-9:30pm)
- Farmer's Market (August 2, 2:30-4:30pm, Wakota Fed. CU)
- SSP Small Business Owners (August 8, 7:00-9:00AM, T & T Galley)

Next Core Team Meeting on Monday, August 7; 8:30-10:00AM; location TBD