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Hendry St Block Party - a Great Success

Posted: July 30, 2011 Nancy J Conrad

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Taking back the streets

One year ago the Hendry St neighborhood was suffering from foreclosures, abandoned buildings and crime. Mayor Menino and the Department of Neighborhood Development made a commitment to turning the neighborhood around.

One year later on July 30, 2011 that same neighborhood celebrated with an afternoon long block party attended by a host of city officials, elected officials and members of the partnership that have helped transform the neighborhood.

Neighborhood traumatized

After an incident on July 4th, 2010 where 4 people were shot, the Hendry St neighborhood was traumatized. The City of Boston responded by initiating a meet and greet where Dorchester Bay EDC, VIP Uphams Corner Health Center and several residents came to the table. With this small group and the Boston Police, a formal crime watch was started.

Dorchester Bay organizers continued to meet and talk with residents, increasing participation to over 15 families who came out regularly to the crime watch meetings. Residents soon elected 3 resident crime watch captains.

Their efforts have led to cooperative efforts with the City of Boston and significant accomplishments:

- New traffic signs
- Changing Hendry to a one-way street
- DND building a fence behind 15-21 Hendry St (stopping cut throughs)
- Residents cleaning up the streets
- New trash barrels for the streets
- New plants and mulch on Boston shine Day

Celebration & thanks

The block party covered the entire length of Hendry Street with activities for the kids, great food, music and opportunity for all of the players involved to express their thanks.

Father John of St. Peter's parish. Provided an opening blessing: "Wherever there is love, you are present. There is love in the air this day. May love permeate throughout this community and throughout the city. May we know your peace and your loving protection. We ask this in your name."

Mayor Menino thanked everybody. "You've really been working hard. Hendry Street is a much better street because of the work that's been done. I want to congratulate the new homeowners who are renovating their homes with sweat equity. I'm really impressed by how the community has come together making this a better place for all the kids and their families. So let's continue working together, investing in this neighborhood and working with the police department."



Dorchester Bay Jeanne DuBois, executive director of Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation, was very excited about the block party. "The condition of this neighborhood one year ago and comparing that to how it is now" this is really important, as important as anything we're doing in the city."

She emphasized the importance of establishing strong neighborhood organizations in all of their residential developments which hold regular crime watch meetings, encourage strong community participation, develop leadership from within the community and provide opportunities to celebrate such as this block party. In its history Dorchester Bay has formed 10 neighborhood watch groups.

And the block parties? They make a huge difference. "It's a very important part of what brings people together. They enjoy themselves. When you go from shooting to talking about flower box competitions, you know you've made a lot of progress."

Mayor Menino spoke of the importance of the police department in the neighborhood's transformation. "Capt. Sexton is very responsive to your neighborhoods. If you have an issue, please call him. He will be there for you. Let's all work together. This is about neighborhood. It's about strong neighborhoods."

City Support Boston Police Department Commissioner Davis told the Hendry St neighborhood that they have supported the endeavors of the community on Hendry, Clarkson, Coleman and Bowdoin Streets. "I appreciate all the work that the community and its partners are doing, making it a much better place to live. We have committed to making a significant presence here so that this is a safe street, a place where people can feel safe, where there is no drug dealing or active criminal activity. If everybody pulls together, we can stop the crime."

The Department of Neighborhood Development was responsible for the renovation of the first four houses in this neighborhood. But Executive Directory Evelyn Friedman attributed the priority to Mayor Menino. "The Mayor said this is where we were going to make a stand on the foreclosures and also on crime. As you can see the results are great. It is wonderful that so many people are wanting these properties. Before nobody wanted to move here and now there is a waiting list. There are more homeowners and things will get better and better all the time. So we really appreciate working with you and the support of the Mayor for all this work."

Other speakers included Rep. Carlos Henriquez, Councilor Felix Arroyo, members of the Police Department and representatives from Dorchester Bay.

For more information regarding the community efforts please contact:

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