

Since its incorporation in 2003, Wick Neighbors, Inc. has established a steady record of accomplishments and has established itself as a leading community development organization in the region. The early years are summarized in paragraph form. More detailed timelines are provided for 2008-2011. To summarize:

2004:

WNI completes the final Wick District-Smoky Hollow (WD-SH) Redevelopment Plan and presents it to the City for adoption; raises \$300,000 for predevelopment studies and engages CT Consultants to conduct engineering analysis; negotiates for land acquisition with the City and County land banks; commences planning for Harrison Common redevelopment; collaborates with private owners on renovation of Emerald Street houses; land under control for development: 65%.

2005:

WNI achieves initial City adoption of the WD-SH Redevelopment Plan and overlay zoning; conducts developer selection process, identifying three candidate firms; achieves State legislative authorization for consolidated land transfer of Smoky Hollow land by YSU (sunsets January 2011); establishes Wick District Design Review Committee and adopts design guidelines; secures \$20,000 in City funding to renovate the exterior of two Emerald Street houses; carries out Economic Impact Study with Patco Group showing that fully developed Smoky Hollow would generate \$2.45 million annually in property and income taxes.

2006:

WNI selects Zaremba, Inc. as Master Developer; Zaremba Inc. completes market analysis to identify market niche in single family, townhouse and condominium development in the \$125,000 to \$250,000 range; WNI negotiates acquisition commitments with YSU, City and County, and achieves control of 86% of the parcels in the Hollow; educates stakeholders on Urban Design Guidelines and presents completed Guideline documents to the City for adoption; collaborates with City to reopen Walnut Street between Commerce and Wood as a pedestrian gateway; completes plans for Bliss Hall Arts Walk connecting the Hollow with the YSU campus; secures Planning Commission approval of the Smoky Hollow Community Development Plan.

2007:

WNI continues to work with Zaremba to refine design and market analysis; WNI adopts Zaremba Inc.'s proposed plan modifications and phasing; WNI and Zaremba Inc. develop capital budget and commence securing approximately \$10 million to replace existing infrastructure; WNI works to secure \$2.6 million city commitment toward the infrastructure budget; secures \$100,000 grant from John and Denise York Foundation to assist in negotiated acquisition of privately owned parcels;

2008:

- 1 thru 3/08 -- WNI finalizes applications and secures funding commitments for WD-SH infrastructure improvements including \$635,000 in HUD-EDI funds from Senator Sherrod Brown and \$550,000 in USACE 594 funds from Congressman Tim Ryan;
- 4/8/08 – City Council passes a resolution “expressing the City of Youngstown’s intent to provide water, sewer, and related infrastructure funding in an amount up to \$2.6 million for development of the Phases I – IV of the Wick District-Smoky Hollow Development Initiative”;
- 7/08 -- WNI secures funding for Harrison Common including \$396,000 from the ODNR through then-State Senator Boccieri, and \$100,000 from the Andrews Foundation, with the Youngstown Rotary Club committing to \$50,000 worth of improvements to the park;
- 10/10/08 – meeting with MLM, Mayor, Finance Director, YSU President, Scott Schulick, Zaremba Inc., YSU counsel Greg Morgione, Hunter Morrison. WNI proposes a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the three entities (City, YSU, WNI) outlining key roles/responsibilities to move WD-SH project towards a development agreement. Mayor states City’s support of project and assures WNI that \$2.6M authorized by Council for infrastructure is secure. MOU draft supplied for review, remained unsigned.

2009:

- 4/09 -- WNI receives \$550,000 from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to finance WD-SH infrastructure;
- 7/09 – WNI contracts with Neighborhood Development Services of Ravenna (NDS) to serve as project manager overseeing infrastructure engineering design and installation;
- 7/09 – WNI-YSU Partnership Feasibility Task Force established. Task Force to explore the feasibility of WNI embracing a more formal partnership with YSU and expanding its vision beyond the current geographic boundaries, expanding to the north and west, including Park Vista and Humility of Mary Health Partners;
- 9/09 – due to the nationwide economic scale back, Zaremba, Inc. determines it can no longer participate as master developer in the WD-SH project;
- 10/6/09 – WNI Board approves entering into \$264k contract with CT Consultants for engineering services on WD-SH infrastructure;
- 10/7/09 – Councilwoman Gillam reports that since Zaremba is no longer the master developer on WD-SH, the City Administration (Finance Dept.) will not advance the City’s \$2.6M commitment;
- 10/10/09 – Meeting with MLM, Paul Johnson, Lown & Bozanich where City placed further conditions on City \$, including requiring developer commitment, without providing any assurance of infrastructure or a timeline for provision;
- 11/13/09 – Communication from Sarah Lown to MLM that City would not approve the USACE Management Plan as drafted, indicating that the City, which had previously not had the personnel or ability to oversee the project,

now wanted to “directly manage and implement the project through the Public Works Department”;

- 11/09 -- WNI identifies two local developers interested in the WD-SH project – A. Johnson & Son and the Home Builders/Remodelers Association of Mahoning Valley, as well as a possible third developer of senior housing;
- 12/2/09 – City of Youngstown Board of Control authorizes the City to participate as a non-federal sponsor, with WNI, of the USACE 594 grant. The ordinance acknowledges the need to supply matching funds for participation, and designates the municipal funds from which the City’s portion can be drawn.

2010:

- 1/10 – WNI awaits receipt of the City’s portion of matching funds to complete the USACE Management Plan;
- 2/19/10 – City Council approves legislation adopting the proposed Smoky Hollow Community Development Plan, authorizing the City to acquire, thru eminent domain, 8 vacant parcels in Smoky Hollow, where title was unclear and ownership not identifiable;
- 2/24/10 – Meeting at City Hall between WNI Board, Paul Johnson, City Council members and Mayor to discuss the City’s \$2.6 million financial commitment to SH infrastructure replacement, and the USACE matching funds. During this meeting, the Mayor agrees that the City will participate as a non-federal sponsor on the USACE grant and agrees to provide the \$183,333 non-federal financial match needed under the USACE agreement;
- 2/26/10 – Sarah Lown, assistant to Finance Director, notifies WNI by telephone and thru email communication, that the City will not provide the \$183k in financial support to WNI based upon YSU’s decision to cut the “Early College” program, favored by the City;
- 4/1/10 – YSU approves a three-year transition plan for the Early College program;
- 5/19/10 – MOU signed between YSU/City/WNI basing City contribution of matching funds on WNI and YSU agreeing that “our vision and goals must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate a variety of elements including office and commercial development . . .” No City funds are forthcoming, but City states it is “still willing to partner” for the federal grant;
- 6/10/10 – When City threatens to refuse to sign off on the USACE Management Plan, WNI prepares an MOU (signed by the parties) agreeing that WNI will provide the full amount of the federally required matching funds;
- WNI negotiates an agreement designating YSU, park property owner, as fiscal agent for WNI’s Ohio Department of Natural Resources grant of \$396,000 for Harrison Common;
- 6/2/10 – Ground-breaking for Harrison Common park construction project;
- 9/10 – Meeting with WNI, YSU and City to discuss WD-SH, the current status of the project including infrastructure engineering. City expressed its desire for a Walnut Street focus (*Paul, You’ll know more than I about this meeting and how you want it portrayed for the Task Force*);

- 10/10 – Harrison Common/Phase One substantially complete;
- 12/10 – Meeting between WNI and YSU regarding WD-SH and the WNI/YSU partnership; *(Paul, Again, you know better what occurred and what tone you want to take on this).*
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