

Implementation Strategy

In order for a neighborhood plan to be successful, there must be broad-based citizen participation during the planning process, and strong, organizational support during the implementation. The residents, business owners, pastors, and social service providers of Olivette Park have invested a great deal of energy in developing *The Olivette Park Action Revitalization Plan*. They have passed the first hurdle in that they have generated a great deal of energy and enthusiasm for improving Olivette Park. The challenge now is to sustain that high level of enthusiasm and channel it into accomplishing their goals. This chapter makes several recommendations for ensuring that this plan is successfully implemented, and that positive change occurs in Olivette Park. These suggestions include organizational requirements and available resources.

Organizational Requirements

The Olivette Park Neighborhood Association held its first meeting on April 7, 1995. It began working with the University of Illinois East St. Louis Action Research Project to develop this plan in October of 1995. Throughout the planning process, the organization has grown as more people became aware of its neighborhood improvement goals. These new members are energetic and want to get involved in specific projects and activities. Therefore, the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association must ensure that it has the organizational capacity to take in these new members, as well as the ability to sustain its future viability through adequate fundraising and staff support. The following recommendations will help ensure that this is accomplished.

*Formalize a
Committee
Structure for the
Organization*

This plan is based on the assumption that the committees established at the Olivette Park Neighborhood Summit - Housing, Crime Prevention, Youth, Cultural Resources, Environmental Improvement, and Economic Development - will continue to function and meet on a regular basis. The activities recommended under each action area are best accomplished through a committee system. Therefore, it is recommended that the neighborhood

association quickly act to establish a working committee system. The neighborhood association should determine whether or not it is more feasible to only have three active committees the first year of implementation and then go to six committees in year two. Each committee should establish a chair person and committee members. The committee should then establish a regular meeting time and place, preferably an evening other than the neighborhood association meeting. The committee chair would then be expected to give reports at each neighborhood association meeting to keep the general membership informed of the committee's activities.

*Obtain 501(c)3
Status from the
Internal Revenue
Service*

In order to be considered a non-profit, tax exempt and tax deductible organization, the neighborhood association must obtain 501(c)3 status. Many foundations and corporations will not donate money to a community group unless it has 501(c)3 status. With the help of Ms. Diane Thompson at Land of Lincoln Legal Aid, the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association has already begun this process by becoming incorporated. It now must submit by-laws and \$465 by within 15 months of the date of filing the Articles of Incorporation to become a legal 501(c)3 organization.

In order for the neighborhood association to achieve its goals, it must be able to secure some external funding. It is recommended that the neighborhood association continue to work with Ms. Thompson to achieve this tax-exempt status. Mr. Rocco Goins, Vice President of the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association, has volunteered to chair a by-laws committee. It is recommended that these by-laws be drafted and approved as soon as possible so the neighborhood association can meet its deadline for 501(c)3 status. These by-laws should include the formal structure of the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association, duties of officers, elections and terms of office, structure of the committee system, and membership of its board.

*Identify Sources of
Technical
Assistance*

Some projects and programs identified in this plan require technical assistance from architects, engineers, planners, grant writers, or community organizers. Several possible sources of technical assistance are available to the neighborhood association, or the neighborhood association might consider seeking funding to hire a staff person. The first source of technical assistance available to the neighborhood association is the University of Illinois East St. Louis Action Research Project. The program has secured fund-

ing from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide technical assistance to Olivette Park for at least one more year. ESLARP includes the Departments of Urban and Regional Planning, Landscape Architecture, and the School of Architecture, and can provide assistance in any of those areas. A second source of technical assistance is the East St. Louis Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center. This new initiative, funded by the Community Development Block Grant Office, is scheduled to begin providing services by mid-summer of 1996. A planner, an architect, and a non-profit specialist will be on staff to help neighborhood organizations with specific projects and programs.

Staff Development

A third source of technical assistance is the possibility of the neighborhood association seeking funding to hire its own staff member. Creating such a position is a necessary and separate step from the type of technical assistance that is described in the preceding paragraph. A staff member would create a central source of information and organization for the neighborhood association's activities. This staff member would work with the organization to recruit members, provide necessary training for the Executive Board, oversee committees, write grants, and provide support for the functioning of the organization. The Winstanley/Industry Park Neighborhood Organization was able to hire a staff member with the use of CDBG funds. Ms. Carol Perry, president of that organization, could be contacted for more information.

*Develop Fund
Raising Strategies*

Many of the immediate projects recommended in this plan require few resources besides time and volunteers. However, some projects will require some fund raising, either through internal fund raising activities or through external funding sources. The fund raising committee should develop a long-range financial plan for the organization. This committee should work closely with the officers and the other committees to determine what program funding will be needed in the short and long term. Mr. Joe Lewis, a member of the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association, has expressed interest in leading such a committee. The first goal of the fund raising committee should be develop a strategy to raise the \$465 needed to apply for 501(c)3 status. Until the organization obtains that status, all fund raising will have to be through internal activities and revenues raised will not be tax exempt.

Conduct Regular Membership Recruitment Drives Most grassroots organizations spend only five percent of their time and budgets on outreach activities to attract and maintain members. This could explain why many organizations do not fully achieve their goals, as there simply are not enough active members to do the work. To avoid this, the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association must make a concerted effort to engage its current members and ensure they stay active, as well as conduct periodic, door-to-door membership drives to recruit new members. An active membership is necessary to sustain the credibility of the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association within the East St. Louis community.

Ensure That the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association is Proactive Too often, neighborhoods are unaware of development proposals and city policies that will impact their neighborhood until it is too late to give input. In those cases, neighborhoods are forced to become reactive, rather than proactive. The Olivette Park Neighborhood Association, to some extent, can avoid that practice by staying up-to-date with activities at the neighborhood, city, and county level. By attending the meetings of other community groups as well as those of local government, members can stay informed of and provide input on policies and programs that could affect the quality of life in Olivette Park. The neighborhood association should send at least two representatives to the monthly ESL CAN meetings held at SIUE-East St. Louis Center every second Saturday of the month at 10 a.m.

Available Resources

Fund Raising Dermer, Joseph. *How to Raise Funds from Foundations*. Public Service Materials Center, 1979.

Flanagan, Joan. *The Grassroots Fundraising Book: How to Raise Money in Your Community*. Chapter Four. Contemporary Books, Chicago, 1988.

Membership Recruitment Alinsky, Saul. *Rules for Radicals*. Vintage Books, New York, NY, 1989.

Bobo, Kim et al. *Organizing for Social Change: A Manual for Activists in the 1990s*. Midwest Academy. Chicago. 1991.

Delgado, Gary. *Organizing the Movement: The Roots and Growth of ACORN.* Philadelphia, Temple University. 1986.