

Greensboro Neighborhood Congress (GNC)
Meeting Notes
Thursday, February 14, 2013



GNC Co-Chairperson Donald Blackstock convened the **February 2013** GNC meeting at the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro (CFGG) beginning with our traditional introduction of all participants and presentations by guest speakers.

Guest speakers:

Rob Luisana, a GNC member and health insurance broker, and Robin Lange, a pediatric nurse and participant in the local League of Women Voters, presented highlights of the new national **Health Insurance Exchange** offered within the new federal **Affordable Care Act** concerning citizen's health insurance choices. Statistics suggest that the U.S. currently spends much more per person per year yet has a lower average life expectancy (~72 years), a higher infant mortality rate, and lower overall health indicators after age 60 than in other developed countries worldwide. Lack of oversight, variations allowed in coding medical conditions, and our inability to easily compare health insurance policies "apples to apples" are some of many complicated contributing factors we all experience.

The **Health Insurance Exchange** concept requires that health insurance policies nationwide categorize their policies as Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Catastrophic, each category having clearly defined comparable benefits, allowing consumers to easily compare benefits and prices -- "apples to apples". Price competition remains within the health insurance industry.

The federal 2012 **Affordable Care Act** requires every citizen to purchase health insurance, offers each state the option to participate in the **Health Insurance Exchange** and offers federal funds to partially reimburse participating state resident's health insurance payments dollar-for-dollar for the first three (3) years. Recently our North Carolina Senate and House of Representatives expressed intentions to **opt-out** of the federal **Health Insurance Exchange** opportunity.

Lechelle Yates, City staff managing Better Buildings Greensboro, promotes local energy efficiency initiatives (energy inspections, rebates and low-cost financing) for Greensboro homeowners at significant financial savings. Offerings include: 1- a thorough energy assessment for \$50, 2- a 50% rebate on **basic** energy saver upgrades (air and duct sealing and insulation), 3- a 20% rebate on **advanced** energy saver upgrades (major appliances, vapor barriers, HVAC systems, water heaters), and 4- low 3.99% interest rate loans for household energy upgrades. Pre-screened lists of contractors are available. To qualify, projected energy savings must be $\geq 15\%$ of current energy costs and rebates are capped at \$3,000. For details visit www.betterbuildingsgreensboro.org or contact Ms. Yates at 336-580-8987 or lechelle.yates@greensboro-nc.gov. This local energy savings program is funded by a \$5 million grant from the federal **2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**.

Nominations for GNC annual elections:

GNC members elected to fill open GNC Board positions include **East Co-Chair Linda Bennett** of Textile Park, **Membership Chair Peter Kauber** of Southwest Neighborhood Association, **Communications Chair Trudy Atkins** of Sedgefield Lakes, **Council District 2 Representative Laura Blackstock** of The Village at Northside, and **Council District 4 Representative Laura Jackson** of Ardmore Park. Past and incoming GNC Board volunteers were thanked.

Committee Reports:

Issues & Bylaws –**Michael Pendergraft** reports this committee maintains that Greensboro has strong ordinances to support safe housing but does not enforce the ordinances. Greensboro employs only 4 inspectors for ~275,000 citizens. Civil penalties haven't been collected for years! GNC members are encouraged to contact City Council at <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/index.aspx?page=84> asking them to enforce existing safe housing ordinances. Details are available from Michael Pendergraft at mrp_mlp@bellsouth.net.

Announcements –

- Learn about a new **Renaissance Community Cooperative**, a grocery co-op planned in northeast Greensboro, by attending an information session at Presbyterian Church of the Cross, 1810 Phillips Avenue, Monday, February 18, 2013, 7:00 p.m.
- The **Greater Kirkwood Community** asks your support for their neighborhood plans which oppose Zoning Commission considerations which could allow removal of mature oak trees on Lawndale Avenue, road widening, and could replace neighborhood housing with commercial development.
- The **College Forest** neighborhood asks your support to oppose a Florida Street extension proposed behind their neighborhood and through NC A&T State University farm land.
- The **Nealtown Neighborhood** needs funding for transportation studies that might improve transit between 16th Street and their neighborhood.
- The **Fairview to Textile Road** area has been cleared of significant brush and new fencing was added along nearby property.
- The **Ardmore Park Neighborhood** continues to request City maintenance of neglected property cleared and abandoned by a former property investor.
- **2013 is the 10 year anniversary for the GNC!** Our April 11, 2013 meeting will serve as a celebration.
- **February 28, 2013, 5:00 p.m.** is the deadline for submitting grant requests to **Building Stronger Neighborhoods**.

Our next GNC meeting is **Saturday, March 9, 2013, 9:00-11:00 a.m. in the Central Public Library Nussbaum Room.**

Respectfully submitted by Ann Stringfield of the Fisher Park Neighborhood, February 15, 2013.