

South Dorchester Good Neighbor Project

Summary of Meeting

June 12, 2012

Twenty people -- members of the community and people who provide services to our community (Care & Share, Coastal Hospice, the Dorchester County Department of Health, and the MD Eastern Shore Charter School Alliance) --gathered together at Old Trinity Church's Parish Hall on June 12, 2012, for a follow-up meeting to the South Dorchester Community Conversation. The primary focus of the group's discussion was:

What have we learned and where can we go from here?

The first topic, however, was to give the group a name. Everyone agreed that one of the outcomes of the Community Conversation was that Old Trinity's Good Neighbor Project had become the **South Dorchester Good Neighbor Project** -- a project where we as a community look for ways to be good neighbors to one another, in good times and in bad.

Next folks shared their thoughts about the Community Conversation. Their comments and observations reflected the General Themes that had emerged from the Conversation.

- I was amazed at the turnout at the Community Conversation. It showed how people in the community support one another.
- Services that are available in Cambridge need to extend to South Dorchester.
- We need cell tower access. There are places where you cannot wear a medic-alert because there is no cellular connection.
- We need to give kids the skills they need to stay and work here, possibly by using the tech school to run a junior college at night. We need to learn more about what the tech school offers by arranging a tour of the school.
- The Senior Center is a valuable part of our community and needs to remain open.
- Maybe there could be a Farmers' Market in conjunction with the Senior Center. Perhaps Emily's could deliver or we could start our own.
- Library services need to be extended to the community, possibly through the Senior Center.
- People need rides. People need transportation to get ongoing medical treatment. It would be helpful to have a shuttle for grocery shopping.
- We need to find ways to identify the neediest members of our community, for instance, by having "spotters" in churches, post offices and fire houses. In other words, we need to implement a good neighbor policy.
- In addition to Jay Newcomb, we need more political people involved.
- We need a lobbying group.
- The media needs to be more involved.

The top issues that emerged from the discussion centered on:

- Communication
- Transportation
- Senior Center

The group discussed the possibility of expanding the Senior Center at St. John's to a Community Center, which might provide library services (a place to drop off and pick up library books), car pooling services, a farmers' market or place to share excess produce, and/or a computer center.

The group decided to meet again on Tuesday, July 10th, from 5:30 to 7:30, at Old Trinity's Parish Hall. Light supper will be provided.

In preparation for the meeting on July 10th, people who were at the meeting offered to do the following:

- Bonnie Rimpo said she would call Mary Handley, from Delmarva Community Services, and invite her to the meeting on July 10th. Note: Mary was actively involved in planning the Community Conversation.
- Sandy Wilson, from the Dorchester Health Department, said she would provide some demographics for South Dorchester.
- Ronnie Reynolds said she would get more information about the proposed cell tower at Spicer's Hill.
- Carl Behrens said he would meet with Jay Newcomb to get clarification on the budget for the Senior Center. Note: Jay was actively involved in planning the Community Conversation.

The group bid farewell to Jennifer Hicks from Sustainable Delmarva and thanked her for her support and guidance in helping us organize the South Dorchester Community Conversation. The group also bid farewell to Father Bob Gribbon, who is retiring from Old Trinity Church on July 1st. One of father Gribbon's dream was to find a way to make connections between members of the South Dorchester community and available services. With the launching of the South Dorchester Good Neighbor Project, his dream has become a reality. We thank him for sending us on our way.

Respectfully submitted,

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