



Wall Street Neighborhood Coalition contactwsnc@gmail.com
495 Wall Street, Moncks Corner, SC 29461

Neighborhood Plan 2014-2017

Purpose

As an organized group of individuals and other partners, we work together to improve the quality of life of all the residents in the Wall Street neighborhood.

History

When we began in 2014, the Wall Street Neighborhood Coalition (WSNC) spent the first year just listening to the residents about their concerns and dreams. The coalition was convened by Habitat for Humanity of Berkeley County (HFHBC) as a part of a neighborhood revitalization initiative with the Town of Moncks Corner. Since 2002, HFHBC had invested over one million dollars in twelve new homes in the Wall Street neighborhood and plans to finish two more homes by July 2017.

In 2012-13, HFHBC and HFHI consultants met with residents, town and county officials, church leaders, and local business people to measure the sense of community. Consultants Karimah Nonyameko and James Johnson, issued a report in April 2014. It states, "Stakeholders are willing to work together for change, and would like to work with Habitat. Stakeholders have started identifying assets they can offer to revitalize Wall Street...The culture and pride of the neighborhood is still present in longtime residents. Many have worked tirelessly to maintain a sense of community."

Moncks Corner is a rural town, population 7,885 (2010 census), just 32 miles from Charleston, SC. Berkeley County is one of three counties, along with Charleston and Dorchester counties, experiencing a spike in population growth. Few counties in the Carolinas-and not one in the Northeast-saw as many residents moving in as did Berkeley County which gained more than 8,000 residents between mid-2015 and mid-2016. Berkeley County is spread out over 1099 square miles. The poverty rate for Moncks Corner, SC is 14.5% and is even higher in the Wall Street neighborhood.

Pre-Planning

It all started with a Jericho Prayer Walk in July 2014. The prayer walk was inspired by the Biblical story in which Joshua and the Israelites circle the city of Jericho silently once a day for six days before conquering it for God on the seventh. (Joshua 6:1-20). Thirty three residents and partners walked silently in prayer to the build site of three new Habitat homes. You could feel the passion and commitment of the people to work together to revitalize their beloved community.

In November 2014, HFHBC convened monthly meetings to clarify the purpose, principles, timeline and resources for the coalition. The WSNC has been meeting regularly for the last two and a half years in the Christianity Holiness Church at 495 Wall Street. On average 20-25 people attend. Agendas of these meetings included a lot of listening to residents and their needs as well as sharing resources from community associations and partners. Discovery and shared understanding occurred.

Neighborhood Planning Process

The center of the framework for the neighborhood plan was determined by the resident aspirations.

The core values that residents agreed upon at the monthly meetings are summarized below :

1. Commit to non-displacement of residents
2. A safe neighborhood for all ages
3. Youth activities and education programs after school and during the summer
4. New affordable housing and critical home repairs spearheaded by HFHBC
5. Access to computers and wifi, digital training for all ages
6. Better access to health care services and healthy living activities
7. A “hand up” not a “hand out” approach to community actions
8. Always use the feedback loop, be transparent and honest
9. Respectful and servant leadership

Twelve resident leaders have been identified as well as five informal committees: Community Outreach, Asset-Mapping, Disaster Response, Advocacy, and Neighborhood Events and Beautification Projects. Because many of the residents are aging in place and have no internet access, the WSNC did door-to-door surveys of housing conditions and create a map of critical home repairs and vacant and abandoned parcels. The survey was completed in 2016 and presented to the residents and the HFHBC board. More residents have been advocating for their community at the town and county council meetings.

Foundational outcomes were achieved by the WSNC in 2014-17. Residents and partners were engaged in several action projects such as Palmetto Pride neighborhood cleanup, a Fish Fry, Wellness Games, and helping neighbors clean up from hurricane damage in 2015 and 2016. The Town of Moncks Corner has built a large recreation complex next to the Wall Street neighborhood with new baseball fields, basketball courts and a local foods farmer market. The Wall Street neighborhood also received new sidewalks, sewer lines, and street lighting with CDBG funds. The neighborhood is safer, looks better, and has empowered citizens.

In 2016, the WSNC identified a need for a centralized community center for its monthly meetings and other community activities. A lot on Cooper Street with two abandoned buildings was identified as an ideal location because it was near the school and centrally located. The WSNC contacted the owner, a local business woman and major property owner, whose grandfather farmed the land years ago. In 2017, she agreed to partner with WSNC, Grace Reformed Episcopal Church, HFHBC, Town of Moncks Corner, and the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce to lease her property at 212 Cooper Street at no cost. Volunteers from HFHBC's Collegiate Challenge demolished one of the buildings in March 2017. The other building may be salvaged and the plan is to build a new building next to it and connect them.

At the WSNC meeting on April 6, 2017 the residents voted 100% that a community center would add value to the community. One of our church partners, Grace Reformed Episcopal Church, has agreed to enter into a long-term lease agreement with the landowner and establish a separate 501c3 non-profit called the Grace Impact Development Center, Inc. (GIDC). Pr. Tory Liferidge and the landowner were both present for questions. Residents voiced their ideas for programs offerings. The Community Outreach committee of the WSNC will be going door-to-door in the next two months to talk with every

resident in the community for their vision and time commitment. Residents will be asked to serve on the board of the GIDC and Pr. Tory agreed to have more information for the next meeting. A HFHBC board member has offered his architectural firm's services pro bono for the planning, design, and construction of the center. The cost of the GIDC is estimated at \$176,000, for 1,400 square feet.

From March 2017 thru December 2017, the WSNC has plans to collectively do the following projects with its residents, partners and stakeholders.

Fundraising for the Grace Impact Development Center ongoing

Outdoor Wellness Games March 18, April 15, and June 10

Men's Prayer Walk May 20

Women's Leadership Training Course 6 days in October-November

Summer youth sports coaching in cooperation with the Town of Moncks Corner Recreation Department

Planning and starting construction of the Grace Impact Development Center

Neighborhood Clean-up Day in September

Establish a committee and begin the process to write a formal neighborhood plan for 2018-2020