



## Northeastern Neighborhood Network (NNN)

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Meeting Summary

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The NNN meeting began at 5:30 p.m. in the President's Conference Room. The following members were in attendance: Carmen Rodriguez (Hollywood-North Park Community Association), Jack Smith (North Park Village Advisory Council) and Dr. Vicki Byard. Representing the University were Interim President Richard Helldobler and Mike Dizon (Chief Communications Officer). They were joined Professor Emerita and Special Assistant to the Interim President Shelley Bannister, Senior Director of Academic and Community Partnerships Kris Pierre, and University Police Chief John Escalante.

Member organizations that were absent included: 17<sup>th</sup> District Police, 39<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman's Office, Telshe Yeshiva, Albany Park Neighbors, Albany Park Chamber of Commerce, Albany Park Neighborhood Council, Chicago Korean Chamber of Commerce, Northside Learning Center, North River Commission, Peterson Elementary School, Peterson Pulaski Business and Industrial Council, Volta Elementary School, Von Steuben High School, Northside College Prep and Bohemian National Cemetery.

### UNIVERSITY UPDATES

Interim University President Richard Helldobler and Chief Communications Officer Mike Dizon welcomed the group and shared a number of updates from Northeastern.

- **STATE BUDGET:** Because of the state budget impasse, which is now in its 20<sup>th</sup> month, the University continues to face financial challenges. In order to keep its doors open for summer and fall, it plans to shut down the University during Spring Break (March 20 to 26) and implement a furlough program that would require employees to take five unpaid days off.
  - Because of a civil service rule, the University is required to lay off roughly 300 student aides before furloughs can be implemented. This is disappointing to the University not only because it relies on student work but the students rely on that income to pay for school and personal expenses.
  - The President expressed his hope that Springfield will find a solution to this budget crisis and recognize the value of public higher

education with adequate and reliable funding for universities like Northeastern.

- The temporary University shutdown and furlough program are necessary in order to continue operations through the summer and fall when Northeastern expects to receive its next infusion of cash through student tuition payments. The University does not intend to shut down permanently, and it is looking forward to welcoming students during the summer and fall semesters for which class registration is currently taking place.
- During Spring Break, all University services will be shut down with the exception of minimal staffing for University Police and engineers. This means that services and amenities that have been open during Spring Break in the past – like the Campus Recreation Center, the Library and computer labs – will be closed to students and neighbors. The Child Care Center will also be closed during Spring Break as well.
- RESIDENCE HALLS: The Nest, Northeastern’s first residence hall, continues to do well as it has met the goals for first-year occupancy. This fall, the University expects occupancy to be near or at full capacity. Northeastern will pursue the building of a second residence hall as planned on the nearby block of Bryn Mawr.
  - In early summer and pending approval from its Board of Trustees, the University plans to release a Request For Proposal (RFP) to find a partner to build and manage the second residence hall. President Helldobler said that he expects this process – from RFP to doors opening – to take approximately two-and-a-half to three years.
    - He said that the University has not made any final decisions on the blueprint or schematics of the new residence hall. It will conduct another market research study to inform those decisions.
    - It is still the intention of the University to provide ground-level retail space. The vision also calls for approximately 500 beds.
    - The second residence hall will be ADA compliant like the first residence hall. But he said he wants the second one to be built with more sensitivity to those on the autism spectrum, particularly when it comes to sound and lighting.
  - Since acquiring the property last year, tenants on the Bryn Mawr block have been gradually vacating the buildings. The University plans to keep storefronts occupied until construction on a second residence hall begins.
  - Currently, Northeastern is looking into establishing temporary space for the following University purposes. It hopes to realize these plans by fall.
    - Office space for University Marketing and Web Communications: Currently, this department rents space in the WTTW building. By temporarily moving the marketing

- department to the Bryn Mawr block, the University can save roughly \$70,000 it pays in rent to WTTW.
- **Community Music Program:** The University's popular Community Music Program has been unable to provide lessons throughout the week and grow its programming due to the lack of space. Moving the program to the Bryn Mawr block would allow it to expand its services to the community.
  - **Community Art Space:** Although plans are still being developed, the University is exploring the possibility creating a Community Art Space that could showcase artwork done by University students and allow an opportunity for the community to participate in the creation of art. This space could go into the building that is occupied by the Ugly Hookah.
  - Some renovation will be required to create new space for the marketing department and the community music and art programs. It will involve some interior renovations, and the University will work hard to make sure it does not cause a problem for neighbors and the community.
  - The 7-11 convenience store, which is located on the Bryn Mawr block that is owned by the University, is still not allowed to sell liquor due to a law that prohibits Northeastern from selling alcohol on University property. Northeastern has been working with elected officials to get that legislation changed but has not yet been successful.
  - **GOODWIN LECTURE:** On Feb. 2, the University hosted its first in its Goodwin Distinguished Lectureship series, which featured husband-and-wife political pundits James Carville and Mary Matalin. More than 800 people attended, including many from the community. We are currently planning for the next in the lecture series, which we are able to produce thanks to a generous donation from Daniel L. Goodwin, a Northeastern alumnus.
  - **PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH:** The RFP for the selection of an executive search firm is underway. The Executive Committee of the University's Board of Trustees will make a recommendation to the full Board on a search firm during an upcoming meeting. If one is selected, a formal search could begin as early as fall. Interim President Helldobler acknowledges that this is a difficult time to be conducting a search given the difficulties that public universities in Illinois are facing.
  - **SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION:** Northeastern's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will kick off its yearlong celebration on NEIU Weekend, Sept. 15-16. Like last year, there will be food, entertainment and activities that are open to all neighbors.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Kris Pierre, Northeastern's senior director of academic and community partnerships, shared a few updates listed below.

- Plots are still available for those who would like to participate in the Peterson Garden Project. More information can be found here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/neiu-ground-garden-membership-2017-6-tickets-32656661955>
- For the past several years, members of the University Community have participated in community service events on Cesar Chavez Day. Plans are still being worked out, and a volunteer event is tentatively scheduled for Saturday afternoon, April 1.
- On Saturday, June 10, Swedish Covenant Hospital will sponsor a bike-helmet giveaway as part of its efforts to support community health.
- Northeastern continues its work as a part of a city-wide collaborative called ChicagoCHEC, Chicago Cancer Health Equity Collaborative, which finds ways to solve issues in the city's underserved communities regarding cancer research, education and training. Other participating universities include Northwestern and UIC.
- The Albany Park Chamber of Commerce will host its Restaurant Crawl on May 24.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD INFO / OPEN DISCUSSION

- During a roundtable discussion, NNN members shared the following updates:
  - Jack Smith of the North Park Village Advisory Council said that the Village has been experiencing issues with graffiti and asked the NEIU Police Chief and the rest of NNN if anyone has noticed the problem in their areas as well. He mentioned that the restaurant on site now provides visitor parking. He added that Maple Fest will take place on March 18.
  - Carmen Rodriguez, the HNPCA representative, said that the Association is going through a revisioning process that has involved monthly meetings with its members and the community. She expects the group to be ready to present to the community a revised mission and organizational structure that would address community needs such as parks / environment, advocacy and a chamber of commerce. She also added that efforts to bring a food truck stand on the 3600 block of Bryn Mawr is in the works and have so far been successful.
  - Dr. Vicki Byard, who is a Northeastern faculty member as well as nearby resident, encouraged better outreach to residents like her who live just south of Foster Avenue.

The NNN meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m. The next meeting of NNN will be scheduled for July.