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City of Gainesville

Inter-Office Communication

Department of Community Development
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To: Tom Saunders, AICP, Director of Community Development

From: *JW* John Wachtel, Neighborhood Planning Coordinator

Date: September 27, 2005

Subject: Neighborhood Planning Program Update

Recommendation

The City Commission hear an update on the Neighborhood Planning Program administered by the Community Development Department and authorize staff to add two more neighborhoods for participation.

Explanation

The City of Gainesville Neighborhood Planning Program (NPP) is a collaborative process between the City and the people that live and work in neighborhoods. A planner in the Community Development Department coordinates the program. That planner assists designated neighborhoods in meeting goals, addressing needs, and implementing projects. To be eligible for the program, neighborhood organizations (usually associations or crime watch groups) must apply for designation and be registered with the City. The City Commission ultimately decides which neighborhoods participate in the program.

The NPP is intended to build stronger community relationships, improve communication between the neighborhood and the City, define neighborhood goals and issues, and explore alternatives for achieving desired neighborhood and City priorities. The NPP provides a forum for residents to initiate, rather than react to change, and in which neighborhood residents can develop mutually acceptable alternatives and solutions to area problems and define future goals. Further, the neighborhood planning process addresses issues and opportunities at a scale that is more refined and responsive to neighborhood needs.

The end product of the NPP, in addition to the physical improvement of the neighborhood, is a Neighborhood Action Plan, which identifies neighborhood issues and projects, guides future enhancements of the neighborhood, and directs and manages change.

Since 1998, the City Commission has designated twelve neighborhoods for participation in the Program. The City Commission allocated \$15,000 for each neighborhood to implement the program and for physical improvement projects located in the city right-of-way or on city owned property. The funding for small projects has been made a part of the program based on the belief that people working together to provide tangible improvements in a neighborhood helps to instill a sense of neighborhood pride, thereby building stronger communities. The projects chosen by

the neighborhood should help to create a common identity or sense of community in the neighborhood.

Resident participation is the cornerstone of the NPP, and the Neighborhood Action Plan is completely neighborhood driven. The plan is divided into issue areas and contains goals and strategies that are developed by the neighborhood through a series of neighborhood meetings and surveys. The main purpose of this plan is to provide the neighborhood with a written document of long-term and short-term actions and goals to continue to work on, beyond the city-sponsored neighborhood planning process.

The following sections update the status of each neighborhood, and the program as a whole, in relation to the Neighborhood Action Plans and the \$15,000 in grants for each neighborhood.

Duval - Although there are no NPP funds left for this neighborhood, and the NPP is no longer active in this neighborhood, the neighborhood association continues to meet, to coordinate with city departments, and to advocate for the neighborhood.

Projects completed include the following:

- Entranceway sign and landscaping;
- Landscaping along streets; and
- Two bus shelters.

Grove Street – Like Duval, Grove Street has no NPP funds left, but continues to meet, to coordinate with city departments, and to advocate for the neighborhood.

Projects completed include the following:

- Historic style street signs throughout the neighborhood;
- Improvements to the Neighborhood's Dreamers' Garden;
- An entranceway sign; and
- The landscaping of several medians.

Sugar Hill - Like Duval and Grove Street, Sugar Hill, has no NPP funds left, but continues to meet, to coordinate with city departments, and to advocate for the neighborhood.

Projects completed include the following:

- A new pavilion for Barbara Higgins Park;
- New play equipment for Barbara Higgins Park;
- New picnic tables, grills and benches for Barbara Higgins Park;
- A fence along the back of Barbara Higgins Park; and
- A new bus shelter.

Lincoln Estates - This neighborhood has approximately \$940 left. They are exploring ways to add lighting to the neighborhood entranceway sign and landscaping at the southeast corner of Southeast 15th Street and Southeast 12th Avenue. This project will use up the remainder of their NPP funds.

Projects completed include the following:

- Crosswalks and sidewalks with curbs leading toward the Boys Club;
- Landscaping a prominent median; and
- Sign and landscaping at a major entranceway.

Hibiscus Park - This neighborhood has \$4,900 left. They are exploring the feasibility of developing a small fenced tot lot near the sink hole.

Projects completed include the following:

- Historic style street signs;
- Three entranceway signs;
- The use of creative design and landscaping to convert a sink hole into a passive park; and
- Coordination with the Public Works Department to pave neighborhood streets.

