

Cedar Park Neighbors Contributions and History in Community Development

Cedar Park Neighbors (CPN) began as a concerned group of local residents coming together in 1960 to address issues involving safety, cleanliness, housing and blight, shifting populations and access to city resources and services. From its inception, Cedar Park Neighbors has been actively engaged in community development issues and efforts:

- Advocating with government agencies, political leaders and policy makers on issue of housing and development
- Organizing for the protection and/or development of particular land and property parcels
- Promoting neighborhood stability and capacity to counter disinvestment associated with urban blight
- Networking with other organizations and agencies to attract resources and expertise
- Researching and maintaining information on neglected properties and land parcels for potential development and improvement
- Engaging with developers and others investing in Cedar Park
- Consulting with and educating residents on major issues related to community development
- Planning, fundraising and facilitating processes leading to neighborhood infrastructure improvements.

In addition to efforts directly focused on housing and development, Cedar Park Neighbors conducts a broad range of activities that contribute to community stability, quality of life, economic development and general community health and well being such as: community forums, greening activities, business promotion, cultural activities, scholarship opportunities, zoning mediation, block organizing and charitable works.

An Historical Overview of Community Development Activities

- 1963: Successfully led a petition campaign to have the Cedar Park Neighborhood included in the University City Urban Renewal Area (46th St. to 52nd St., The Media line of the PA Railroad, Chester Avenue to Larchwood Ave.) enacted by City Council. The project relied entirely upon voluntary residential rehabilitation, not demolition.
- 1964: University City-Cedar Park Demonstration House at 4714 Windsor Ave. CPN collaborated with the West Philadelphia Corporation and the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority. The house served as a conduit for information on special FHA mortgage insurance under the provisions of Section 220 of the Federal Housing Act.
- 1965: CPN qualified Cedar Park for 3% Federal loans under the 1965 Housing Act – the first neighborhood organization in the entire country to do so. Urban renewal projects in Cedar Park totaled close to \$1,000,000 by 1965 and focused on conservation and rehabilitation, involving approximately 150 houses.

19__ : CPN obtained a 100% rehabilitation loan on an existing apartment house – the first of its kind – for the Ivan Apartments (S.E. corner of 47th and Baltimore Ave.); the mortgage value of \$282,000 was used to convert the Ivan into 26 modern apartments with three street level commercial spaces. The restoration was completed in 1971-1972 and assumed the name University House Apartments.



1975- 19__ : The CPN Vacant Buildings Committee formed the Cedar Park Community Development Corporation to buy vacant houses to repair and remodel into community owned apartments and houses for low-income and moderate-income families. The CPCDC changed the focus of its rehabilitation efforts from community owned properties to owner occupants and completed 5 properties on Hazel Ave. and 3 on the 800 and 900 blocks of S. 49th St.

1977: The Home Loan Committee received a grant from the Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial Foundation to aid elderly homeowners to make emergency and essential property repairs.

1981: CPN instituted a weatherization program by mobilizing block captains to market weatherization products and services to neighborhood residents. The program was unique in Philadelphia and believed to be the first of its kind in the country.

1984 – 1998: To address concerns about a recently vacated Firehouse at 50th and Baltimore, CPN conducted a study to determine the best use for the vacant firehouse. A public presentation was made at a CPN meeting in January, 1986; and, after 4 years of planning with project partners (The West Philadelphia Partnership and the West Philadelphia Corporation) construction of the Firehouse Market began in May, 1988. The Firehouse Market officially opened in 1989. CPN remained a named partner in the separately incorporated West Philadelphia Firehouse Project, Inc. until CPN sold its 50% interest to its for-profit partner in 1998.



1999: CPN facilitated a community process to consider various proposals for the long vacant and blighted lot at 47th and Warrington (the former Bronson Apartments was destroyed in a fire in 1992). The process led to a community vote, facilitated by CPN, that resulted in support for construction of a new restaurant, the Abbraccio Restaurant, that opened for business in 2003.

