



Update

December 2009

GRDC Responds to a Changing World

How should the Grandmont Rosedale communities respond to a rapidly changing world? That was the question underlying a series of "Community Conversations" sponsored this fall by GRDC.

"Increasing foreclosures, decreasing population, rising unemployment, and falling tax revenues are just some of the trends affecting our city that will also impact our community," says GRDC Executive Director Tom Goddeeris. "We need to be pro-active about addressing these issues."

INPUT FROM THE COMMUNITY

The Community Conversations were designed to solicit ideas from residents for improving area neighborhoods, the first step in the development of a new strategic plan for GRDC that will be ready for implementation in early 2010.

Four sessions were held. Subjects covered included city-wide land use, regional transportation, changing housing market demographics, creating a sustainable community, growing the local economy,

and improving city services. Copies of speaker presentations and summaries of the residents' discussions are available for viewing on the GRDC web site at www.grdc.org.

VACANT PROPERTY STUDY

As part of its strategic planning process, GRDC will also be conducting an intensive study of vacant and distressed housing with the help of the Detroit Vacant Property Campaign (see related article on page 3) and examining every aspect of its business practices with the help of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation's Organizational Sustainability Initiative.

LONG-TERM VISION

"Our goal is to develop both a long-term vision for our organization's future and a plan of action we can begin implementing right away," added Goddeeris. "I am optimistic that we can weather the current economic storm and emerge as a stronger organization and stronger community."

Home Repair Workshops Return

Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation (GRDC) will once again host a series of free home repair workshops. "We had a great response to last year's program, so we are happy to host another series," said GRDC Deputy Director Cathy Marshall.

This do-it-yourself program, brought to you by the Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative (NDNI), DTE Energy, and the WARM Training Center, covers a variety of topics:

- Your house system
- Weatherization & energy conservation
- Introduction to carpentry
- Basic electrical repair
- Basic plumbing repair
- Basic wall repair & painting

The workshops are scheduled on Tuesday evenings, 6-7:30 PM on January 12, 19, and 26; and February 9, 16, and 23. All workshops will be held at GRDC headquarters, 19800 Grand River.

To register, contact Sheila Vanfield at 313-394-1038 or sheilav@next-detroit.org. For questions, call GRDC Intern Simon Wang at 313-387-4732, ext. 104.



New Homeowners Fill Vacant Homes

Despite the recent housing market downturn, GRDC is continuing to attract new homeowners to the Grandmont Rosedale neighborhoods. At the time of this writing, GRDC has sales pending on four homes, which should bring four new homeowners to our community before year-end.

HOMES IN SEVERAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Two of the homes, one on Ashton in Grandmont #1 and another on Rosemont in Rosedale Park, were donated to GRDC by their previous owners. A third house, on Rosemont in North Rosedale Park, was sold to GRDC at a greatly reduced price by long-time residents who had already moved to Florida.

GENEROSITY OF DONORS BRINGS SUCCESS

"One key to the success of these projects was the generosity of the local residents that donated their property to us. GRDC could offer them a large income tax deduction, a convenient method of disposing of their property, and the peace of mind of knowing that their homes would be sold to new families who would care for them as much as they did," says GRDC Executive Director Tom Goddeeris.

The fourth pending sale is for the last of the three new homes GRDC recently built on Stahelin Street, just south of McNichols. One other of these new homes was recently sold in August 2009.

All of these homebuyers are excited about moving to the Grandmont Rosedale communities.

HOW TO DONATE A HOME

For more information about how to donate a house to GRDC, call Executive Director Tom Goddeeris at 313-387-4732, ext. 111.

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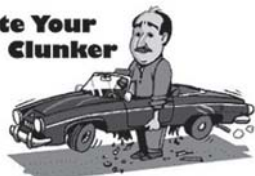
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ceeds of its sale. Call Cathy
Marshall at 313 387 4732,
ext. 105, for details.

Thank You to Our Supporters

GRDC thanks the following families and businesses for their generous support of our programs.
Your contributions of time and money make a real difference in our community!

[All donations received 08/01/09 - 11/01/09]

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Vacant Property Action Plan Developing

In response to the increasing number of vacant homes in our community, GRDC is creating a Vacant Property Action Plan. "We need to do something now, before the situation gets worse," said GRDC Deputy Director Cathy Marshall. "There has been a sharp increase in vacancies due to foreclosures and the economic downturn. Our property values have fallen, and many investors are just leaving houses vacant instead of selling them to new owners."

