

Upper Albany/Clay Arsenal Weed & Seed Steering Committee Minutes from 5/17/06 Meeting

WSSC Members Present (20/32): *Charles Barrow, Alston Belfast, Denise Best, Chuck Cummings, John Danaher, Albert DiChiara, Neil Dryfe, Lynn Ford, Duckworth Grange, Glendowlyn Hall, Hattie Harris, Jean Holloway, Mark Kaczynski, Isabel Osorio-Vasquez, Lori Potter, Marilyn Risi, George Scott, John Schmaltz, Rev. Don Steinle and Kevin Waite.*

Total Attendance: 26 persons signed in, not including several presenters of community-based programs or former Weed & Seed funding applicants (e.g. Hartford YOUTH Empowerment, Greater Hartford Pro-Am, Inc.)

The UACA Weed & Seed Steering Committee regular monthly meeting was opened by co-chair *John Danaher, Assistant U.S. Attorney Law Enforcement Coordinator*. It was announced that, as of this meeting, the new starting time will be 4:00 PM to accommodate a bifurcated format of the executive session preceding the public forum, which will start at 5:00 PM. *Mr. Danaher* requested that the Weed and Seed Coordinator Update be deferred until the completion of New Business, to start the public forum session.

The minutes of the April 19, 2006 meeting were approved, and introductions of WSSC members followed.

George Scott, as convener of the WSSC Retreat Planning Subcommittee, summarized the outcomes of that half-day team and capacity-building session held on Saturday, May 6, 2006. The WSSC Retreat, which oriented old and new steering committee members, was hosted in the Mount Sinai Campus Auditorium. Both the meeting place and continental breakfast were provided, at no charge, by *Dr. Edward Johnson*, Senior Vice President, Saint Francis Hospital. *John Motley*, former Hartford Public Schools Executive Director for External Affairs, facilitated the morning at no fee.

Beyond member orientation, the purpose of the WSSC Retreat was to develop reliable and comfortable communication within the group, clearly define roles and responsibilities and organizational structure, identify outstanding areas of need, and finalize policies and procedures. Subcommittees were assigned new members and assistant chairpersons to fulfill the immediate needs of UACA strategy implementation and CCDO reporting. New assistant chairpersons are: *Lynn Ford* (Community Policing); *Glendowlyn Hall* (Prevention, Intervention and Treatment); and *Denise Best* (Neighborhood Restoration).

D/C Neil Dryfe and Lt. John Schmaltz presented the Monthly Crime Report that reflected year-to-date decreases (-5.7%) in Part 1 crimes. Monthly totals were down (-16.1%), as well as shooting incidents (-40%) and shooting victims (-50%). Narcotics arrests were up (75.7%) compared to April 2005. Burglaries (+33.3%) and aggravated assaults (+55.6%), as well as murder (+200%) and robbery (+250%) have increased for this reporting period. Meanwhile the three homicides for this year remain open, without arrests in the cases.

George Scott thanked HPD for the temporary assignment of *Officer Hiram Otero*, to substitute for *CSO Craig Francis*, who remains on medical leave.

Duckworth Grange asked if there was any correlation between Part 1 and Quality of Life crimes. *D/C Dryfe* confirmed the relationship and exemplified how greater enforcement of QOL enforcement decrease the presence of Part 1 offenders. *Lt. Schmaltz* also related the positive impact of traffic stops and registered driver enforcement on the removal of drugs and guns from our neighborhoods.

The reports for the Community Policing, Prevention, Intervention and Treatment, and Neighborhood Restoration subcommittees followed. UACA strategies were identified were for each group and outcomes were prioritized.

Al DiChiara distributed minutes and reported on the May 11 Community Policing subcommittee meeting. He announced that a CP Training Session will be held at HPD headquarters on June 15. The training conducted by new subcommittee member *Sgt. Emory Hightower* and is open to all WSSC members.

Dr. DiChiara also cited the need to assess the viability of the UACA neighborhood block watch strategy; and the involvement of business block watches. Community Policing members will canvass the community to develop an understanding of community policing through the Block Clubs.

George Scott agreed that the needs and weaknesses of these block organizations should be documented. *Dr. DiChiara* committed to a comprehensive assessment and to connect with leveraging resources, and other organizations (including *Julio Mendoza*), to support the block watch strategy. The business community will be engaged to create Business Block Clubs in the neighborhoods and to provide training.

The Community Policing subcommittee will continue to hold monthly meetings and focus on: 1) the implementation of an Information Center strategy through public access television; 2) cooperation with the PIT subcommittee to establish Safe Havens and engagement with the NEST and Men of Color groups to support this strategy; 3) HPD substation issues; 4) Weaver High School Urban Academy implementation; 4) and Public Safety Academy enrollment.

Accordingly Community Policing priorities, *Jean Holloway* will explore Hartford Neighborhoods Center, 115 Bedford Street as an alternative community meeting and Juvenile Review Board (JRB) site, in lieu of the substation; and *Lynn Ford* will explore creating a Police Explorers Program at Weaver High School to further encourage the ongoing planning and development of an Urban Academy, by the Urban League of Greater Hartford.

