



BLUEPRINT BULLETIN

Winter 2010

Winter greetings from the Columbia County Housing Corporation and your Neighborhood Manager, Jay Jarrett. The second edition of the *Blueprint Bulletin* has arrived; please take a minute to look it over at your convenience. We hope this newsletter will serve as a valuable communication tool to keep everyone up to date on the progress and plans of the Blueprint for Revitalization. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at anytime. I can be reached at 784-9373 ext. 121 or via email at jjarrett@columbiacountyhousing.com.

If you are anything like me, once the calendar changes to February, you are already starting to think about spring. The longer days and warmer weather are always a welcome relief after the dark, cold winter. We are especially looking forward to the spring of 2010 as the beginning of the next phase of the Blueprint for Revitalization. As we mentioned in the first newsletter, much of the behind the scenes work has been completed. Now that those pieces are in place, we are ready to start finalizing plans, making improvements and impacting the neighborhood in real and measurable ways.

The thought of spending a beautiful Spring day in the neighborhood instead of the office is certainly something for me to look forward to over the next 6 weeks. More importantly, the thought of getting our rehabilitation projects started and working with the Borough to install new playground equipment in Sponsler Park is something that all the residents of the Blueprint Neighborhood can look forward to in the very near future.

Good things are happening in your neighborhood and better days are surely on the way. The plan is not only in place, it is in motion. However, we still need your help. Take the time to get involved and join with your neighbors to make the Blueprint for Revitalization a success.



4 OBJECTIVES for REVITALIZATION

Crime Prevention: The Neighborhood Manager meets with members of the Berwick Police on a regular basis. The Blueprint Community remains a top priority for the entire department and we have already seen positive results from their efforts. Plans are in place for the Neighborhood Watch to be active by spring and saturation and undercover patrols will be used as needed. In addition, Borough code officers will continue to proactively enforce property maintenance rules and work in tandem with police to address problem properties. Please keep in mind that police and code officers cannot be everywhere. If you see something wrong, report it. Never think you are “bothering” the police - they need and appreciate your eyes and ears in the neighborhood.

Homeowner Rehab Assistance: As part of the Blueprint for Revitalization, the Columbia County Housing Corporation has received \$650,000 in grants to be used for the rehabilitation and repair of 30 homes in the neighborhood. The first rehab project will get underway in early March with at least six more to follow in 2010. The work will range from new siding and roofing to insulation and furnace replacement. While the list of eligible homeowners is growing, it is not full and we are still accepting applications. If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact our office at 784-9373.

Redevelopment Opportunities: As we reported in the fall newsletter, the Columbia County Housing Corporation purchased three properties in the 300 block of LaSalle Street at a tax sale in September. This process continues to work its way through the legal system but has not yet been resolved, nor have we been able to take possession of the properties. While we expect that it will happen soon, the exact date is hard to predict. In the mean time, we are anxiously awaiting word from Columbia County court and looking forward to the first redevelopment opportunities in the Blueprint Neighborhood.

Beautification: The beautification of the Blueprint Neighborhood will get started this spring at Sponsler Park. As we reported in our last newsletter, the Borough of Berwick has committed \$40,000 for upgrades and improvements at the park and they plan to install new playground equipment in 2010. Our hope is that residents will volunteer to help with this project and make it a community wide event. In addition to the installation of playground equipment, other plans include cleaning up the park, planting flowers, and some minor painting. Please watch for the date and if you are able, please join us in sprucing up your neighborhood park.



Blueprint Success Stories – Neighbors Helping Neighbors

On Tuesday, February 2nd the first official meeting of the Blueprint Neighborhood Council was held at the Holy Family School. The council consists of a group of concerned neighborhood residents and Borough officials and will help guide and plan the revitalization efforts in the Blueprint Community. The Council members will identify the priorities and goals of the Blueprint initiative and work to organize the residents and encourage the involvement of the entire neighborhood.

There are currently 22 members with spots available for 3 more. If you are interested in becoming part of the Blueprint Neighborhood Council, please contact Jay Jarrett at the Columbia County Housing Corporation at 784-9373 ext. 121, or speak with a member.

