

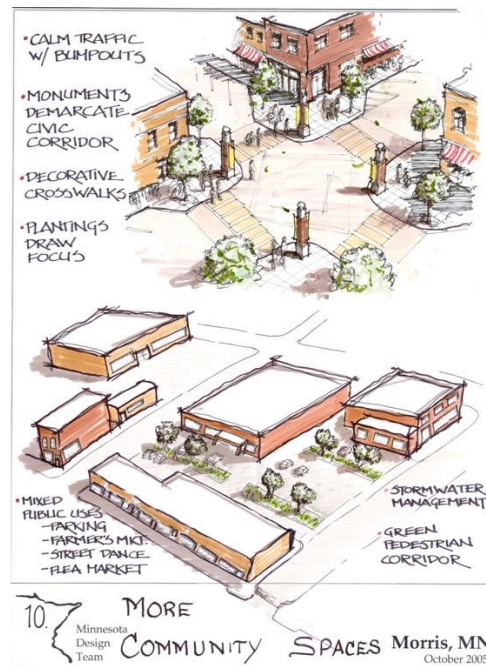
Minnesota Design Team visit is beginning of redesign process

On October 14 - 16 the Minnesota Design Team came to Morris to help begin the Design Morris! portion of the COPC grant. Over the course of the weekend the team toured Morris and talked with community members to get a picture of what the Morris community is as well as what it wants to be.

The team members then created a series of drawings that highlight changes aimed at improving the aesthetics and feel of the community. Now that the Team has left, it is up to the community to create and implement a plan based on their suggestions.

The Minnesota Design Team visit helped our community better understand our history and collect input from residents on ideas for making improvements. Funding for the visit was provided in part by the COPC grant. A \$5,000 Community Planning grant has also been received from West Central Initiative.

Currently, the Community Design project team has focused on five of the Design Team's sugges-



tions. These five areas each have an Action Team that are working to lay the groundwork on projects that additional community members will eventually be able to get involved in.

Look to page 2 for individual Action Group updates

Stevens County Habitat for Humanity plans house for 2006

The establishment of a Habitat for Humanity affiliate in Stevens County is well on its way to being completed. While there are "plenty of people willing to swing a hammer," Publicity Chair Paul Schwarz said, the 15-member steering committee is currently working to get the structure of the organization ready.

An initial project is for Stevens County to become an affiliate of the Habitat for Humanity Prairie Lakes chapter to Habitat for Humanity International. The paperwork is in progress, and Schwarz indicated that the outlook is positive.

Joining the Prairie Lakes affiliate would have clear benefits for the

project. Curt Larson, Board member and past president of the Prairie Lakes chapter commented, "I see nothing but a positive impact on both Pope and Stevens Counties. By combining forces, the affiliate will have access to more resources -- financial, volunteers, board members, paid staff, etc.-- than it could with two separate entities."

The Habitat for Humanity steering committee has created various subcommittees that will focus on fundraising, selecting families for the program, and recruiting volunteers respectively. The fledgling Stevens County affiliate has estab-

HUMANITY continued on page 2



Upcoming Events

Community Advisory Committee

The CAC is responsible for the general oversight, implementation, and documentation activities of the COPC grant. The members of the committee participate directly with all of the outreach and research projects to ensure that vial communication channels remain open.

Community Advisory Committee Meeting

January 11, 2006
4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Morris Senior and Community Center

Design Morris!

The Design Morris! project is part of the Community Organizing and Revitalization portion of the COPC grant. The first major event of this process was a visit from the Minnesota Design Team. Continued work will focus on improving the overall look and feel of the Morris community.

Design Morris! Meeting

February 7, 2006
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Morris High School Commons

Design Morris! Action Group Updates



17 Minnesota Design Team **SHARED VISION** Morris, MN October 2005

6th Street Corridor - This group is working on creating a bike lane and including lights, banners, and planters along the street. Major projects focusing on the curbs and gutters might be started in 2007.