Duckworth Grange reported on the May 16 Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (PIT) subcommittee, highlighting Safe Havens, gang prevention, Milner Elementary School, and youth summer programs. Meeting minutes were accompanied by several other handouts, including a definition of Safe Haven from the Weed & Seed Implementation Manual, email correspondence for hosting “Preventing Gangs in Our Communities” live webcast,

and a DCF Bureau of Adolescent and Transitional Service Programs listing. A matrix of UACA subgrantees with their assigned subcommittee review was also distributed and generated extended alignment review and assessment.

Mr. Grange emphasized the need to address the youth before the summer begins, and especially to team with *Chuck Cummings* on his annual summer basketball league and other City of Hartford youth or recreation programs. The Department of Children and Families (DCF), YMCA and other CBOs would also be enlisted to support youth summer basketball.

Continuing to use the Albany Avenue substation and securing the resources for various community basketball collaborations would support Safe Haven activities at this location. Meanwhile more attention should be given to programs and resources at the other designated Safe Havens, not just for the summer but year round. A discussion of UACA-designated Safe Havens followed, citing Hogar Crea, Milner Elementary, Albany Avenue Substation, Artists Collective and CHS.

The upcoming May 23 Department of Justice “Preventing Gangs in Our Communities,” to be hosted at the DCF central office, was announced and others were invited to attend.

Attention returned to youth violence prevention and positive youth development by WSSC discussion of several current and summer programs at Milner Elementary School, including remaining Vine Albany Task Force (VATF) activities and the upcoming Christian Activities Council (CAC) “Adventures in the City.” According to *Rev. Don Steinle*, this CAC program annually serves approximately 100 youth. Six more VATF events would be held for Milner families and the rest of the Vine Albany community including: Community Field Trip to Mystic Aquarium (May 20); Milner Movie Night (May 27); Safe Summer Safe Kids at Milner (June 9); Senior Community Outing (June 10); Milner School Carnival (June 24); and Vine Albany Block Party (August 26).

Given recent safety concerns, HPD supervision and escort was request for children and chaperones for the May 27 Milner Movie Night, between 5:30 and 8:00 PM.

Marilyn Risi distributed notes on Neighborhood Restoration subcommittee activities; several related Upper Albany Main Street (UAMS) meetings were held within the month through the Design, Neighborhood Development and Library Steering committees. These three UAMS committees have been concentrating mainly on Upper Albany neighborhood initiatives, and reflect very strong relationships within various University of Hartford departments (Engineering, Center for Integrated Design) and between City of Hartford and State of Connecticut agencies and private enterprises.

Beyond UAMS committee summaries, the Neighborhood Restoration subcommittee report included updates on the Albany Avenue Streetscape Project, involving the CT Department of Transportation, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and the City of Hartford; the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) \$25 million Upper Albany health and environmental program; Crime; Image Improvement; Economic Restructuring; and Micro Business Incubator, and Create a More Pedestrian Friendly District.

Ms. Risi also distributed an MDC Hartford Courant insert, which highlighted area small businesses and the UAMS Weed & Seed within a full color 8-page insert. *Richard LeGrier* inquired about circulation, costs and promotional opportunity through this media strategy. *Ms. Risi* spoke to the broad marketing and public information reach of the newspaper, and its affordability (approximately \$5,000) based upon its corporate sponsorship and local business underwriting (\$177 per ad). She cited that this has become an annual strategy. *George Scott* suggested that there could be various scenarios to leverage this media strategy to further benefit UACA, such as increased Weed & Seed content, more frequent publication, cooperative marketing and/or advertising solicitation.

There remains ongoing attention to code enforcement. It was also reported that Mac the Vac is back in operation, after repair. A list of Neighborhood Restoration subcommittee members is forthcoming.

Chuck Cummings provided a more detailed overview of his Summer Enrichment youth basketball programs, and introduced *Luis Delgado*, an Intervention Specialist at Fox Middle School, as his primary assistant in programs that he has conducted for over 100 youths, ages 9 to 14 years, from Milner, Barnard Brown and SAND elementary schools. In previous years he has received funding from HPD, and notable support through *Duckworth Grange*, to supplement City of Hartford Recreation monies to conduct an afternoon summer league for boys and girls enrolled in area summer schools. Participation is contingent upon fulfillment of morning academic requirements; and recreation is scheduled between 12:45 and 3:00 PM at the Albany Avenue Substation on summer school days

It was also cited that *Rev. Patrice Smith* has conducted Night Lights Basketball in the summer, between the hours of 5:30 PM and 1:00 AM at the Albany Avenue Substation, with the financial support and supervision of HPD. Presentations by *Rev. Smith*, *Mr. Cummings* and *Mr. Delgado* reinforced the need to sustain youth basketball and other Safe Haven activities at the Albany Avenue Substation, as well at other UACA-designated sites. In terms of the success and safety of these established programs, *Mr. Cummings* has stated that “There has not been one fight” throughout the history of the league. Nonetheless a commitment to continue the program must be made by HPD and UACA—and volunteers (especially males) are sorely needed. Whereas expansion of this Summer Enrichment strategy is being requested, sustainability through local community collaboration remains an issue. *George Scott* asked for promotional marketing materials to coordinate support through the Upper Albany Merchants Association and to solicit outside of the community. *Duckworth Grange* suggested involving the YMCA (through executive director *Mr. Washington*) for staffing and volunteers. *Al DiChiara* offered providing up to six credits of Cooperative Education to University of Hartford interns and recommended contacting the men’s basketball team. It was further suggested to contact other area colleges for interns or volunteers.

