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FEBRUARY 2017

We hope to see
you there!

- *Neighborhood Task Force Meeting on Saturday, February 11th at 11:30 a.m. Location: Jim's Local Market*
- *People Task Force Meeting on Wednesday, February 15th at 10 a.m. Location: Family Investment Center, Ridley Place*
- *Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting on Wednesday, February 15th at 6 p.m. Location: Family Investment Center*
- *Housing Task Force Meeting on Tuesday, February 21st at 3 p.m. Location: Family Investment Center*
- *Neighborhood Task Force Meeting on Tuesday, February 21st at 6 p.m. Location: Jim's Local Market*



NEWPORT NEWS CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD

Get involved.

For questions or to **VOLUNTEER**, please contact: Garrett Morgan, Senior Planner at gmorgan@nnva.gov Phone: 757.926.8761 (Department of Planning) Britta Ayers, Manager of Comprehensive Planning at bayers@nnva.gov

What Happened in January?

The Steering Committee and task forces met in January to continue their discussions on assets and needs in the community and develop questions for the Needs Assessment and Community Survey. The Housing Task Force also performed a design charrette to develop conceptual ideas for the housing component of the Transformation Plan.

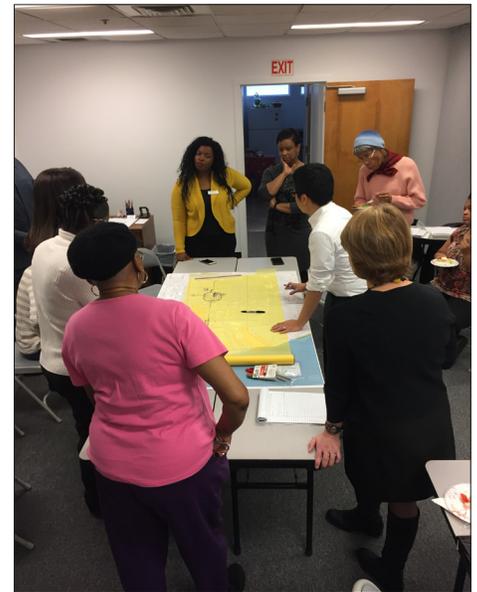
For meeting agendas and summaries, check out our project website at www.newportnewschoice.com. If you are unable to access the website and want more information, please contact Garrett Morgan, Senior Planner at (757) 926-8761. Get involved and stay informed!

Meet Neighborhood Advocate and Property Owner George Covington

We recently had the pleasure of speaking with George Covington, a member of the Newport News Choice Neighborhood Steering Committee and the Downtown Newport News Merchants and Neighbors Association.

How long have you operated in the neighborhood?

I established my foothold in the neighborhood in the mid-1970s and have



The Housing Task Force discussed potential housing investments in the neighborhood.

continued to be associated with the East End of the City for over 20 years. I have extensively invested in the area by way of property interests on 13th and 14th streets, where I own several residences and lots.

Why did you choose to invest here?

I did not choose the location; the location chose me. Years ago, my father-in-law showed me five duplexes on 13th Street. I decided to purchase the five duplexes. An added incentive to purchase included the benefit of a tax write off as my salary was increasing at the same time. Subsequently, I purchased

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Mr. Covington was a little camera-shy, so we share this photo taken in the community.

additional single-family homes and adjacent lots that were available. At the time, the area showed potential such as offering throughways throughout the community which was attractive from an investment perspective. Further, it offered the possibility of improving and changing the current zoning designations from residential to office, retail, or other commercial use.

What are 3 challenges that you think the neighborhood must address?

1. Community unity, which entails interacting with the police force, City administration, Council, and city departments.
2. The City should exercise an increased level of transparency when it has information that has an impact on the health, social, and economic conditions of the residents. This would promote a partnership between the community and the City allowing the residents to become more informed and involved in their own welfare. Further, this open communication would help to elimi-

nate the distrust of residents so that they can take full advantage of the resources that are available to them.

We as community residents should not have to accept the current environmental related conditions (air pollution and contamination) that have been long standing for over 30 years. Until we as a people accept and commit to doing something about this dilemma, a cloud will remain over the community which leads to distrust among residents. This is especially true when we see other developments blossom within the city.

