

Upper Albany/Clay Arsenal Weed & Seed Steering Committee Minutes from 4/19/06 Meeting

WSSC Members Present (24/32): *Charles Barrow, Alston Belfast, Denise Best, Chuck Cummings, Albert DiChiara, Lynn Ford, Duckworth Grange, Glendowlyn Hall, Hattie Harris, Jean Holloway, Mark Kaczynski, George McDonald, Naomi McKoy, Isabel Osorio-Vasquez, Lori Potter, Bea Powell, Marilyn Risi, George Scott, John Schmaltz, Clorinda Soldevila, Gerald Thorpe, Denise Tillman, Kevin Waite, and Patricia Williams.*

Total Attendance: 29 persons signed in

The UACA Weed & Seed Steering Committee meeting was opened by *Lori Potter, U.S. Attorney Law Enforcement Coordinator*. The WSSC co-chairs *John Danaher* and *Neil Dryfe* had been excused, due to trial and personal commitments respectively. Introductions of the WSSC members followed.

The minutes of the March 15, 2006 meeting were approved, with the accepted change that shootings were not reflected in the Monthly Crime Report and that the addition of “Shots Fired” and other gun-related data will be included hereafter.

Lori Potter asked for an update from the Weed & Seed Coordinator, *Richard LeGrier*, who presented points from his monthly report that included progress on recommendations by the Institute for Law and Justice consultant, *Valencia Coar*, for this site’s and coordinator’s timely development: 1) Temporary community locations have been secured at 115 Bedford Street and 20-28 Sargeant Street; 2) Clerical support (perhaps a qualified volunteer or P/T senior worker) has not been obtained; 3) We are planning a Saturday retreat to increase the capacity of steering committee members; 4) An understanding of the neighborhoods, UACA Weed & Seed and Official Recognition strategies, and root causes of juvenile and adult crime is being gained through research and community involvement; and 5) Additional “right players” (including residents) have been identified and recruited on the board.

Mr. LeGrier reported on his attendance at CCDO Strategy Development Workshop, held in Birmingham, AL on March 27-30, 2006. He also announced that *George Jones*, HPD Senior Project Manager, has officially retired. In losing Mr. Jones, we have lost the non-budgeted resource for food and beverage at WSSC meetings. Members were invited to consider other means for providing some refreshment at upcoming meetings.

George Scott, convener for the WSSC Retreat Planning Subcommittee, reported finalization of the date, time, place and facilitator for the upcoming board development meeting. The retreat will be held on Saturday, May 6 at the Mt. Sinai Campus Auditorium, 500 Blue Hills Avenue, from 7:30 am until noon, starting with continental breakfast. The hospitality is compliments of *Dr. Ed Johnson* (Saint Francis Hospital). *John Motley*, Hartford Public Schools Executive Director for External Affairs, has accepted *Richard LeGrier’s* invitation to facilitate the WSSC Retreat. Details are still being finalized for the

agenda and training content. *Al DiChiara* requested additional copies of the strategic plan for retreat attendees to be able to focus on the UACA objectives and priorities.

D/C Neil Dryfe and Lt. John Schmaltz presented the Monthly Crime Report that reflected slight increases in robberies and aggravated assaults. Nonetheless overall crime is down 6.5% and narcotics arrests are up 11%. Arrests have been mainly of young adults in their early 20's. Two hundred extra hours have been allocated for neighborhood patrols.

There were various questions about code enforcement and quality of life issues by residents and steering committee members. *Naomi McKoy* addressed the revised city policy of car towing, which is now primarily limited to abandoned vehicles on the street. Cars on private property are first given citations before lien penalties and towing.

Gerald Thorpe expressed his concern about illegal beer sales in the area. Meanwhile other attendees asked about including Part II Crimes in monthly reporting. *George Scott* asked about the substitution or replacement of the Upper Albany Community Service Office who has been in and out of commission due to injury and health issues. There was consensus that this position should not remain unfilled or inactive.

Lt. William Schwarz, of the HPD Crime Analysis Division, introduced himself as the Weed & Seed crime data and reporting resource. He reviewed the searchable design of the UACA map that dynamically represents crime incidents by location and symbol. Statistics for the UACA catchment is harder to capture because it consists of two incomplete police zones. *Lt. Schwarz* also discussed the difficulties of timely reporting of Part II crimes. In comparison to Part I crimes, Part II crime data entry is delayed by a couple of weeks. Reporting Quality of Life crimes remains an interpretation issue. It was also recommended to supplement Quality of Life and juvenile crime data with information from other sources, like the Community Courts, Juvenile Probation, Hartford Public School, DCF, DSS, etc.

Denise Tillman complained about police harassment through questionable loitering enforcement. Her issue was an officer had personally challenged her in front of her residence. She suggested that community police needed additional training in etiquette. HPD committed to follow up on this issue

Added to HPD follow-up list was ensuring informant confidentiality. However the issue of informant safety has often been jeopardize by irresponsible reporting by the press, particularly The Hartford Courant. *George Scott* urged that the media be called to task for putting crime informants at risk.

Weed and Seed subcommittee updates were presented by the chairs of Community Policing (*Al DiChiara*) and Neighborhood Restoration (*Marilyn Risi*). Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (*Duckworth Grange*) did not meet.

Dr. DiChiara cited the need to impress upon the community the importance of their involvement in Community Policing, and the need for an HPD member. He will continue to recruit to these ends.

Mr. Grange distributed a wide assortment of literature— Milner School Update; Voices of Faith Healing Conference; Community Schools Convention: Creating the Conditions for Learning; Youth Violence Prevention; and Leading Change Conference— and committed to *Lori Potter* that all were subcommittee items that would be updated at the next WSSC regular monthly meeting.

Neighborhood Restoration, according to *Ms. Risi*, has had several meetings, which included a clean up and a Spring Planting. Mac the Vac is back and Upper Albany Main Street wants to extend street banners to Clay Arsenal.

During New Business, *Naomi McKoy* reported that 450 residents had been served through the Upper Albany Neighborhood Collaborative's VITA program; and that funding for the program would again be available next year. *Ms. McKoy* attributed her absences in recent months to her service at the VITA Center during WSSC regular monthly meetings, but stated that she is clear to resume regular attendance as of this meeting.

Several attendees introduced themselves—*Jorge Davila* (concerned citizen), *Janet Viruet* (DCF), *Carl Shields* (DMHAS) and *Becky Vail* (Salvation Army)—and respectively expressed their interests in a “Neighborhood Crisis Center,” DCF intervention and Milner Project collaboration with Weed & Seed, recovery and community integration and Job Corps referral success.

Pat Williams cited the need to refer such issues to the appropriate subcommittees. *Gerald Thorpe* reported that he met with *Andrea Comer* about securing school construction jobs and that there was a Job Funnel meeting at the Christian Activities Council, 51 Vine Street, on Friday, April 28 ,at 10:00 am. *Richard LeGrier* announced, on behalf of *Chuck Cummings*, that the Violence Intervention Project would be holding a morning workshop at the Elizabeth Park Pond House, also on April 28, from 9:00 am until noon.

The meeting was adjourned with the announcement that the next WSSC meeting will be held at Community Health Services, on Wednesday, May 17, at 5:00 PM.*

PLEASE NOTE: Our start time for the May 17th regular WSSC meeting will be one hour earlier. We will begin at 4:00 pm with an executive session to be followed by a public forum at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard LeGrier, III
UACA Weed & Seed Coordinator