As a part of New Business, *Duckworth Grange* presented a proposal for the realignment of subgrantees for subcommittee review, through the matrix included in his PIT monthly report. After WSSC discussion, the Juvenile Review Board and Hip Hop Academy were reassigned to PIT. Two other subgrantees requested for PIT review, the Artists Collective and Hartford Animation Institute were tabled and will remain under Neighborhood Restoration and Law Enforcement review respectively.

John Danaher referenced the UACA subgrantees, and the difference between their budgets submitted and the Weed & Seed funding approved. There remains a dissonance based upon undocumented notifications of reduced awards. With an historical review and administrative input from *A/C Lester McKoy*, it was determined that resolution would have to be done formally on a case-by-case basis through subcommittee review and Weed & Seed Coordinator confirmation. Each subgrantee will have to be renegotiated, given the amount of time that has passed, the reduction of the requested funding, and contracted services to fulfill UACA strategic outcomes. Per *A/C McKoy*, it was recommended that the Official Recognition (OR) document should be reviewed with each subgrantee through the assigned UACA subcommittee, and that subgrantee justification presentations should satisfy UACA Official Recognition performance measures.

Al DiChiara reiterated that the University of Hartford should be removed from the subgrantee list, as his team will pursue outside funding to support the UACA evaluation. These funds, and perhaps other budgets, will be reallocated to most effectively further the scope of work for this first year, January 1 – December 31, 2006.

Richard LeGrier, UACA Weed & Seed Coordinator, opened the public forum session within the WSSC regular monthly meeting with his monthly update. Besides his oral report, he had distributed several documents within the course of the executive session to address: the strategic (not programmatic) foundation of UACA's Official Recognition, "*What Can We Change*"; *FY 2006 Weed and Seed Program Guide and Application Kit: Continuation Sites*; CCDO "*Performance Measures*"; CCDO "*Site Development Benchmarks*"; OJP/CCDO Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Report "*Instructions for Part I – Site Performance and Part II – Site Characteristics and Activity Data Report Forms*"; CCDO "*Guidelines for the Evaluation of Information Obtained in State and National Criminal Background Checks on Potential Employees and Volunteers Who May Have Access to Children, the Elderly, and Individuals with Disabilities at Weed and Seed Sites*"; and Weed and Seed subcommittee roles and responsibilities.

Special attention must be given to "*Performance Measures*," for these are the objectives and the supporting data required to distinguish a successful Weed and Seed site and sustain CCDO funding. Our priorities necessarily are: 1) Enable communities to reduce violent and drug crime; 2) Strengthen community capacity to increase the quality of life; and 3) Promote long-term community health and resilience.

It will be most important to maintain the CCDO "*Site Development Benchmarks*" as a guide to evaluating UACA Weed & Seed progress, as "it will be the basis of future funding decisions," according to the *FY 2006 Weed and Seed Program Guide and Application Kit: Continuation Sites*.

Mr. LeGrier will be attending the upcoming CADCA Core Competencies and Evaluation Workshop, held in Minneapolis, MN on June 7-9, 2006

The Community Update represented the balance of the public forum. Presentations were made by *Kelvin LoveJoy*, of Hartford YOUTH Empowerment, *Rev. Patrice Smith*, "Saving

Our Kids from the Streets,” and *Peter Higgins*, Greater Hartford Pro-Am, Inc. All were well received and generated supportive interest.

Mr. LoveJoy is based within the Garden and Mather neighborhood and works a Youth Development Business with 25 families and is promoting a “Stop Killing” campaign.

Rev. Smith lives on Vine Street and has been directing a “Saving Our Kids from the Streets” program as part of her ongoing youth prevention and advocacy. Besides working at the Annie Fisher School Family Resource Center, *Rev. Smith* has conducted the successful Night Lights basketball program and is opening a Safe Home, on 18 Enfield Street. Also she and *Capt. Richard Kemmett* currently are working with Fox 61 and WTXX-Channel 20 on a television documentary.

Mr. Higgins continues to run the highly successful Greater Hartford Pro-Am, which features the most talented collegiate and professional talent in the region.

All have expressed interest to partner with Weed and Seed, and all received encouragement to those ends. Specifically collaboration is desired in supporting a summer youth and family outreach, Albany Avenue Substation (Safe Haven) support, volunteer recruitment and community marketing

The meeting was adjourned with the announcement that ***the next WSSC meeting will be held at Community Health Services, on Wednesday, May 21, at 4:00 PM*** beginning the executive session and followed by the public forum at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard LeGrier, III
UACA Weed & Seed Coordinator