



Wilkinsburg

Wilkinsburg Re-Certifies as a Blueprint Community

One program that helped shape the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC) is Blueprint Communities (BC), initiated in 2005 by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh. Other primary sponsors included PNC Bank, Rural LISC and Sovereign Bank. The initiative was aimed at helping older neighborhoods in Pennsylvania, Delaware and West Virginia more effectively plan for community renewal.

The focus was on neighborhoods that had demonstrated some initial progress at revitalization but could do more through enhanced leadership, strategic planning and community coordination. Each neighborhood team was responsible for assembling a diverse group of stakeholders – local residents, government officials, developers, students and others – who were chosen for their ability and willingness to undergo the months-long training schedule. Training focused on leadership development, organizational capacity, creating a strategic plan for the neighborhood, community consensus building and first steps in project implementation.

While sitting on various community boards and committees, BC committee members helped inspire and encourage significant improvements in the Borough, including:

- development and sale of renovated row houses and new single family homes in the Peebles Square Project
- a new comprehensive plan/business district study/5 year financial plan for the borough, which is nearing adoption
- tax incentives for new construction/ significant renovation through the newly formed Joint Tax Committee of the Borough and School District
- tax compromise programs through the Joint Tax Committee that make it easier for people or organizations to purchase abandoned and tax delinquent properties
- a new summer basketball program for kids called HOOPS, started with help from Pittsburgh Steeler Charlie Batch, now in its second year
- the Wilkinsburg Sun, a monthly community newsletter delivered free to residents provides the missing positive information about Wilkinsburg and the many efforts to improve the community.

Recently re-certified as a Blueprint Community, Wilkinsburg has access to special low-cost loan programs through FHLBank and a mini-grant for community development. BC committee members include: Jason Cohn, Chairman, and Wilkinsburg Council member; Mary Ellen Sullivan, PNC; Lazae LaSpina, Whitney Avenue Art Gallery; Greg Whitted, PHDA; Michael Sriprasert, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation; Pam Cohn, Hamnett Place Neighborhood Association; Tracey Evans, WCDC Executive Director and Wilkinsburg Council member; and Ralph Yearick, WCDC board member.

www.wilkinsburgcdc.org

Event Calendar

DECEMBER

Thursday 12/2

Business District Safety Meeting
8:30am -10:00am
WCDC Office
1001 Wood St.

Saturday 12/18

WCDC Board Meeting
9am -12pm
Wilkinsburg School Admin. Building
718 Wallace Avenue

WCDC Seeks Board and Committee Members

WCDC seeks volunteers to fill vacancies for three-year terms on its 15-member executive board. Time commitment includes monthly board and committee meetings, and special activities. Preference is given to borough residents who can demonstrate proven leadership skills and knowledge of community development. Applications are available at the WCDC office. Descriptions of current committees and activities are located on our website.

You can help to revitalize Wilkinsburg by sending a tax-deductible contribution to:

WCDC
1001 Wood St.
Wilkinsburg, PA 15221

DONATE ON-LINE