3. Employment. The average income of residents in the community is far below the poverty level. It's a challenge to create development in a community if there's no economic base to support it. The recruitment for manufacturing, service, and hi-tech jobs are desperately needed in the community to provide a means to increase the quality of life for each resident. Those that live there see obtaining employment and a livable wage as an unreachable dream.

What are 3 significant changes that you would like to see in the neighborhood?

1. Better relationships and growing partnerships between the residents and all city administration. Police authorities should inform the community of incidents which have occurred and the community should reciprocate. It is after all, our neighborhood. I also believe that the South Precinct station should be designed in a way that invites community participation by being more welcoming rather than having to be buzzed into the station to gain access. All relationships

between the community and the various administrations could be served by improved access, mutual respect, and responsiveness.

2. Remove all unsightly areas within the community such as dilapidated homes, vacant lots, and debris on the streets and sidewalks. In addition, any unsightly area in the community, such as places where there is a lack of maintenance and maintaining trash free streets and sidewalks.
3. Reduction in violence, crimes, and gang related activities.

What sorts of services, stores, and/or amenities do you think could enhance/enliven/strengthen the neighborhood?

1. Improved and sustainable transportation so that residents can travel throughout the city and other municipalities.
2. Establish a tutor and mentoring program between the young residents and employers within the city.

Meet Jim Scanlon, Owner of Jim's Local Market

This month we also had the pleasure of checking in with Jim Scanlon, owner of Jim's Local Market and member of the Neighborhood Task Force. Jim and his great team prepare the wonderful snacks and meals for our committee and task force meetings. Jim's Local Market opened on May 10, 2016 at Brooks Crossing on Jefferson Avenue.

Why did you choose to locate your business here?

The City of Newport News recognized

need for a grocery store in the Southeast Community, a limited food access area. We worked with the City to develop and construct Jim's Local Market to serve the community.

What are some of the things you like best about the neighborhood?

I like the neighborhood's history and heritage. We see people coming in on Sundays who grew up in the area come in after church. There is a strong cultural history, especially with the arts, with figures like Pearl Bailey and Ella Fitzgerald. It's great to be a part of that.

What are 3 challenges that you think the neighborhood must address?

I think the major issue is crime. All other issues will be improved when crime goes down. Loitering is also a concern because it contributes to stigmas that may prevent other businesses from locating here.

What are 3 significant changes that you would like to see in the neighborhood?

I would like to see more business growth in the area, especially along the Southeast Jefferson corridor. We need to have compatible businesses, not just at Brooks Crossing, but across the entire community.

What sorts of services, stores, and/or amenities do you think could enhance/enliven/strengthen the neighborhood?

The neighborhood needs stores that meet the needs of everyday, regular shopping. It needs a department store that sells affordable shoes and clothes. It needs a hardware store. It needs businesses that residents use every day.



Jim's Local Market opened on May 10, 2016 at Brooks Crossing on Jefferson Avenue.

Did You Know...

...about the **Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program**? Offered through the Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NNRHA), the program offers families in the housing choice voucher program or living in public housing the opportunity to become economically independent, and can provide a path to homeownership. NNRHA helps eligible families establish long-term goals to become self-sufficient and transition out of income-assisted housing, and coordinates public and private resources to support them in achieving their goals.

FSS is a five-year program that requires selected heads of household to sign a "Contract of Participation" that covers everyone in the household. The contract states the rights and responsibilities of the family and NNRHA, identifies the resources and supportive services that will be provided to the family to meet their needs, and lists the activities to be completed by the family to

achieve their goals. The head of household is required to seek and retain employment. Once the household begins to receive income from employment or the family's income increases, NNRHA establishes a FSS Escrow Account to help the family save money. Money in the account earns interest. Once the Contract of Participation is successfully completed, the head of household receives the money in the account which can be used to purchase a home or toward further education. NNRHA has assisted over 160 families become first-time homebuyers.

Through the FSS Program, eligible families can access a range of services including education programs, job training, financial counseling, homeownership counseling, parenting skills, and personal counseling. A NNRHA counselor coaches the family through the five-year contract period to help them achieve their goals.

NNRHA has helped 172 families reach their goal of homeownership through the FSS Program. Homes purchased to date total in excess of \$19.5 million.

For More Information

Please call for an appointment.

