

City of Binghamton FIRST WARD BOA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

MEETING MINUTES

Community Service Providers Stakeholder Meeting
September 16, 2009

MEETING ATTENDEES

- Steve Sedlock, Steering Committee Chair
- Marybeth Smith, Boys and Girls Club
- Jerry Willard, First Ward Action Council
- Caroline Quidort, City of Binghamton
- Kimberly Baptiste, Bergmann Associates

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

Imagine the First Ward in 2020 – What would you like to see stay the same? What would you like to see different?

Same

- Boys and Girls Club still there and doing well
- Boys and Girls Club having positive impact on community
- Continue expanding niche businesses – cards, video, etc. are doing well today

Different

- No more crime
- Safer
- Mindset – business owners look for trouble
- Aesthetics of Clinton Street
- People feel safe
- More positive and upbeat
- Stop blaming others for lack of success
- Change peoples' perception of First Ward
- More diversity in business types
- Not Antique Row anymore – this concept has changes (impacted by 9/11 and Ebay.com)

What are some of the obstacles and opportunities associated with running a business / service in the First Ward neighborhood?

Obstacles

- Some of the buildings are in poor condition
- How to motivate people to care what their property looks like
- Apathy

Opportunities

- Celebrate people who take care of their buildings
- Lots of traffic on Clinton is good for business
- People in the neighborhood
- Need to keep working with businesses – strive to be like Ithaca Commons

What are the three most important projects / initiatives you would like to see undertaken in the First Ward in the next three years?

- Traffic calming (not enough speed limit signs)
- Streetscape enhancements
- More trees and flowers
- Motivate business owners
- Easy to work with buildings, hard to work with people
- Fill gaps in community
- Vacant spaces would benefit from infill development

General Discussion

Boys and Girls Club

- For children 6-18 years
- Recreation and education programs
- Bus kids in
- Have dinner program
- Schoolwork, dance, sports, computer, cooking
- Open 3-8:30 weekdays and 7-5 weekends
- No geographic restrictions
- Not-for-profit
- 75 staff members, new business opportunities (35 per shift, average)
- Serve 110-175 kids per night

First Ward Action Council

- Renovate storefronts – seen as wasting tax dollars
- Develop housing, provide housing, assist homeowners
- Mixed use revitalization projects
- Healthy business district is part of a healthy neighborhood

First Ward Assembly

- Just held successful day-long street fair

Miscellaneous Comments

- Need façade improvement program but businesses have to be interested in participating and paying for portion of improvements – FWAC interested in this
- Rental rates are low - \$550-600 month for high quality space
- First Ward was “bar capital” from the 1920’s – 1950’s, only 3 bars left today

- Latin American grill didn't make it – in business about 1 year – reluctance of neighborhood to try something different
- Efforts to draw Binghamton University into First Ward
- Sunrise Diner is a local neighborhood market