



CITY OF BIDDEFORD, MAINE

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Additional *My Neighborhood Network* Meetings Announced for Biddeford Neighborhoods

BIDDEFORD — The City of Biddeford is continuing its efforts to promote the revitalization of downtown neighborhoods with the *My Neighborhood Network* initiative. Through this initiative, residents of defined downtown neighborhoods meet to discuss what makes them feel connected to their neighborhood and what changes they would like to see in their communities. Following a set of three successful meetings this summer, two additional neighborhood meetings will be held to help identify key areas that the communities can address with help from the City and its community partners.

The next neighborhood meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on October 11 at the Historic Biddeford Meeting House for residents of “Tattle Corner”, the area located around Meeting House Road. An additional meeting is set for residents who live in the area between Alfred Street and Pike Street and between Clark Street and Pool Street. The meeting will be held at the J. Richard Martin Community Center in Room 4 on the first floor on October 25 at 6:30 p.m. Parking will be available in the Clark Street or Myrtle Street parking lots.

During the meetings, attendees will be asked to provide input on both what they like about their neighborhood and what they would like to see change. They will also look at the neighborhood map and outline their neighborhood boundaries. Community Development Coordinator Linda Waters, Rev. Shirley Bowen of Seed of Hope Neighborhood Center on South Street, and Sarah Breul of the UNE Coastal Healthy Communities Coalition and Sullivan Street Neighborhood Hub will be present at each meeting to facilitate discussion and connect those who attend with existing resource centers in the city.

“This process gives the City an inside look at what kind of programming needs will help residents of each neighborhood while also opening the door to a direct line of contact for them to reach out to us and suggest projects they come up with themselves,” said Waters. “Strengthening neighborhoods and connecting residents through these networks is essential for growth and revitalization. It’s showing neighborhoods that they have a voice that’s being heard.”

Since the initiative began this summer, four of the identified downtown neighborhoods have been included in three initial meetings. Common topics of discussion across these meetings have included concerns about lead-based paint, pedestrian safety, and affordable housing, as well as interest in community gardens.

“The meetings have been very successful so far,” said Waters. “The South Street Neighborhood had a great turnout, and we had some kids come out to the Bacon Street meeting and heard their perspective. We’re learning about the things that we need to work on, but we’re also hearing that things have already been changing for the better and neighborhoods have been becoming quieter and nicer places to live.”

The initiative has even inspired interest in community-building from residents of neighborhoods outside of the downtown. Tattle Corner was first identified as a neighborhood in *My Neighborhood Network* when Louise Merriman, a member of the Biddeford Historical Society Board of Directors, contacted Waters after hearing about the initiative.

“The neighborhood initiative is a powerful way to connect the community and gives us all an opportunity to engage in history,” said Merriman. “Knowing the history of a neighborhood invests neighborhoods with meaning and context, and gives us all a sense of pride to know that we are part of something bigger.”

For more information or to schedule your neighborhood’s meeting, please contact Linda Waters by email at lwaters@biddefordmaine.org or phone at 284-9105. A map outlining the boundaries of the identified neighborhoods can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/BiddefordNeighborhoodMap>.

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