

Neighborhood Planning Unit-T

950 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd.
Atlanta, GA 30310



“Dedicated to building on our strengths in clean, safe neighborhoods”

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Kwabena “Cubby” Nkromo, NPU-T Chair
TO: NPU-T General Body
RE: Chairperson’s Report
DATE: 13 February 2008

It is said that power comes in two forms: organized people and organized money. We are concerned about the question of power as a community because simply put, we need it. We need the power to protect ourselves from harm, both with person and property. We need the power to care for our children, either those in our home or that of our neighbors. And we need the power to create our future, whether grown from the ground or built through good development.

Neighborhood Planning Unit T is working hard to organize ourselves for people power. Since the beginning of our new term, we have called together a remarkable group of citizen volunteers to serve as officers and committee chairs. In addition, we have reached out to our association presidents as partners in the effort to strengthen our neighborhoods, and we will continue to do so. And just this past weekend, the Executive Committee gathered at Morehouse College for a NPU-T Leadership Retreat that moved us even further along the path of an empowered community.

As neighborhoods of mostly working families and individuals, we often find the power of organized money more difficult to achieve. Although we are learning to rediscover and work with our existing assets, many do not possess the kind of wealth that would allow us to easily meet our challenges by simply writing checks. Our greatest potential capital is in the willingness of neighbors to volunteer their time and energy in this empowerment movement. Volunteers are the most valuable currency of NPU-T.

Creating Social Capital

So we are staking our claim on people power. In his book *Roots for Radicals: Organizing for Power, Action, and Justice*, Edward T. Chambers writes, “The social capital of a broad-based [citizens] organization grows only when the organization is in action.... Creating significant social capital requires organizing people on a size and scale that permits them to initiate action (motion), rather than merely reacting to the pressure of others.”

Aren’t we tired of reacting to the “pressure of others”? How many times have we had to mobilize ourselves against an unwanted development in our neighborhood? How long have we been told that our city cannot afford to keep us safe and that our police officers

won't stay on the job? How many times will we be squeezed by projects such as a "Belt" that won't stay in "Line" with what we want for our communities?

We have to find a way to get out of the vicious cycle of reactivity. Based upon the work volunteers are willing to do, we have identified a set of policies for NPU-T that we believe is proactive and forward thinking. Between now and the next time we gather, we will ask for your review, comments, and eventual endorsement of this policy agenda for this year. Subsequently, we will begin a dialogue with our delegation of elected officials and other partners about how we can work together for success.

Chambers further writes in his book, "The social (or political) capital of a citizen organization is its power to win on its interests". Our policy agenda, backed by organization and action, will allow us to ask for specific support of our goals from our elected officials and other stakeholders. Their response over the year will allow us to have something to hold them accountable for. Power to the people!

NPU-T 2008 Policy Agenda (Draft)

- **Resident Driven Public Safety**
 - Citizens Patrol
 - Neighborhood Deputies, ACERT, Citizens Police Academy
- **Housing Stock Remediation**
 - Community Land Trust
 - Dirty Truth Campaign
- **Community Benefits Agreements**
 - Georgia Stand Up as negotiating partner
 - Preferred developers
- **Asset Based Community Development**
 - Capacity / Asset Mapping
 - Creating Vibrant Communities, Inc.
- **Urban Agriculture**
 - The Community Food Project
 - Atlanta Living Foods Initiative
- **Cultural Affirmation**
 - Historic Landmarks
 - Pan African Trail

Other Items:

The Executive Committee will meet 7:00PM Thursday March 6th and will be hosted by the Westview Community Organization (location TBA). This meeting is open to the public, but only committee members may participate.