PARTNERSHIPS STRENGTHEN THE PLAN

GRDC is partnering with the Detroit Vacant Property Campaign, the Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative, and the Local

Initiatives Support Corporation to create the Vacant Property Action Plan. The goal of the plan is to map out problem areas in our community and create a strategy to make things better. "We are the third neighborhood in Detroit to be given the resources of this fantastic group of planners," said Cathy. "This plan will lead to real, positive changes in our neighborhood." Along with the plan sponsors, each of our five Grandmont Rosedale neighborhood associations has a representative on the planning team.

If you are interested in hearing more about this planning effort, contact Cathy at 313-387-4732, ext. 105.

2009 Home Repair Program Succeeds

Twelve low-income families in the Grandmont community are receiving home repair assistance from GRDC, through a program supported by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and Flagstar Bank. The program provides a combination of grants and zero interest loans for basic home repairs.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The primary objective of the program is to eliminate health and safety hazards in accordance with MSHDA's Housing Quality Standards and to improve energy efficiency. Federal HUD guidelines also stipulate that a thorough Lead Risk Assessment is done for each house and all necessary repairs are made to eliminate or abate all lead risks that are present. Typical improvements included installing or repairing windows, front porches, furnaces, roofs, and electrical and plumbing repairs.

To date, nine homeowners have completed their home repairs, with the remaining three houses expected to be complete by early January.

Program Coordinator Tom Ridgway explained, "This program not only helps the individual families that receive the grants and loans,



it also helps stabilize our entire community as well. The houses look great when they are finished and the whole block benefits from that."

MORE FUNDING FOR 2010??

Currently, funds for this program are exhausted and no new applications are being accepted. However, GRDC intends to seek additional funding to continue the program in 2010.

VOLUNTEERS *continued from pg. 2*

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Looking Good: Omega Grill



Worker applies paint to the masonry walls of the building; a new roof over the greenhouse and new signage will complete the facade improvements.

Omega Grill is the latest neighborhood business to join GRDC's facade improvement program. "It has been great to help this longtime neighborhood restaurant get a new look," said GRDC Commercial Program Manager Pam Weinstein.

Omega owner Nick Lulgiura received a grant that paid 100% of the cost of architectural designs for the facade improvements. He also received an additional grant that covered 50% of the construction costs. The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) generously funded both grants.

Grand River businesses interested in applying for a facade grant can call Weinstein at 313 387 4732, ext. 103.

Farmers' Market Season Succeeds



GRDC's popular Northwest Detroit Farmers' Market enjoyed another successful season of good food and fellowship in the south parking lot of Bushnell Congregational Church. "This was our fourth and undoubtedly our best season," commented Market Master Pam Weinstein. "We had more vendors this year, selling a wider variety of food products and our customers were really happy about that," she explained. The market also purchased a wireless point-of-sale device, allowing customers to shop using their credit, debit, or Bridge Cards. "We were glad we could offer our customers the convenience of using their 'plastic' at the market," Weinstein added. Market weekly sales averaged \$4500 to \$5000 this year.

Planning for next year's market season is currently underway. To join the Farmers' Market Committee, contact Weinstein at pweinstein@grdc.org or 313 387 4732, ext. 103

Community Garden Grows Great Veggies!

There's a new kid on the block. The Grandmont Rosedale Community Garden at Bushnell Church got its start in planning sessions back in January 2009. By July, pounds and pounds of vegetables were being harvested! In fact, over 356 pounds of tomatoes, squash, green beans, cabbage, collard greens, turnips, potatoes, carrots, onions, raspberries, watermelons, eggplant, parsnips, swiss chard, lettuce, parsley, basil, and oregano sprouted up and grew in our fledgling community garden. Dozens of neighborhood residents pitched in to build raised beds and fences, haul topsoil, plant seeds, weed, water, and harvest – all the work it takes to grow your own food. "The whole project was delicious and delightful," commented gardener Mary Mueller. To get involved in planning next year's community garden, contact Pam Weinstein at pweinstein@grdc.org or 313 387 4732, ext. 103.

