

Education & Recreation Focus Group

Meeting Notes – **December 6, 2005**

The group reviewed the Asset Inventory Worksheet, and made the following comments:

Condition of Education Facilities:

- Average age is 56 years
- Repairs need to be accomplished
- Safety is now being studied
- Demand: The system currently shows a need for 64 classrooms; a 1,200 pupil increase is predicted for area schools, as 1,400 housing units are already approved in the Town of Newburgh

Other Educational Facilities

- Currently John Ety (sp?) is working on a plan for vocational learning, to be CTE-endorsed
- Gary Van Voorhis is the community representative to the board on Adult Education and Community Learning. He and his colleagues are working on creating GED Centers in the City, and satellite learning centers.
- Vera Best runs Best Resources and the Best Temple at 49 Grand Street, where she also has a school.

Recreation Center Facility & Programs:

- Newburgh's recreation center has a swimming pool, a stadium, and soccer and football fields
 - The pool was revamped 3 to 4 years ago, so is in good condition
 - Fields need reconditioning
- There are requests for a basketball league and for summer baseball camps; the City needs a tennis program and other recreation programs for residents.
- 30 years ago, Newburgh employed 15 full-time staff; now there are 4 full-time staff in the Recreation dept.
- The current facility is used primarily for rentals

There are two major City parks – Audrey Carey and Tyrone – but no money for needed upkeep. A capital plan is in the works for Audrey Carey Park.

NOTE: Tim will bring to the next meeting information and studies re: Audrey Carey Park and other City parks.

Programs that Build Self-Esteem and Respect

City programs mentioned include:

- DARE
- Restorative Justice Program

There was discussion as to whether these programs still exist.

Character education is mandated as part of the current curriculum guidelines, but how is it manifested in school classroom teaching?

Diversity:

The district has diversity recruitment teams that have started becoming active as of last year. Several programs outside the school system have programs that build diversity:

- The MLK Celebration Group (Rev. McLaren)
- The Black Ministerial Fellowship
- The Orange County MLK Commission and Memorial Committee

In addition, there is an inter-faith garden project.

Programs and Facilities that provide educational opportunities:

- Board of Education (has a budget of roughly \$166 million)
- Newburgh Free Library (while based in a facility owned by the Board of Education, the Library has its own budget of about \$50 million)
- Orange County Community College
- Mount St. Mary's College
- West Street Child Care
- Recreation Organizations:
 - Hoops Express
 - Zion Lions
 - Pop Warner
 - Little League
 - Soccer
- Glen Hines (Boys & Girls Club)
- Library Partnership Program, for academic enrichment (Mona Burton)

Note: Tim will research the various recreation organizations that exist in Newburgh.

PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH:

The Youth Bureau is putting together a youth support booklet.

We need to contact the Orange County Youth Bureau for their list of programs and activities for youth.

FUTURE NEEDS:

Some of the City's needs include:

- A calendar of youth programs and activities—a multi-language, web-based information calendar for Education and Recreation offerings
- An Information Kiosk that would have an electronic bulletin board, and could be housed in community facilities around the City

NOTE: Logan Miller will be asked to research what technology-based programs may be available to help develop such a kiosk, including looking into programs of NYSCATE (Technology for Educators), Microsoft (based in NYC & Seattle), Orange/Ulster BOCES, and various University Think Tanks. Pam Krizek will call the Harriman Technology Center.

Recreation Needs:

- New turf – artificial turf
- An engaged Board with a clear vision

The group is interested in seeing a needs assessment done to identify the existing recreation needs of the community.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, January 4th at 4:30PM.