A Glimpse of

RESERVOIR HILL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL
2006 – 2007

It's been quite a year! Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC) has been able to mobilize more community action, link more residents to public decision-making, and train and field more community leadership than any previous year. RHIC, staff, and volunteers have been a presence and voice in more hearings and task forces than ever before. In the past year RHIC has made significant strides in getting the condition of vacant houses addressed, prompting City action on deficiencies in the vacant house and SCOPE programs, completing the rehab of former HABC apartments for 64 families, engaging tenants and low income families in campaigns such as preserving bus route 5 and keeping the neighborhood school open, and opening opportunities for joint work city-wide with other communities.

Community Needs – Regional Solutions
People Powered Change!

Two new resident leadership teams were established

The Development Monitoring Team monitors all the major development projects in Reservoir Hill. The Team publishes an email newsletter, *Housing News & Notes,* to report on these projects to the community.

The Advocates Circle is a network of residents that responds to city and state budget and policy issues as they arise. The Advocates Circle was responsible for mobilizing the most resident action on City and State policy initiatives in Reservoir Hill in recent years.

RHIC coordinated with 14 organizations and 11 member groups to turn out more than 700 volunteers on 32 projects and events. This was a very big year for resident involvement and the recognition of RHIC's capacity for effective projects.

RHIC initiated the community's first Green Master Plan. The Green Master Plan provides a general framework to guide community greening activities. By analyzing the physical layout of the community, strategies can be developed to improve public safety, sanitation conditions, and other common community concerns.

Check Out Our New Website:
www.reservoirhill.net

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The Better Schools Initiative engaged more 250 residents, highlighting the importance of neighborhood schools, and resulting in stopping consideration of closing John Eager Howard Elementary School, getting funds designated for renovations, and establishing a Parent-Teacher-Community Organization (PTCO) at the school. Those who participated got a taste of fighting a local battle at the city level.

The rehab of vacant properties in Reservoir Hill builds in momentum. 80 vacant houses have been brought back on line since 2002.

Code enforcement has been stepped up on privately-owned vacant houses, with receivership emerging as an important tool. Of the 124 privately-owned vacant houses in Reservoir Hill, 42 properties are at this time under some form of code enforcement legal activity, and 40 more are under rehab

RHIC advocates worked on city campaigns to pass Inclusionary Housing legislation and eviction reform, and in the General Assembly to maximize school facilities funding. Community associations need to be able to see their local problems addressed by having the capacity to articulate the voice of their communities in city and statewide arenas.

RHIC's partnership with Pennrose Properties completed the rental portion of the rehab of 44 houses formerly owned by the Housing Authority; 64 units are now leased to low and moderate income families.

RHIC's housing counseling program was transformed to a Family Asset Building Program. More than 140 people have received housing counseling since 2004, enabling many to purchase homes elsewhere in the city. But soaring house prices in Reservoir Hill have meant that a strictly homeownership program is not benefiting the majority of Reservoir Hill residents. This program now includes credit counseling and financial management to help Reservoir Hill residents improve their economic picture.