2002: CPN was one of 6 neighborhoods that participated in Welcome to Philadelphia, a two year demonstration project funded and coordinated by the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation and the Mayor's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative. The project engaged six (6) middle income neighborhoods in the development and funding of neighborhood marketing strategies promoting: "smart-growth" and dynamic, diverse and livable communities within the Philadelphia region; and the assets of urban living in general; and selected

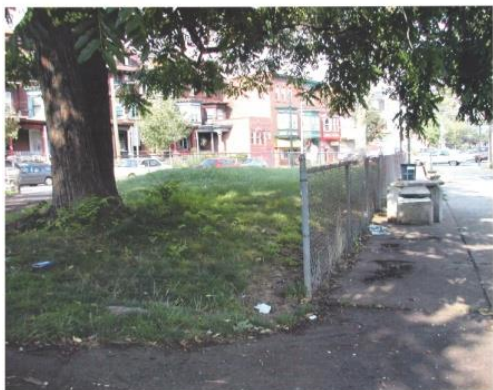
neighborhoods in particular. In consultation with residents, promotional materials were developed that were unique to each neighborhood. The CPN website was launched in coordination with this effort.

2003: CPN initiated the Crossroads Project, a community development strategy focusing on a blight renewal zone extending one block in each direction from the intersection of 49th St. and Baltimore Ave., at the heart of the Cedar Park neighborhood. Efforts were undertaken to address issues of vacant housing and land, crime and safety, green space and revitalization of the commercial corridor.

- Property Housing Task Force was launched to address issues of vacant housing and land. PHTF members surveyed vacancy, property conditions, and ownership, met with developers and coordinated advocacy and meetings with city officials to resolve blighted properties.
- Cedar Park Improvement Committee, composed of local stakeholders, was formed to address renovation of the neglected Cedar Park.
- Dock St. Brewery opened its new location at 50th & Baltimore Ave. following a vigorous and successful zoning effort by CPN.
- The Liquor Store Project was begun as an advocacy campaign to the PA LCB to close the nuisance State Store on Baltimore Ave. and build a new Wine and Spirits Store. A new store opened at 4906-08 Baltimore in 2008.



2003- 2008: CPN began planning, advocacy and fundraising, with design assistance from the Community Design Collaborative, for a complete renovation of Cedar Park, a then blighted and notoriously unsafe community green space at 50th and Baltimore Ave. CPN secured primary city funding with the support of Councilwoman Blackwell and raised more than \$50,000 in addition from grants and private funders to complete the first phase in 2006. The City of Philadelphia committed additional funds; and CPN facilitated planning for the installation of a new playground, installed in 2008.



2010: With the assistance of the CommunityDesign Collaborative, CPN initiated The Baltimore Avenue Conversation, a conceptual design study for the revitalization of Baltimore Ave. from 49th St. to 52nd St. CPN volunteers did extensive outreach to invite participation of local



residents and stakeholders in several community meetings and workshopsto give input and review design conclusions put forward by the CDC design team of planners and architects. Over 200 participated. A final report, “The Baltimore Avenue Community Corridor Design Study”, was published documenting the process and conclusions for future neighborhood planning efforts.

2012 The Property Housing Task Force adopted a new name, the Development Impact Task Force with a mission to monitor, evaluate and influence commercial and residential development in the community. A CPN “Future of the Neighborhood” survey was developed and broadly distributed in hard copy as well as online. Approximately 500 responses were received. Data and input was gathered and analyzed on such issues as changing demographics, homeownership vs. rental, zoning issues, reasons residents stay or choose to leave Cedar Park, improvements desired, major concerns, etc. The results were published and are available on the CPN website.

2013 The Development Impact Task Force crafted development principles, building upon the “Future of the Neighborhood” survey results and “Baltimore Avenue Conversation”, to inform CPN Board and the Zoning Committee activities as the neighborhood grows and evolves.