

Neighborhood Roundtable Meeting
January 11, 2012
1:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Karen Clay, Neighborhood Relations Specialist, Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development. Ms. Clay thanked everyone for coming and made announcements. Ms. Clay introduced the speakers, Ms. Betsy McCright, Executive Director, Chattanooga Housing; Ms. Tammie Reeves, Housing Choice Voucher Program Director, Chattanooga Housing Authority; and Ms. Jeanette Eigelsbach, Director, Scenic Cities Beautiful.

Ms. McCright stated that the CHA's mission is to provide safe, decent, affordable housing. CHA also strives to encourage the education, personal development and wealth building capabilities of the residents and participants served through various community service programs, in a cost-effective manner. Ms. McCright spoke specifically about the demolition of the Steiner Apartments, the closing of the Harriet Tubman Housing Development, and the renovation of the Fairmont Apartments.

Ms. Reeves stated that the purpose of the federally funded Housing Choice Voucher Program is to assist low-income families, elderly and/or disabled participants obtain affordable and safe housing in the private sector. The Housing Choice Voucher Program enables the voucher holder the opportunity to find their own rental housing – single family house, duplex, apartment or mobile home. There are 3,148 Housing Choice Voucher allocated. The participating landlord accepts a portion of the rental payment from the renter and a portion from CHA. The renter pays at least 30 percent of their monthly adjusted gross income towards rent and utilities. The renter and CHA both pay their portion directly to the landlord.

Applications for the Housing Choice Voucher program must be obtained from CHA; however, the waiting list is closed and no new applications for the program are being accepted at this time. There are currently 5,400 applicants on the waiting list.

Ms. McCright explained the rental agreement process and answered questions regarding the Housing Choice Voucher Program. For more information regarding the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) and links to HUD's Federal Regulations (24 CFR Part 982) that govern the program, visit the website at www.chahousing.org or call (423) 752-4893.

Ms. Eigelsbach stated that Scenic Cities Beautiful is an affiliate of the national Keep America Beautiful for the city of Chattanooga and Hamilton County. She stated that she is currently promoting the Great American Cleanup, which is also known in many communities as Sparkle Day or Grab-Bag-A-Thon. It is a litter pickup effort to help tackle the visual pollution in the neighborhoods and is an easy and simple way to make a visible difference in your neighborhood. One of the things with the program is that many neighborhoods involve youth in the cleanup process so that they can earn eco-volunteerism experience for school or community service organizations that can be included in their resumes. Scenic Cities Beautiful works with many organizations in their effort to help keep neighborhoods clean.

There are several different kinds of litter and each type of littering is punishable under the law under several definitions:

- Commercial purpose: litter discarded by an entity (or employee) conducting business for economic gain;

- Garbage: perishable animal and vegetable waste from food preparation and/or consumption;
- Litter: garbage, refuse, rubbish and all other waste materials including tobacco products;
- Refuse: all perishable and nonperishable solid waste;
- Rubbish: perishable solid waste consisting of combustible and noncombustible waste.

Scenic Cities Beautiful is also affiliated with the StopLitter campaign sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Transportation and Keep Tennessee Beautiful. The primary purpose of the campaign is to educate citizens about the effects of litter in the community. Tennessee averages over 5,000 pieces of litter per mile on the urban freeways; thirty percent of this litter is deliberate litter from people in vehicles and seventy percent is negligent litter from unsecured loads.

Scenic Cities Beautiful has many resources available to help groups organize clean ups: garbage bags, latex gloves, posters. Ms. Eigelsbach may be reached at (423) 757-0061 to answer further questions or to help plan a neighborhood clean-up.

Vanessa Jackson, Program Specialist for the Department of Neighborhood Services, spoke briefly about the Home Repair Program. This program, a partnership with World Changers, provides minor to moderate home repairs to qualifying households. The repairs will take place July 2012. Applications will be accepted until March 5, 2012. For more information regarding the Home Repair Program, contact Ms. Jackson at (423) 425-3700.

Ms. Clay thanked everyone for attending and took requests for future meeting topics.

Next meeting, Wednesday, March 14, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. in the Mayor's conference room, City Hall.

Submitted by:

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