Main Street Corridor - Plans include creating landmark pointers and programs that create a more inviting atmosphere on Main Street. Projects include encouraging merchants to fix up building exteriors, reviewing the number, condition, and placement of trees, and street lights. They are also considering signage that points to UMM and are exploring funding.

Community Public Spaces - This groups primary focus is on the parking lot behind the City Center Mall. Plans for this area include

adding more trees, berms, and walkways that lead to 6th Street.

Elementary School Reuse - Over the next six months this group will work with the University of Minnesota's Center for Rural Design to collect community information, conduct feasibilities on potential projects, create concept drawings, and provide the City of Morris with a master plan for reusing the buildings and 17.7 acres.

Trails - The short terms goals of this group are to improve street markings, identify costs, and focus work on the West Side. Midterm goals are to connect with young to identify their needs, and long term the group may explore a path around Crystal Lake.

Each of these Action Teams has a representative member on the Design Morris! Steering Committee. This committee provides general oversight to the implementation and communications as well as keeping connections for the grant strong and the website updated.

The next community event for the Design Morris! Now project will be on February 7, 2006. This event will present the overall plan for Design Morris! Now.

HUMANITY continued from page 1

lished its own checking account and has about \$1,500 in the bank and the fundraising committee is working on strategies to get more.

The groups first big fundraiser is a raffle for a 10 x 12 foot garden shed donated by U.B.C. in Morris. Tickets for the drawing are available at UBC, Coborn's, Willie's, Lembke's Garage, By-Lo (Hancock), Cargill (Alberta), Donnelly Café, United Farmers and Merchants Bank (Chokio) as well as from Gordon McIntosh, Paul Schwarz, Nora Jost, Pat Mumm, Ken Jost, and Matt Fluegel. The drawing for the shed will be held on January 15, 2006 as part of a pancake and sausage feed at the American Legion, so get your tickets soon!

The goal is to raise \$60,000 and complete a house in Stevens County in the year 2006. Thus far neither family nor location have been picked out officially, but Schwarz was optimistic that construction could begin in Summer 2006.

Project Contacts

Priority Area I: Housing

Morris Housing Study

Melanie Fohl, 589-3142

melanie@morris.mn.org

Geographic Information Systems

Parcel Mapping

Benjamin Winchester, 589-6451

benw@morris.umn.edu

Morris Housing Cooperative

Dr. Bart Finzel, 589-6195

finzelbd@morris.umn.edu

Morris Rental Housing Commission

Dr. Greg Thorson, 589-6208

gthorson@morris.umn.edu

Establishing City of Morris Habitat for Humanity Chapter

Paul Schwarz, KKOK Radio, 589-3131

kmrskkok@info-link.net

Priority Area II: Economic Development

Energizing Entrepreneurship and Business Mentoring Project

David Fluegel (temporary), 589-6451

fluegel@morris.umn.edu

Business Connections Program

David Fluegel (temporary), 589-6451

fluegel@morris.umn.edu

Priority Area III: Community Organizing and Revitalization

Morris Development Partnership

Roger McCannon, 589-1692

mccannonr@morris.umn.edu

Morris Community Design Program

David Fluegel/Carolyn Peterson

589-6451/589-1242

fluegel@morris.umn.edu

mchamber@hometownsolutions.net

Adopt a Grandparent

Carol McCannon, 589-6083

mccannncs@morris.umn.edu

Community Dialogue Series

Tom McRoberts, 589-6450

mccrobtb@morris.umn.edu

Morris Elementary School Reuse Plan

Sue Dieter, 589-2525

morrjgm@info-link.net

Take Back the Night/

Operation Neighborhood Watch

Jessica Beyer, 589-6541

jbeyer@morris.umn.edu

Operation Neighborhood Watch

Chief Jim Beauregard, 589-1155

jimbeauregard@co.stevens.mn.us

Applied Research Areas

Strategies to Combat Homelessness and Provide Affordable Housing

UMM Faculty Lead: Dr. Greg Thorson

gthorson@morris.umn.edu, 589-6208

Student Housing Choices in the Morris Community

UMM Faculty Lead: Dr. Arne Kildegaard

kildegac@morris.umn.edu, 589-6190

Housing Costs and Employment in Industry Sectors

UMM Faculty Lead: Dr. Bart Finzel

finzelbd@morris.umn.edu, 589-6195

COPC Project Updates

Housing

Morris Housing Initiative: The initial focus of the initiative has been to determine what kinds of housing data is most useful for planning, education, and grant writing. UMM students are currently collecting data from the County Assessors office. A survey for rental property owners is nearly ready to send. This group has also been meeting with consultants to work on drafting written reports for the project.