Highland Court Manor - This neighborhood has approximately \$10,500 left. Future projects identified in the Neighborhood Action Plan include additional landscaping and recreation and infrastructure improvements.

Projects completed include the following:

- Entranceway signs and landscaping installed at six prominent entrances.

Porters Community – The Neighborhood has recently reached a consensus regarding the Neighborhood Action Plan. Future projects to be completed with the remaining \$13,140 in NPP funds will include entrance signs and park improvements in both Grandmothers Park and the tot lot.

Projects completed include the following:

- Drinking fountain installed in a neighborhood tot lot.

North Lincoln Heights – This neighborhood has \$10,200 left. Future projects identified by the neighborhood include entrance signs and historical monuments.

Projects completed include the following:

- Installing 41 Holly trees in front of Williams Elementary School, along Southeast 7th Avenue; and

- Installing 18 flowering trees along Southeast 3rd Avenue.

Oakview – The neighborhood association has approved its Action Plan.

Proposed projects include the following:

- Entrance Features--The neighborhood has approved the design and location for entrance signs and landscaping; and
- Landscaping a median--The neighborhood is finalizing a landscape plan for a median.

Ridgeview – The Neighborhood Action Plan is nearly complete. Projects identified include park improvements and a bus shelter.

Proposed projects include the following:

- Install bollards to control parking around a neighborhood park; and
- Install a bus shelter at a heavily used bus stop.

Springhill – The Neighborhood Action Plan is nearly complete.

It will propose the following project:

- Work with the Community Redevelopment Agency to install large picnic shelter with tables, benches, grills, and a drinking fountain in Springhill Neighborhood Park.

Ironwood – The Neighborhood Action Plan is complete.

Proposed projects include the following:

- Install flowering trees along the west side of Northeast 15th Street, between the bus stop shelter and Northeast 39th Avenue; and
- Install decorative fencing along the east side of Northeast 15th Street, near Ironwood Village.

Summary – Duval, Grove Street, and Sugarhill are complete. With the conclusion of the entranceway lighting project, Lincoln Estates will be complete. Hibiscus Park is more than two-thirds complete. Highland Court Manor, Porters Community, North Lincoln Heights, Oakview, Ridgeview, Springhill, and Ironwood have begun to implement their Neighborhood Action Plans.

Designating New Neighborhoods

The City has received applications for the Neighborhood Planning Program (NPP) from the following four neighborhoods:

- Appletree;
- Stephen Foster;
- Pine Park; and
- Northeast Neighbors.