The Columbia County Housing Corporation thanks the people listed below for volunteering to serve and looks forward to working with them on the Blueprint for Revitalization.

Blueprint Neighborhood Council Members

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Randy Herring | Lou Biacchi |
| AD George | Frank Brennan |
| Sue Klinger | Joy McGinnis |
| Kevin Dalberto | Steve Phillips |
| Kristy Champ | Lauren Martz |
| Delores Norce | Gary Pintrich |
| Lucille Whitmire | Tom Manley |
| Janet Dalberto | Gene Golla |
| Rebecca Kline | Wendy Pollick |
| Zanaida Garringer | |
| Louis Dalberto | |
| Will Schrader | |
| Brenda Schrader | |



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News You Can Use

The Berwick Area United Way is once again sponsoring a free state and federal income tax filing program for Berwick residents. Last year, the United Way tax site brought \$330,000 into our community in tax refunds and saved tax preparation fees. The United Way focuses on working families to help them file for the Earned Income Tax Credit. Taxes are prepared by appointment only and can be done for filers making less than \$50,000 per year. Taxes are prepared by IRS certified tax preparers and appointments are at the McBride Memorial Library. Please call the Berwick Area United Way at 759-1005 for more information or to make an appointment.

The Columbia County Housing Corporation is still seeking families to take part in the Homeowner Rehabilitation program in the Blueprint neighborhood. If you are a homeowner and meet certain income guidelines and other requirements, you could be eligible to have improvements done on your home at no cost. Also, we have two slots remaining for "Special Needs" households. If you or a member of your family suffers from a chronic medical condition, is physically or mentally handicapped, or otherwise disabled, you may qualify as a Special Needs household and be given priority status on the rehab list. For more information or to apply for this program, please contact our office at 784-9373.

Berwick City Hall has moved and is now located and open for business at 1800 N. Market Street. The phone number remains the same, 752-2723, and winter hours are Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The Borough also has a great website that contains important information that all residents can use www.berwickborough.org . If you haven't visited the site yet, take a minute to check it out.

Blueprint Neighborhood Council will meet on Tuesday, March 2 at 6:00 PM. The meeting will be held in the library at Holy Family School. All neighborhood residents are welcome to attend.



Special Announcement

Dear Neighbor,

The Borough of Berwick and the Columbia County Housing Corporation are working together to secure funding for upgrades at Sponsler Park. The Borough has already committed \$40,000 and we have been actively exploring additional grant opportunities. In fact, we plan to apply for a Department of Conservation and Natural Resources grant in April. As with most grants, the successful applicant must secure matching funds equal to the amount awarded. The matching funds can come from existing money, in-kind labor and equipment usage, other grants, and contributions from civic groups, businesses, and citizens.

With that in mind, the Columbia County Housing Corporation would like to invite you to get involved in your neighborhood by contributing financially to improve Sponsler Park. We are not asking for money right now, we are asking for your PLEDGE to donate if our DCNR grant application is successful. Any pledges received before the grant application is submitted will be tallied and added to our matching funds. Also, neighborhood pledges will be noted in the grant and will help to illustrate the commitment of the residents to Sponsler Park.

This is a unique opportunity to have a positive impact on your neighborhood. Your pledge will provide an ownership interest in Sponsler Park and if our grant application is successful, you will, in effect, double your money. Pledges in any amount are appreciated and will be recognized. Families and businesses will also be offered the chance to sponsor a picnic table, park bench, the pavilion or other equipment for pledges at or above a specified amount.

If you would like to contribute to the improvements at Sponsler Park, please fill out and return the pledge card on the back of this page. Once again, we are not asking for money now. We are simply asking for your promise to contribute if we secure the grant. Please feel free to call the Columbia County Housing Corporation with any questions.



Please return before April 1, 2010 to ;
Columbia County Housing Corp.
700 Sawmill Road Suite 101
Bloomsburg, Pa. 17815

Sponsler park Pledge Card

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Pledge Amount _____

Yes I am interested in sponsoring a specific piece of
Equipment. Please contact me with pricing.