Geographic Information Systems Parcel Mapping: This project is on track to begin in Spring 2006 and will add new layers of GIS mapping for use by the city and county planners.

Morris Housing Cooperative: As a small college town Morris is uniquely situated to benefit from multiple generation housing and retirees seeking continuing education opportunities. This project area will explore these multiple generational housing options and feasibilities with in Morris.

Morris Rental Housing Commission: This project is creating parallel certificate training for landlords and renters and are currently seeking additional funding through Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.

Habitat for Humanity: Documentation for Stevens and Pope Counties to become chapters of the Prairie Lakes affiliate of Habitat for Humanity is in progress. Committees have been created to work on fundraising, family selection, and recruiting volunteers for the project. The project was officially "rolled out" at the November 17 Morris Parade of Lights. The current construction goal of the group is to complete one house in Stevens County in 2006.

Economic Development

Energizing Entrepreneurship and Business Mentoring Project: An application form, policies and process documents for a three-tiered micro-grant program called "The Idea Factory" and framework of support for new business start ups have been drafted. The grants will soon be available to the public.

Business Connections Program: The Business Retention and Expansion program, will be facilitated by the Extension Service, along with a directory of University and other resources. After providing leadership for the initial formation of these project areas, David Nelson of the U of M Extension Service, Morris District, is moving to Mankato.

Community Organization and Revitalization

Morris Development Partnership: A UMM student has been hired to work on research for this project. This student will look into existing organizations and missions that promote or conduct community development activities.

Morris Community Design Program: Five Action Teams were created at a Nov. 15th follow up meeting to the Minnesota Design Team visit. An overall design plan of the Design Team suggestions is being created.

Adopt a Grandparent: Project activities are being discussed in the Residence Halls at UMM. The program hopes to coordinate "Big Friend/Little Friend" type activities between UMM students and older adults in the Morris community.

Community Dialogue Series: A project team has been formed and is visiting with existing organizations. The initial project focus will be on community response to "new residents."

School Property Reuse Plan: The school board has transferred ownership of the 17.7 acres with buildings to the City EDA. A steering committee has been formed as part of the Design Morris! Now project and is working with the University of Minnesota Center for Rural Design to create a master plan by June 2006.

Take Back the Night: In September, an expanded UMM Take Back the Night program included the City of Morris. Planning for the 2006 event has already begun. UMM students provide leadership.

Operation Neighborhood Watch: A Stevens County Methamphetamine Task Force has been created to initially focus on a prevention and awareness campaign. Currently, a video is being developed with UMM Media Services.

Applied Research

Strategies to Combat Homelessness and Provide Affordable Housing: Dr. Greg Thorson is also developing a Service Learning course to go along with this project. UMM students will study the housing crisis with both metro and rural perspectives and assist with interviews at homeless shelters in Moorhead during Fall 2006.

Student Housing Choices in the Morris Community: The research for this project will begin in Spring 2006.

Housing Costs and Employment in Industry Sectors: UMM students have been collecting data from the county Assessors office, the project will tentatively be completed in Fall 2006.

The COPC Partnership titled Adapting to Change: Managing Urbanization in Rural America, is a partnership for communities in rural areas: housing, economic development, and community organization and neighborhood revitalization and is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Outreach Partnership Centers Program.

For more information about the grant and the COPC Partnership activities, contact the UMM's Center for Small Towns at (320) 589-6451, or visit: www.centerforsmalltowns.org

This newsletter was designed and compiled by Kim Ukura, Student Administrative Assistant at the Center for Small Towns.