- *Elsie Hines, Public Housing FSS Coordinator at (757) 928-3684*
- *Joceyln Brewer, Housing Choice Voucher FSS Program Coordinator at (757) 928-6072*
- *Helen Pyles, FSS Homeownership Coordinator at (757) 928-6074*

February Events at Pearl Bailey Library

The Newport News Public Library System provides free programs and services for all ages, year-round, at four full-service libraries and a public law library. The Pearl Bailey Library is located at 2510 Wickham Avenue in Southeast Newport News. Come in and check them out! All programs are FREE and open to the public. For more information, visit www.nnva.gov/library, call 757-247-8677, or stop by.

Monday, February 6 and 27 at 11 a.m.

Preschool Storytime: This fun storytime is designed for children ages 3-5 years. Through books, songs, rhymes and activities, build a foundation for reading readiness.

Tuesday, February 7 at 4 p.m.

Duct Tape Craft: Get creative, and join us for making things out of Duct Tape! (Ages 8+)

Wednesday, February 8 at 10:30 a.m.

Computer Basics 102 (Computer Class): A one-session, two-hour course, students will build upon skills learned in the Computer Basics 101 class. Upon completion, students will be able to use the mouse and perform Computer Basics functions such as open/close win-

dows, type simple text on a document, print, save, and organize documents. **Prerequisites:** Computer Basics 101. (Ages 9+)

Wednesday, February 8 at 5 p.m.

Teen Advisory Committee Meeting: Teens meet monthly to conduct their business meeting and help advise library staff on ways to improve library programs and services. Committee hours count as community service hours. (Ages 12 to 18)

Monday, February 13 at 11 a.m.

Preschool Storytime: This fun storytime is designed for children ages 3-5 years. Through books, songs, rhymes and activities, we will build a foundation for reading readiness.

Monday, February 13 at 4 p.m.

Make It Monday: Join us for making a fun craft that celebrates Black History Month. (Ages 6 to 11)

Thursday, February 16 at 6:30 p.m.

Get the Job Workshop: Part 1: Ready to get a job? Join us for the first of a two part series of Career Readiness for Teens (Ages 13 to 18)! **Resume Building:** Learn about the different components that make up a resume and how to create a clear and concise resume that will stand out among other job applicants!

Saturday, February 18 at 3 p.m.

Anime & Manga Club: Come and enjoy Anime screenings and Manga discussions. At some sessions, we offer Japanese culture related crafts, food, games, origami and interesting facts related to Japanese culture.

Thursday, February 23 at 4:30 p.m.

Male Mentoring Program: This program empowers youth to aspire toward higher education through self-creation, avoidance of risk-taking behaviors, and participation in positive, esteem-building activities. All participants must register and complete a Big Brothers Big Sister application form. Registration is required and ongoing. (Ages 8 to 18)

Thursday, February 23 at 6:30 p.m.

Get the Job Workshop: Part 2: Ready to get a job? Join us for the second of a two part series of Career Readiness for Teens (Ages 13 to 18)!

Mock Interviews: Your resume rocked and you got an interview with a prospective employer! Congrats! Now what? Part Two of our Career Readiness program for Teens focuses on Interview Skills. Take part in a series of Mock Interviews with real potential employers, learn what they're looking for and how to succeed in getting that job offer.

What we are working on this month...

Neighborhood Revitalization Coordinator: The City and NNRHA conducted interviews in January for the Neighborhood Revitalization Coordinator position. The Coordinator will serve as an advocate, resource and liaison to residents, with initial focus in the Choice Neighborhood. Come meet the finalists on Thursday, February 16th from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center.

Task Force Meetings: The task forces will focus on developing questions for and reviewing the Needs Assessment and Community Survey.

Needs Assessment and Community Survey: We plan to start surveying the community in early March. The Planning Team will be at various community meetings and events to get your input. Look for us at the Family Fit and Fun Day at Brooks Crossing on Jefferson Avenue on March 11, 2017.

Bus Trip: Plans are in place to take residents and other community stakeholders on a bus trip to Charlotte, North Carolina. The purpose of the trip is to see several neighborhoods that have transformed or are in the process of transforming through various public-private initiatives and meet some of the many residents, business owners, and other stakeholders involved in the processes. The trip is scheduled for Thursday, March 2, 2017. Seats still available. Call us to reserve your spot on the bus.