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AUGUST 2017

We hope to see
you there!

- *Housing Task Force Meeting on Tuesday, August 15th at 3 p.m. Location: Family Investment Center, 600 Ridley Circle*
- *Neighborhood Task Force Meeting on Tuesday, August 15th at 6 p.m. Location: Family Investment Center, 600 Ridley Circle*
- *People Task Force Meetings on Wednesday, August 9th and on Wednesday, August 16th at 10 a.m. Location: Family Investment Center, 600 Ridley*
- *Annual House of Refuge Worship Center Good News March on Saturday, August 19th from 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The March will begin at Anderson Park, 16th Street and Oak Avenue, and continue to King-Lincoln Park*



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

Comprehensive Plan Update

Have you had a chance yet to look over the City's new comprehensive plan? The Draft One City, One Future Comprehensive Plan, released for public review on July 17th, is a plan to help shape the future of Newport News. It looks at existing conditions – where we are as a community – and establishes a vision for where we want to be in 20 to 30 years. It identifies opportunities and challenges for many topic areas including housing, transportation, economic development, land use, public health and safety. The plan lays out a road map of how we are going to get to where we want to go as a community by setting goals and an action plan. Once adopted, the comprehensive plan serves as the primary tool for our decision makers to decide on land use and investments to improve the overall quality of services and life for our citizens.

Help plan a better future for Newport News by participating in the planning process. Review the One City, One Future Comprehensive Plan and provide your feedback. It is available online at <https://www.nnva.gov/1763/Comprehensive-Plan>, at the City's libraries, and in the Planning Department (City Hall, 2nd Floor). If you missed the Open House at Downing-Gross Cultural

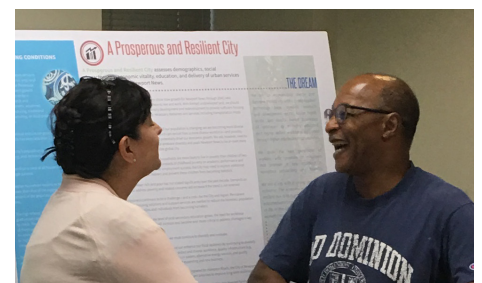
Arts Center on July 17, 2017, check out the video of the presentation on the Planning website.

The Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan will become a part of the comprehensive plan after it is adopted by City Council.

CNI Early Action Activities

As part of the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative a group of neighborhood residents have begun meeting as a committee to come up with and implement early action items that they feel have the greatest potential to make a splash in the neighborhood. Early Action Activities are physical improvements in the Choice Neighborhood completed during the development of the Transformation Plan.

The Early Action Subcommittee considers the results of the Community Survey, feedback from residents at CNI events, and successful



Citizen and Planning Staff interact at Downing Gross Cultural Arts Center during a Comprehensive Plan Open House.

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projects in other cities to help develop projects for the Marshall-Ridley Choice Neighborhood.

The Early Action Subcommittee has identified several projects in the neighborhood to pursue. These include, but are not limited to, the construction of a heritage trail that highlights the neighborhood's unique and vibrant cultural history by painting utility boxes, establishing visual gateways on major roads into the neighborhood to support a sense of place, and the restoration of Pinkett's Beach along the waterfront at King Lincoln Park.

Of the projects identified, Pinkett's Beach was suggested for further exploration by the subcommittee. Pinkett's Beach runs along the shoreline from the Seafood Industrial Park to Aqua Vista apartments. The beach is named for William Ward Pinkett, a successful tailor in the Southeast Community. Pinkett's home was located at 1 Nelms Avenue on the current site of King-Lincoln Park. The City purchased the property in 1943 and opened it as the first interracial beach in Newport News. The beach quickly became a gathering and recreational place for the Southeast Community where festivals and baptisms were common sights! The beach remains an under used asset for the community and city at large.

Through the planning process, it became clear that increased access to the water is a crucial goal of the Transformation Plan. Improving connection between residents and the water can help to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood as well as support local businesses. The first steps towards returning the beach to its former glory is a beach wide clean-up. On August 7th, sailors

from the USS George Washington, an aircraft carrier in for maintenance at Newport News Shipyard, volunteered to do a cleanup blitz. We're very thankful and excited to have the sailors involved in the neighborhood!