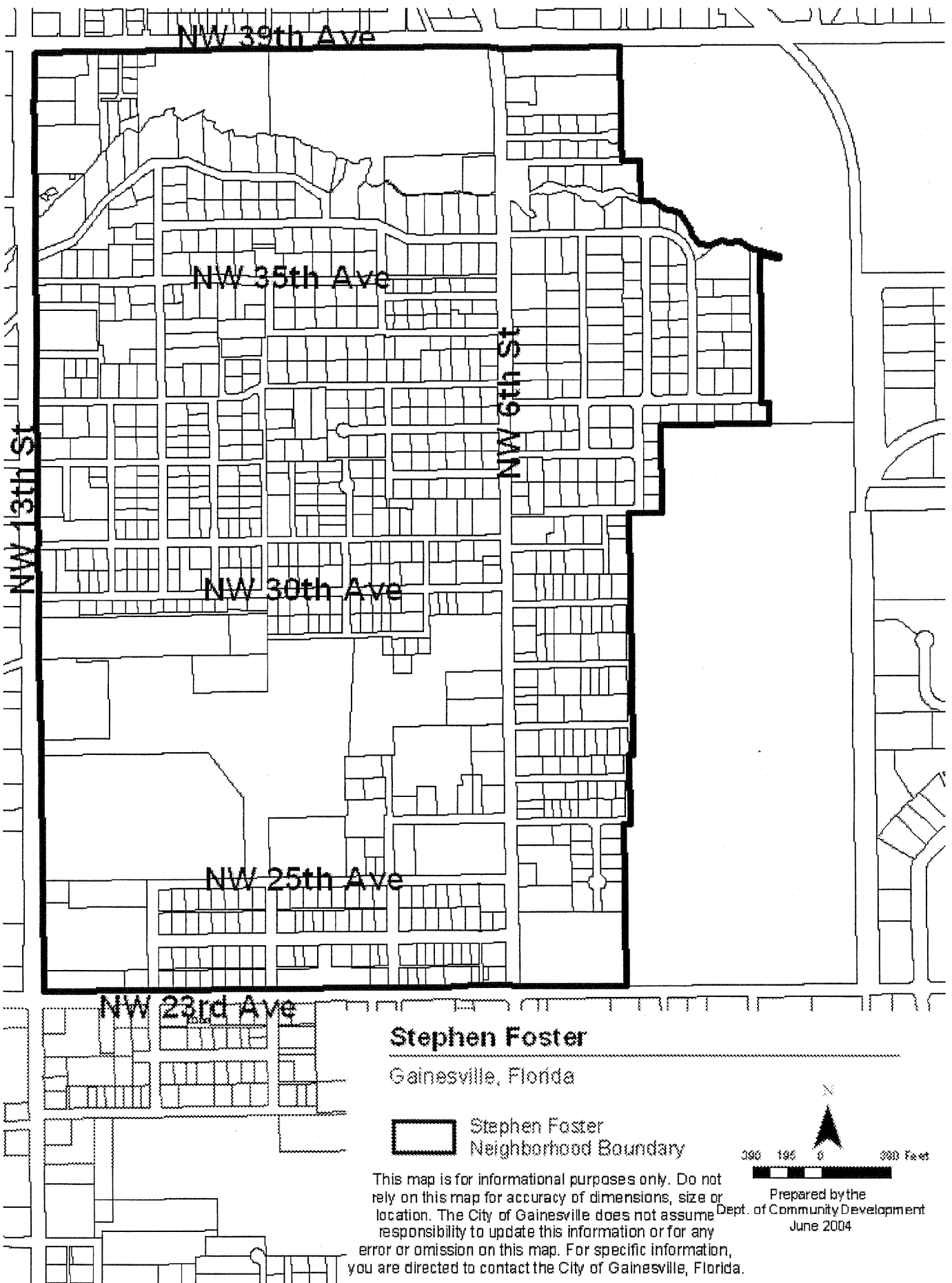
Location Maps for these neighborhoods are attached to the end of this memorandum. In order to determine which neighborhoods to recommend for inclusion in the NPP, the following criteria were used:

- Age of Neighborhood (*has the neighborhood been in existence for at least 25 years? Older neighborhoods are considered more favorably for inclusion in the NPP.*)
- Level of Need (*neighborhoods with poorer infrastructure and/or housing stock are considered more favorably for inclusion in the NPP.*)
- Neighborhood Organization (*neighborhoods that are organized to some extent, have had meetings in the past year and have indicated that at least 15-20 people are willing to participate are considered more favorably for inclusion in the NPP.*)
- Identifying Potential Projects (*neighborhoods which specify issues and potential projects which could be effectively addressed and implemented through the program are considered more favorably for inclusion in the NPP.*)
- Previous Initiatives (*neighborhoods which have successfully implemented previous initiatives are considered more favorably for inclusion in the NPP.*)

“Neighborhood Organization” and “Identifying Potential Projects” were given greater weight than the other criteria. Information used to determine which neighborhoods to recommend, was gathered from the applications, site visits, and discussions with Community Development Department staff.

Two applications appear to meet all the relevant criteria and appear to be best situated to take advantage of the program. Those are the applications from the Stephen Foster Neighborhood and the Pine Park Neighborhood. Those neighborhoods appear to be more organized and have a greater understanding of the goals, benefits, and limitations of the program than the other neighborhoods. Funding to cover the cost of adding these two neighborhoods to the NPP has already been budgeted.

For these reasons, planning staff recommends adding the Stephen Foster and Pine Park neighborhoods to the NPP.



NW 39th Ave

NW 35th Ave

NW 30th Ave

NW 25th Ave


NW 23rd Ave

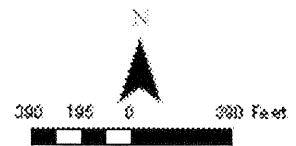
NW 13th St

NW 6th St

Stephen Foster

Gainesville, Florida

 Stephen Foster
Neighborhood Boundary



This map is for informational purposes only. Do not rely on this map for accuracy of dimensions, size or location. The City of Gainesville does not assume responsibility to update this information or for any error or omission on this map. For specific information, you are directed to contact the City of Gainesville, Florida.

Prepared by the
Dept. of Community Development
June 2004