

Rochester City Council Notebook — Imagine Kutzky plan gets good review from council

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Imagine Kutzky, the initiative to revitalize Rochester's Kutzky Park neighborhood, won plaudits Monday from city council members, who said they can imagine similar initiatives taking off in other core neighborhoods.

"I think this is a fantastic model ... of a way to plan," said council member Bob Nowicki.

A yearlong planning process involving hundreds of neighborhood residents yielded the plan, which calls for preserving the best of Kutzky Park -- its historic buildings and traditional neighborhood ambiance -- while improving things by slowing traffic, fixing potholes and replacing trees.

The initiative was professionally staffed and funded with local grants, including \$15,000 last year from First Homes. Another \$20,000 is hoped for this year, said Stephanie Kilen, project coordinator.

Goals for this year, Kilen said, include council approval of a special zoning district for the neighborhood.

The organization also intends to establish architectural design guidelines and form the Imagine Kutzky Citizens Council, a group that would review incoming development proposals and provide leadership, Kilen said.

Ultimately, she said, Imagine Kutzky would found a community development corporation, a group with deep pockets promoting development in the neighborhood.

Council President Dennis Hanson expressed concern about the evolving organizational structures, saying he wants to ensure Imagine Kutzky works well with the existing Kutzky Park Neighborhood Association.

"You've got two organizations that are working in the same neighborhood," Hanson said, "and we've got to make sure you're all on the same path."

Blenker 'comfortable' in first council meeting

New council member Amy Blenker attended her first meeting Monday after being elected April 5. Blenker was sworn in Thursday as Ward 1 council member.

Her first meeting was a doozy -- a committee meeting lasting almost three hours.

"A good way to get into things," Blenker said. "It was pretty informal, it was comfortable."

Since her election, Blenker said, she's had a few, but not too many, constituent calls. She's used the time to familiarize herself with her new duties.

"It's just been a matter of me just getting oriented with the way things work," she said.