After the cleanup, the Early Action Subcommittee, city staff, and neighborhood residents will continue to work together to provide a healthy and safe beach at King-Lincoln Park. If you have questions or would like to become involved in the beach restoration or any other early action activities please contact Carlton Ransom, Neighborhood Revitalization Coordinator, by e-mail at cransom@nnva.gov or by phone at 757-926-8761.

Oral History of the Southeast

On July 25th, community members came together at the Marshall-Early Learning Center for an evening of Oral History of the Southeast Community, as told by residents themselves. Facilitated by Dr. Telly Whitfield, Assistant to the City Manager, the panel discussion featured three prominent members of the Southeast Community in conversation with each other and the larger audience. The panelist included Queen Esther Marrow, a world renowned singer who was a Newport News resident during her teenage years, Colonel Aaron Dotson, a Huntington High School graduate and Fisk University Alumni, and Michelle Horne, the granddaughter of William Ward Pinkett.

Queen Esther Marrow remembered there being a strong sense of community and a respect for elders in the Southeast Community while she was growing up. She said, "It was a wonderful place to live." So



Above: Pinkett's Beach looking West towards the Seafood Industrial Park. Below: Wavescreen Fishing Pier at King-Lincoln Park.



Above: Michelle Horne, Middle: Queen Esther Marrow, Below: Colonel Aaron Dotson

wonderful that in 2004 she came back and brought her family to reside once again. Upon her arrival, Queen quickly realized a lot had changed. She was taken aback because the “love that was once there [in the community], was gone... and fear replaced it instead.” Ultimately, she expressed her desire to get the East End back to what it was.

Michelle Horne remembered the resilience and fight embedded into the spirits of Southeast residents and especially the drive of her grandfather William Ward Pinkett and the Scott family to fight for rights of minorities.

Colonel Dotson emphasized the importance that the school system played in his upbringing in the city. He remembered the strong work ethic of students at Huntington High School and the vibrant neighborhood streets with thriving movie theaters, drug stores, and fresh fruit markets.

Additional community members recounted their own stories and memories of the Southeast Community and shared their aspirations for the neighborhood. It was an informative and fun evening!

Meet Pastor Benjamin Jeter, House of Refuge Worship Center

Pastor Jeter, a Warwick High School graduate, was born at Riverside Hospital in 1965. His father was in the military but the family always found their way back to Newport News. Following high school, Pastor Jeter joined the military. After retiring from the military, he felt called to return to the city. Pastor Jeter is married to Pastor Felicia Jeter who is currently employed with the City

of Newport News.

Carlton Ransom, Neighborhood Revitalization Coordinator, sat with Pastor Jeter to discuss his experiences in the Marshall-Ridley Choice Neighborhood and larger Southeast Community.

How long has the House of Refuge Worship Center been a part of community?

The House of Refuge found a permanent home on Ivy Avenue about two years ago. We were established in 2004, however, in the middle of the city. In 2008, the Church migrated to 79th Street. We have always held a special place in our hearts for the Southeast Community. And as the pastor, I was led to work here. Although the Church has worked throughout the region, we have continued to play an active role in this community.

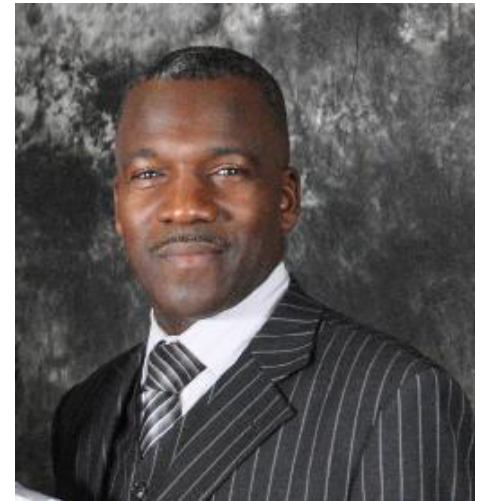
What do you think the role of the church should be in the community?

