

City Suburban News

October 29–November 4, 2008

Overbrook Farms Club and Volunteer Designers Win Community Design Award



The Overbrook Farms Club and the Community Design Collaborative are proud to have been recognized at the Philadelphia AIA Annual Awards Dinner that took place on October 16 in Philadelphia. The two groups, an all-volunteer design team, created the newly-redesigned 63rd Street Commercial Corridor. Pictured from left – Christine Miller, Design Team Historic Preservationist; Natalie Malawey-Ednie, Design Team Lead Architect; Benjamin Cromie, Design Team Planner; Jeffrey Brummer, Design Team Architect; Beth Miller, Community Design Collaborative Executive Director; Terry M. Henry, Overbrook Farms Club President; Michael Paul Community Design Collaborative Board Chairman.

The Overbrook Farms Club, located in the 63rd Street Commercial Corridor in the City Avenue Special Services District, recently won the 2008 Community Design Award from the Community Design Collaborative. The 63rd Street Commercial Corridor, which was once a social and economic hub, will be revitalized and modernized to recreate a “Main Street” feeling. The Collaborative is an organization that pairs volunteer designers with non-profits in the Philadelphia region to make improvements in and around the city.

The winning project team from the Collaborative consists of Natalie Malawey-Ednie, Jeffrey Brummer, Benjamin Cromie, Terra Edenhart-Pepe, and Christine Miller. The designers’ Master Plan Strategy for the 63rd Street Commercial Corridor will make pedestrian-friendly improvements in five key areas: building usage, streetscaping, traffic calming and parking, façade improvements, and site identity. Terry Henry, Executive Director of the Overbrook Farms Club said recently, “We knew what we wanted to see, how we wanted it to feel, but we didn’t know the nuts and bolts of design. The Collaborative team captured our vision and gave us concrete things like textured crosswalks and sidewalk bump-outs.”

The design volunteers worked with a task force of residents, business owners, and representatives from SEPTA and other local organizations to determine what the community wanted. The process led to a plan that not only maps out the future, but also outlines pieces that the community can change in the present. One such improvement was the implementation of the Overbrook Farms Farmers’ Market, open Saturdays, that provides healthful food options while attracting business back into the Commercial Corridor. The master plan strategy is helping to promote the project in advance and demonstrates the long-term positive effects. The plan will be implemented in phases to allow the Overbrook Farms Club to secure resources for the project.

“We are so thrilled about this project and that the designers have been recognized for their important work,” said Terrence Foley, President and CEO of the City Avenue Special Services District. “The plan fits in perfectly with our goals of rejuvenating the entire City Avenue Special Services District. It is going to be a beautifully restored area that will attract visitors and energize the neighborhoods.”

The Overbrook Farms Club is the country’s oldest home owners’ association. It was founded in 1892, along with the community for which it is named. Since that date, the Club has worked to preserve and protect the historic fabric of the community and maintain the quality of life of its residents.

Overbrook Farms is a residential neighborhood in Philadelphia listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The neighborhood is located near the western border of the city, leading to Philadelphia’s famed Main Line. At present, there are 413 buildings in Overbrook Farms, which is bounded by 58th and 66th Streets and Woodbine and City Avenues, and bisected by Lancaster Avenue.

The City Avenue Special Services District is a collaboration between the City of Philadelphia and the Township of Lower Merion to enhance the public and private sectors of the region extending west on City Avenue from the Schuylkill Expressway to 63rd Street and Wynnewood Road. From the creation of public safety initiatives to new strategies for development, the CityAve Special Services District is the go-to organization for any individual or business interested in becoming a part of what this exciting region has to offer. For information about the District, call 610-747-0311 or visit www.cityave.org.