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Community Groups Address Housing Concerns at Grand Rapids City Commission Briefing

GRAND RAPIDS – A coalition of 24 community organizations will be presenting a position paper to the Grand Rapids City Commission at 10:30am today (7/27/10) calling for cooperation to address growing housing concerns as a result of the recent changes in the real estate market.

The position paper calls for three primary issues to be addressed.

1. Ensuring a minimum standard of quality among all rental units by adding single family rental units to the City's rental inspection and certification program.
2. Redesigning the City's vacant property inspections program to mitigate the negative effects that the foreclosure crisis has had on property values, crime, and neighborhood stability.
3. Creating a comprehensive, accessible, and accurate database of parcel information.

The group has already met with City Manager Greg Sundstrom and has formed a working group that will further develop these strategies to improve Grand Rapids housing stock. That work group will be meeting through October 2010 and will bring refined recommendations back to the City Commission.

“We are thrilled with the City's response to date on these issues,” said Kym Spring, Project Coordinator for Foreclosure Response. “We need to put these ideas into action to mitigate the negative impacts foreclosures are having on our neighborhoods and our residents.”

“It's good to be collaborating with the City on this work,” said Paul Haan, Executive Director of the Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan. “It's time to modernize how our housing code is applied to reflect the needs of the new housing market and to better protect the children and families who have born the brunt of this crisis.

A complete version of the position paper can be found at www.healthyhomescoalition.org/uploads/PDFs/100727.pdf

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Support for
Strategies to Address Housing Quality and Sustainable Neighborhoods

The following organizations formally support *Strategies to Address Housing Quality and Sustainable Neighborhood*:

- Baxter Neighborhood Association
- Bazzani Associates Inc.
- Creston Neighborhood Association
- Disability Advocates of Kent County
- Eastown Community Association
- Garfield Park Neighborhood Association
- Grand Rapids Area Center for Ecumenism
- Grand Rapids Urban League
- Greater Grand Rapids Children's Environmental Health Initiative
- Habitat for Humanity of Kent County
- Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan
- John Ball Park Community Association
- Lee Kitson Builders Inc.
- Lighthouse Communities, Inc.
- Midtown Neighborhood Association
- Neighbors of Belknap Lookout
- New Development Corporation
- Oakdale Neighbors
- Salvation Army Booth Family Services
- South East Community Association
- South West Area Neighbors
- United Growth for Kent County
- Urban Pharm LLC
- West Michigan Environmental Action Council