The church has an instrumental role with fostering moral character. Moral character can lead to strengthening families as well as unifying the community as a whole.

What are the top challenges facing the Southeast Community?

Some of the challenges facing the Marshall-Ridley Choice Neighborhood and the larger Southeast Community are a lack of vision, jobs, and self-awareness (history).

There are things that are out of the control of the community, but we tend to lean on our greater community and city leaders for guidance. It would be great if all city leaders could begin to view the Southeast Community as their home and base



decisions from that point of view. If we all did this, the vision that we dream of, an economically thriving Southeast Community, would become a reality.

Unfortunately, it is no secret that there are a lack of jobs in the Choice Neighborhood. The Community cannot build and strengthen itself if residents are not working. We need to provide educational and training opportunities for our residents that will give them the ability to gain employment. At the House of Refuge, we are seeking opportunities to provide job skills training for the local workforce as well as helping local businesses offer apprenticeships to our residents.

Lastly, and very important, is self-awareness, especially as it relates to understanding our history. As a community that is rich in history, it is important that we educate our residents, local businesses, and congregations of what the Community has to offer. For example, I never knew that the beach at King Lincoln Park was formally known as Pinkett's Beach. As a child, that is where I played. Knowing our history is paramount to shaping our future.

What do you feel are the top three assets in the Southeast Community?

I feel the top three assets are unity, location, and cultural amenities.

The Southeast Community is one of the oldest parts of the city. Its traditional neighborhood design fostered community interaction and economic vibrancy.

Location is also a valuable asset. Through the CNI process, task force members, residents, and community partners have identified King-Lincoln Park as a key asset that should be supported. The City and Community should continue to use the process to explore opportunities for additional waterfront access and recreation.

We also need to promote this wonderful asset to the rest of the City as well as the region.

Our community has great cultural assets. Wickham Avenue, just outside of the Choice Neighborhood, offers a number of amenities in one compact area. Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center, Pearl Bailey Library, Doris Miller Recreation Center, and C. Waldo Scott Center cultivate the talents and champion the history that are hidden in community.

As an active participant, what are your expected outcomes of the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative?

Creating self-awareness is an important outcome. The CNI has provided a platform for developing and identifying leaders in the Marshall-Ridley Choice Neighborhood and larger Southeast Community. It has also produced many new and exciting ideas that have the potential to make real change in the neighborhood. We will, however, have to continue to work together in order to achieve our goals.

tainment, and back to school supplies.

For more information please contact Pastors Benjamin and Felicia Jeter by phone at 757-827-5416 or by email at info@houseofrefugewc.org or visit the church at 1217 Ivy Avenue.



CNI Task Forces have been working hard in July

Community Features

Is there someone you think we should feature in an upcoming newsletter? Do you want to know more about a particular community program or service? If yes, call us at (757) 926-8761 or email Garrett Morgan at gmorgan@nnva.gov. Tell us what information you want to see in future newsletters.

Good News March

The House of Refuge will host their annual Good News March on Saturday, August 19, 2017 from 10 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The family friendly march will begin at Anderson Park and continue to King-Lincoln Park and feature food, giveaways, enter-

What's Happening in August...

Getting Creative

Interested in jewelry making or mixed media arts? Want to share your talent at Open Mic Night? Check out the event calendar for Downing-Gross for all the latest news and updates for August at <http://www.downinggross.org/> or stop by the center at 2410 Wickham Avenue.

Southeast Celebration

Don't miss the Jazz Concert on August

26th from 5 to 8 p.m. at King-Lincoln Park! Bring friends and family to enjoy the Jae Sinnett Zero to 60 Quartet and Karla Crump. The event is free and open to the public. Food trucks and children activities will be on site.

Early Action Activities

Interested in joining the subcommittee that will work on the early action activities? They will identify projects that celebrate the community and

accelerate neighborhood transformation. The group's initial focus is celebrating the history and culture of the community through art.

To volunteer, please call Carlton Ransom at 757.926.8081 or email him at cransom@nnva.gov.